Gert-Matthias Wegner

Drumming in Bhaktapur
Music of the Newar People of Nepal

Volume I: Text
Drumming in Bhaktapur
DOCUMENTA NEPALICA

Book Series; 4

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Text
About the author
Gert-Matthias Wegner (b. 1949) is a German ethnomusicologist. He founded and directed Kathmandu University’s Department of Music, taught at the Free University Berlin and published mostly about drumming traditions in South Asia.

Production sponsored by Pro Musica Viva – Maria Strecker-Daelen Stiftung

This volume has been promoted by the Joint Science Conference of the Federal Government and the governments of the states of the Federal Republic of Germany in the Academies’ Programme from the joint funding of the Federal Government of Germany (Federal Ministry of Education and Research) and the state Baden-Württemberg (Ministry of Science, Research and the Arts).

This publication includes electronic supplementary material (documentary films and audio examples). An overview can be found on page 403.

Bibliographic information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek
The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data are available in the Internet at http://dnb.dnb.de.

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Published at Heidelberg University Publishing (heiUP), 2023

Heidelberg University/Heidelberg University Library
Heidelberg University Publishing (heiUP)
Grabengasse 1, 69117 Heidelberg, Germany
https://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de

The electronic open access version of this work is permanently available on Heidelberg University Publishing’s website: https://heiup.uni-heidelberg.de
urn: urn:nbn:de:bsz:16-heiup-book-1246-6
doi: https://doi.org/10.17885/heiup.1246

Text © 2023, Gert-Matthias Wegner

Cover illustrations: Gert-Matthias Wegner (Vol. I), Kevin Bubriski (Vol. II)

ISSN 2568-7867
eISSN 2569-8141

ISBN 978-3-96822-230-1 (Hardcover)
ISBN 978-3-96822-229-5 (PDF)
To the memory of Hari Govinda Ranjitkar (1934–2019)
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Preface

This publication is intended for English-language readers around the world, including the present generation of educated Newars. With its focus on the musical life of Bhaktapur during the decade starting from 1983, it could serve as a point of reference for comparison with the present situation. The transcriptions of almost every Newar drumming composition played in Bhaktapur and the use of special compositions for inducing divine inspiration may interest musicians even beyond South Asia.

It was my late Guruju of navabājā, Hari Govinda Ranjitkar who claimed that this publication was his last unfulfilled wish. Unfortunately he passed away in 2019 at the ripe age of eighty-four, having taught the repertoire of the nine drums to many students at Kathmandu University’s Department of Music. Since its foundation in 1996, my transcriptions of the compositions served as teaching materials and are included in this publication together with other drum repertoires of Bhaktapur. I studied with Hari Govinda for almost two years, starting in March 1983 with daily lessons at my home at Yatāchẽ, Bhaktapur. Lessons were divided between the repertoire of the nine navabājā drums dhā̃, kvatāḥ, dhā̃cā, dhimaycā, nāykhĩcā, pachimā, dhalak, kvakhĩcā and nagarā, and in addition dhimay and lālākhĩ. My late Guruju Ganesh Bahadur Sijakhva taught the latter two drums. Both Gurujus were the leading drummers of Yāchẽ Gaṇeś navadāphā. In the 1980s, this group was still performing regularly and within hearing distance of my roof terrace.¹ This and all my further drumming apprenticeships in Bhaktapur required the prescribed rituals and offerings to the local gods Gaṇeś, Kumār, Nāsaḥdyah and Haimādyah, as described in chapter 2. During his remaining years following my navabājā apprenticeship, Hari Govinda added only a few minor variants² to the existing repertoire. The transcriptions published here are exactly what he taught me in 1983/84. To allow comparison with other genres and related repertoires, the drum compositions of dāphā (lālākhĩ), Bhaila pyākhã, cacā pyākhã, processional drumming genres Sāymi gūlābājā and Śākya gūlābājā, dhimaybājā, nāykhĩbājā, ghētãgiśi and tamva are also included. The cult of the music god Nāsaḥdyah concerns every genre of Newar music and dance. To cover important aspects of this cult, the relationship with processional music is also examined in chapter 2.

My early publications in the series ‘Newar Drumming’³ include summaries in Newari that complement the English text. As the knowledge of English among young Bhaktapurians has improved since then, this publication does not include a Newari summary. I am sure, with school education

¹ In 1983 there was no motorized traffic in Bhaktapur.
² Fabian Bakels allowed me to look at the notes of his much later lessons with Hari Govinda
³ Wegner 1986b and 1988
commonly available, every young person in Bhaktapur will be able to read the transcriptions after studying the instructions. This publication describes music in society as I encountered it in the early 1980s. Many Newars used the Nepali version of their Newari caste names, ‘Kapāli’ instead of ‘Jugi’, ‘Bannmālā’ instead of ‘Gāthā’, ‘Prajāpati’ instead of ‘Kumāḥ’, ‘Manandhar’ instead of ‘Sāymi’, etc. Farmers wanted to be ‘Kisān’ instead of ‘Jyāpu’. In this publication the Newari caste name is applied in general to members of specific castes. Individuals appear with their preferred surnames. If not indicated otherwise, Newari terms are represented in the Bhaktapur dialect. With its abundant use of nasals, the pronunciation differs from Kathmandu Newari and there are many special words and phrases that identify the ‘pakka Bhaktapur Newar’—as I have been called to my amusement.

In March 1983 I settled in Bhaktapur as a member of the ‘German Nepal Research Programme’, to document Newar drumming traditions. As an ethnomusicologist and a performing musician in a society where participation and contribution were essential values, my role did not agree with the concept of a scholarly observer keeping a safe distance from his or her research object, to produce a ‘theory’ as a visiting card for use in academic circles. For trying to understand another culture, I recommend humility.

As a resident of Bhaktapur for more than three decades, it was inevitable and natural that I interacted with local people and that my later role as a teacher of local drumming traditions affected those traditions. Obvious mistakes in some compositions were amended. I introduced written notation of compositions as a teaching aid and organised the first concert tours of Newar musicians to Europe. These were clearly out of context performances but they stimulated foreign interest in Newar culture and helped to raise the status of musicians involved, exposing them to unprecedented appreciation of their music. In 1995 I taught Indira Lachhimasyu of Dattātreya, the first female dhimay drummer, causing a fundamental change of the local concept of gender participation in music making. My aim at creating jobs for local musicians as regularly paid music teachers led to the foundation of the Department of Music at Kathmandu University—a pilot project of applied ethnomusicology in South Asia. This started operating in 1996 at Chupin ghāt, Bhaktapur and was inaugurated by the then German President, the late Dr. Roman Herzog during his state visit to Nepal. Devastation of the physical facilities during the big earthquake in April 2015 and the following flood wave in August 2015 caused the Department of Music to move to Kathmandu, along with the core staff from Bhaktapur and earlier graduates from various areas of Nepal, to resume their academic activities in a new setting that should accommodate the rising number of students.

At my age personal participation as a drummer in the musical life of Bhaktapur is definitely over. But I hope that this publication will promote interest in this unique and fascinating repertoire and inspire future drummers to live with these compositions and behold the bliss of Nāṣahdyāḥ’s inspiring magic.

4 ‘real-complete Bh. N.’
5 Until 1995 the local concept meant that men did all the fun things in life and women the rest.
7 Nāṣahdyāḥ is the local god of music and dance whose cult is examined in detail in chapter 2.
Gā̃ bell and pakka Bhaktapur Newar in front of the palace, 1985
Thanks

I am grateful to my late Guruju of navabājā, Hari Govinda Ranjitkar and to my late Guruju of dhimay and lālākhĩ, Ganes Bahadur Sijakhva. They initiated me into the cult of the Newar music god Nāsahdyah in such a thorough manner that, at a later stage, I was able to perform the detailed rituals for my Bhaktapur students of dhimay drumming. I am grateful to Tek Bahadur Prajapati and Krishna Prajapati who taught me the drum compositions of Taulāchẽ Bhaila pyākhā and to Mangal Lal Manandhar (Sāymi gūlābājā), to Punhi Rāj Śākya and ‘Gvale Guruju’ Nucherāj Buddhacārya (Vajrācārya and Śākya gūlābājā), to Krishna Prasad ‘Kampani’ Kapali (tamva) and to Ratnakaji Bajracharya (pañcatāl). I apologize to all those sacrificial animals whose life was taken as per ritual requirement during my personal drumming apprenticeships. No doubt, they would not have lived much longer in the vicinity of so many keen meat-eaters. But it was my desire to learn that caused their sacrifice.

There are hundreds of other musicians who allowed me to record their music and interview them. It would fill many pages to mention the names of each and every musician with whom I was involved in some way or other during the past forty years in Bhaktapur. My heartfelt thanks to all of them! I would also like to thank my drum-maker during the 1980s, the late Dil Bahadur Kulu and his relatives, for constructing and maintaining my drums and teaching me some of his skills, the late Ganeshman Basukala for translating during my early teaching sessions, interviewing all the music groups and helping in many other ways as my first field assistant, Buddhalal Manandhar for preparing surveys of music groups and Pandit Mahesh Raj Pant for translating a number of legal documents.

I am grateful to the late Bishnu Prasad Shrestha, resourceful and worldly-wise manager of the German Nepal Research Programme’s local office and his excellent support team including Mahendra Shrestha (driver) and Nutan Sharma who was especially helpful with translation and erudite advice. Commissioned by me, Nutan prepared a commented list of all music manuscript kept in the National Archive. Their patience with sometimes demanding and eccentric German scholars was truly admirable.

I am grateful to Laxmi Nath Shrestha for teaching me rudimentary Newari, and to his late wife Belaiti for sharing recipes from her thaḥchẽ in Dhulikhel.

I am grateful to Shamsher Bahadur Nhuchen Pradhan for negotiating my rent agreements and other necessary legal requirements that made my life in Bhaktapur easier.

I would like to thank my friend Madhu Krishna Chitrakar for his magnificent paintings and for the permission to use some of them for teaching and publication.
Thanks

I would also like to express my sincere thanks to Shyam S. Dhaubhadel and his brother Ananta for their friendship and unfailing support of my work in Bhaktapur.

I am grateful to my late friend Jagadish SJB Rana who visited me in 1987 in Bhaktapur, saying, “I heard about your work. How can I help you?” Coming from a member of the top level of Nepalese aristocracy, this offer was definitely meaningful. It proved effective in dealing with nonplussed administrators during the foundation work of the Department of Music. When Jagadish Rana accompanied me to ministries and other government offices, there was instant awe and submission. He did enjoy those memorable scenes, with a twinkle in his eyes. “It will be done,” was one of his favourite sayings. My sincere thanks go to Jagadish for allowing me to use the 17th century Newar rāgamālā—then acquired from another branch of his family—in my publications.

My faithful secretary, Raju Hyaumikha helped me to design the Microsoft Excel based notation of drumming syllables in the early 1990s, transcribe my hand-written notation of all compositions, created a database for information on music groups and musical change and checked the final proofs for mistakes. He retrieved the notation documents, after the earthquake (April 25th, 2015) smashed my home and my computers. A big THANK YOU, Raju! A helpful expert at Mac Support Kathmandu managed to breathe new life into one of those damaged computers. I am grateful to Prasanna Shrestha and his team.

I am indebted to my faithful students and friends Fabian Bakels, Ravi Kapali, Bishnu Bahadur Manandhar, Lochan Rijal, Abhāya Krishna Shrestha and members of the Nepal Army who came to the rescue of my belongings after the earthquake devastated my Bhaktapur home while I was in Germany. Some of the material presented here would have been lost without their efforts. Many thanks to Fabian Bakels, for allowing me to compare transcriptions based on nāgarā lessons that he took thirty years after my navabājā apprenticeship (1983/84).

I am grateful to Ranav Adhikari for his technical expertise in applying English subtitles in my documentary films and installing them in YouTube. I am also grateful to Rajkumar Manandhar for a photo of the Navadurgā dancers.

I am immensely grateful to Prof. Dr. Niels Gutschow who opened my eyes to the meaning of urban space and ritual in Newar culture, contributing countless details to my understanding of Bhaktapur and the Bhaktapurians and helping me in many ways. Based on our field notes and those of our respective field assistants, he produced admirable maps depicting the location of music groups, musical processions, etc., that are included in this publication. Among his publications about Bhaktapur, I recommend readers to his crowning achievement ‘Bhaktapur-Nepal: Urban Space and Ritual’ as a companion to this study.

I shall always remember with gratitude Prof. Dr. Bernhard Kölver, founder and co-ordinator of the German Nepal Research Programme, for supporting my continuous membership as a research scholar and for sharing his knowledge and enthusiasm. He did an ad hoc translation from Sanskrit for me of the musically relevant passages of the Bṛhad-Svayaṃbhū purāṇa. He introduced me to the novels of P.G. Wodehouse, causing a lifelong addiction to this fountain of sweetness and light.

My sincere thanks go to all the collaborators of the dictionary project, foremost to Dr. Ulrike Kölver and her invaluable expertise as a linguist. Her Nepalese team included Iswarananda

1 Gutschow 2017
Thanks

Shresthacarya, Daya Ratna Sakya and Nirmal Man Tuladhar. Daya Ratna Sakya was particularly helpful and patient, ploughing through the available literature in Newari with me.

I thank Prof. Richard Widdess for his beautiful friendship, for his helpful comments on this manuscript and for including Carol Tingey and me in his Leverhulme-funded Research Project that allowed us for three years to carry out research into historical links between Indian and Newar musical traditions. This brought to light among other things the only complete Newar rāgamālā manuscript, commissioned in Bhaktapur during the early 17th century. Richard’s study of sacred dāphā singing in Bhaktapur set new standards in ethnomusicological scholarship and has been a source of inspiration to me. I strongly recommend readers to explore his dāphā book, before diving into the ocean of Newar drumming.

I would like to thank Simonne Bailey for her friendship, continuous encouragement and patient corrections of my attempts at producing readable scientific prose in English. Her corrections are made even more valuable by the fact that for a decade she participated in almost every performance of the Yāchẽ navadāphā and several other music and dance groups, playing the natural trumpet pvaṅgā and the shawm Gujarāti mvālĩ—thus knowing better than anybody else what I was trying to say and what had to be questioned. Initially, her double identity as a British lady and a low-caste Newar musician tended to confuse locals. But soon she was generally accepted and much in demand as a performing Jugi. At the end of her Bhaktapur stay I inherited her indestructible cast iron cooking vessels made in the United Kingdom, that are giving such marvellous service in my kitchen.

I thank Bronwen Bledsoe for lending me her excellent NIKON camera for over a year, after my camera broke down during the wild New Year festivities at Thimi. I am grateful to Kevin Bubriski for allowing me to use the brilliant photos that he took in 1988 at my home and during our dhimay drumming procession to Indrāyanī. I am also grateful to Bikas Rauniyar for two photos of Bhaktapur events, and to Bernd Karl Rennhak for photos of my drums that he took during his visit to Bhaktapur in 1984. If not indicated otherwise, all other photos in this publication were taken by me.

I am grateful to the German Research Council (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG). Without their generous support for eight years, my ethnomusicological fieldwork in Nepal would not have possible. I am equally grateful to the Leverhulme Foundation for funding my research for three years and to the German Academic Exchange Programme (DAAD) for funding my initial decade of establishing and directing the Department of Music at Kathmandu University.

I am very grateful to the ‘Pro Musica Viva – Maria Strecker-Daelen Stiftung’ and my old friend, Werner Ehlenberger for contributing to the production costs of this publication and to my daughter Uscha Wegner for creating preliminary digital versions of the manuscript for reviewers, publishers and friends to read.

Last not least, my sincere thanks go to the gentle and tolerant people of Bhaktapur. They managed to bear with me for several decades, extending their warm Newar hospitality and friendship to a German drummer who fell in love with their admirable culture.

2 Wegner and Widdess 2004 and 2005
3 Widdess 2013
It makes me sad to realize that quite a few people mentioned here have already passed away. I owe them much gratitude for their kindness and support of my work and hope that—despite coming out so late—this publication will help others to remember them as I do with fondness.

I am grateful to Heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften, their Forschungsstelle Religions- und rechtsgeschichtliche Quellen des vormodernen Nepal and Prof. Dr. Axel Michaels for accepting my manuscript for publication. Several officers at Heidelberg University Publishing contributed to various aspects of the production, among them Christian Kolb to whom I am indebted for his careful and excellent work in adjusting the original manuscript to the format of ‘Documenta Nepalica’.
1 Introduction

The Newar people of the Kathmandu Valley and beyond are an ethnic group of Nepal that absorbed many cultural influences from South Asia over the past two thousand years. Their Newari language belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese language group. Their admirable musical culture saw its heyday during the rule of the later Malla kings of Bhaktapur, Patan and Kathmandu (13th to 18th centuries) and continued to thrive initially even under later Nepali-speaking rulers of other ethnic background. During the 1980s, the decline of Newar culture had become a matter of concern to many Newars who engaged in appeals to preserve their language. As there are now several ground-breaking publications about the social, spatial and ritual orders of Bhaktapur, I will not duplicate this but recommend the reader to consult these essential books for detailed and fascinating background information.

Owing to the lack of data, it is not possible to reconstruct a continuous early history of music in the Kathmandu Valley. This was not made easier by the unhelpful habit of invading armies destroying and eradicating whatever they encountered. Frequent massive earthquakes had a similar effect. The earliest written document dates from 464 A.D. when the Licchavi ruler Mānadeva (464 to 505) had a stone pillar with a carved inscription installed at Čāngu Nārāyaṇa. Originally the pillar carried the glorious statue of Garuda that now stands on the pavement, facing the sanctum and is said to be a portrait of King Mānadeva. The stone plinth of the temple shows coarse carvings that could be the earliest depictions of musical instruments in the Kathmandu Valley. Although the temple was destroyed and rebuilt several times after earthquakes and fire, the plinth carvings—now in part concealed by later structures—could refer to the music practice of the Licchavi period that coincided with the North Indian Gupta period. We perceive musicians playing various drums, cymbals, transverse flutes, lutes and harps. The first stone inscription mentioning a music group dates from 604 A.D. It stands at the roadside in Lele. Line eleven of the Sanskrit inscription goes “...yāḥ mā 12 vādittra gauṣṭhikā nāmmā 10 ... rasya mā 40 pradipagausṭhikā nāmmā 8 arccā gauṣṭhikānām...”, mentioning a group of musicians endowed with a land donation of ten mānikā. Vādittra gauṣṭhikā translates into Nepali as bājā guthi. So the practice of supporting music groups with land donations goes back to the Licchavi rulers. It reached a monumental scale during the later Malla period (15th to 18th centuries), the Golden Age of Newar culture.

1 Whelpton 2005 offers an insightful discussion of changes in lifestyles, values and identities (chapter 6).
3 cf. Wegner and Sharma, 1994 and 1995
The first written version of the *Brhad-Svayambhū purāṇa* in Sanskrit dates from the third quarter of the fourteenth century. It mentions sweet sounding *ghaṇṭa* bronze bells, the performance of dance (*nṛtya*), hymns (*stotra*, *dharāṇi*), song (*gīta*), singing (*gāna*) in local language (Newari). Musical instruments (*vādya*) played for Swayambhū include *mrdaṅga*, *dundubhi*, *pataha*, *vīṇā*, *muruja*, *dhvār* *ghaṇṭa*, *ḍiṇḍimā*, *jharjhara*, *bherī*, *tūrya*, *śṛṅga*, *śaṅkha*, *maṇḍala*, *mukunda*, *kāṃsya tāla*, *kāhāra*, *vāṃśa*, *ghoṣa vādyā* and *kāṃsaya*, *dhakkā*, *mrduḍindima* and *jantu śṛṅga*. The manuscript mentions *tirtha* processions where the following instruments were played, *maṇḍala*, *mrdaṅga*, *pataha*, *dhakkā*, *dhvana*, *dundubhi*, *maddu*, *ḍinḍima*, *tāḍana*, *vīṇā*, *kiṅkinī*, *kāṃsaja*, *turya*, *kāhāla*, *janṭu śṛṅga*, *saṅkha*, *bherī*, and *ghoṣavādyā*. It also tells us that Swayambhū is adorned with the *pañcatāla* instruments (compound drum, cymbals, natural trumpets) and other instruments. We learn about three different kinds of utterance and their use, *japa* (murmur, for mantra and *yajurveda*), *paṭh* (recite, for *stotra* and *ṛgveda*), *gāi* (sing or recite in a singing manner, for *sāmaveda*). Important advice for monks (*bhikṣu*) is added: If they indulge in *doṣa* (sins) like alcohol inspired dance, song, playing of instruments, garlands, perfume and—heaven forbid—*maithuna* (sexual intercourse), this will lead them to hell (*durgati*). So, if a reader of this publication happens to be a monk, he should stop reading here. As the following chapters prove, the Newar people of Bhaktapur tend to enjoy all these things tremendously.

The cult of the music god Nāsahdyah with its unique concept of the linear progression of divine energy along flight lanes indicated by specific openings in brick walls must have been in practice when ancient settlements emerged. The town of Bhaktapur grew from a cluster of villages, each having at its centre a shrine of Nāsahdyah (Fig. 1). This becomes clear when we examine the gods worshipped during music apprenticeship and the processional routes to the respective shrines. The following chapters include several maps providing evidence. Following the Licchavi period, the time between 740 and 1150 was a dark age of anarchy that coincided with a similar situation in Tibet. Vajrayāna Buddhism became a prominent religious influence with its centre in Lalitpur (Patan). It introduced Tantric Buddhist *caryā* songs (*cacā* in Newari) and dances (*cacā pyākhā*). According to legend, Bhaktapur was founded during the 9th century. During the 12th century Anandadeva of Banepa moved his residence to Bhaktapur. The early Malla period began with Ari Malla (1200–1216). In 1342 the queen and prince of Simraungarh (Terai) settled in Bhaktapur, installing their tutelary deity Taleju. Bhaktapur was in control of the trade route to Tibet and became the leading town in the Kathmandu Valley until its division into the three Malla kingdoms in 1482. (Map 1)

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4 I owe this information to the late Prof. Horst Brinkhaus who was preparing his translation of the text.
5 p. 66
6 p. 104
7 p. 122
8 p. 138
9 pp. 296, 297
10 pilgrimage to sacred water sources for ritual purification
11 p. 153
12 p. 200
13 p. 221
14 cf. chapters 2., 3.1, 3.3, 5.1, 5.2, 5.3
With all those invading armies devastating North India, the remote Kathmandu Valley appeared as a peaceful refuge to those arriving in search of physical security. They brought with them their cults, their skills and in some cases, their musical instruments. All this contributed to the unique Newar musical culture that blossomed between the fifteenth and eighteenth centuries. Among the Malla kings of Bhaktapur who left an important legacy as patrons of music, art and architecture were Jagajjotir Malla (1614–1637), Jagatprakāśa Malla (1644–1673), Jitāmitra Malla (1673–1696), Bhūpatīndra Malla (1696–1722) and Raṇajīt Malla (1722–1769). The former is remembered as a composer-king. He devised the most spectacular details of Bhaktapur's New Year festival, founded the initial navadāphā groups and composed dāphā songs that were still sung in the 1980s. His statue crowns a pillar in front of the Golden Gate in the palace square. Bhaktapur remained a Malla kingdom until 1769 when it was the final Malla kingdom to fall into the hands of a conquering warlord, Pṛthvī Nārāyan Shah of Gorkha, founder of the state of Nepal. When he made Kathmandu the capital of his kingdom and resided in the Hanuman Dhoka palace, he encountered Indian court musicians whose performance irritated the ruler. They were deported to India, to be invited back to stay by the conqueror's grandson, Raṇa Bahādur Shah (ruled 1777–1799). Pṛthvī Nārāyaṇa Shah found the musical culture of the Newars tolerable enough to recommend his subjects to proceed with their ritual masked dances and singing and drumming at
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temples and during processions. Even after the conquest, new forms developed and the creative spirit remained unbroken for a while. The new ruler did not interfere with the land endowments that financed Newar culture. Nepalese school textbooks describe King Prithvi Narayana Shah as ‘father of the nation’, whereas some Bhaktapurians used expressions for the Shah kings that cannot be repeated in polite society. More than two centuries after the conquest, people in Bhaktapur lived with a marked sense of subjugation, perceiving Newar culture as superior but threatened by decline. Two Royal Nepal Army camps outside Bhaktapur and continuous army presence in the Malla palace compound did not contribute to relax the situation. In Bhaktapur, the old spatial and social orders persisted. Robert Levy called it a ‘unicultural town’.

When I arrived in Bhaktapur in March 1983, it was a town for pedestrians. There were no vehicles. People walked. The air was clean and so were the Hanumante and Kasan Khusi rivers. Set on an elevation stretching from east to west, the old town with its Newar population of seventy thousand was overlooking the paddy fields where over seventy per cent of the citizens worked as farmers. Chilies, ginger, cucumber, cauliflower and yoghurt were of outstanding quality. Clouds of butterflies and golden dragonflies hovered over the fields and everywhere lingered a smell of the most prominent weed, Cannabis indica. There was a feeling of profound peace, of being out of this world. Nobody lived outside the old town. Farmers spending the night out in a field hut to water potatoes or cauliflower, had alarming stories to tell of ghosts making their appearance, rattling at the door, etc.

15 Levy 1990
Inside Bhaktapur it felt very safe, as if living in a womb. The town was protected by numerous gods and goddesses residing in temples and shrines that constitute a *mandala*, with the shrines of the eight mother goddesses *Aṣṭamātṛka* at the periphery and *Tripurasundarī* in the centre and shrines of other gods spreading all over the town (Map 2). The Bhaktapur *mandala* painting below includes only some of the main gods and goddesses. The outer rhombic realm shows the *Aṣṭamātṛkā* starting with *Brahmāyaṇī* and *Maheśvarī* (top left), in the next realm eight *Bhairava-s* and *Mahāsiddhas*, then eight *Gaṇeśas* and *Tripurasundarī* in the centre. In reality, the total number of Gaṇeśa shrines is forty. There are more Gaṇeśas outside the town. One of the four guardian Gaṇeśas of the Kathmandu Valley, Surya Vināyaka Gaṇeśa is located two kilometres south of Bhaktapur and receives blood sacrifices after completion of musical apprenticeships. The shrine of the tutelary goddess of the Malla kings, Taleju is located inside the palace complex and does not appear in the *mandala* painting.\(^{16}\) (Fig. 2)

As my language skills in Nepali and Newari improved, my teacher of the nine *navabājā* drums, Hari Govinda Ranjitkar revealed his mythic world view by telling us the story of a tornado that he witnessed during his young days. In the Kathmandu Valley, the occurrence of a tornado is much rarer than earthquakes, perhaps once in a century. This one devastated a rectangular water reservoir on the southern slope of Cāṅgu Nārāyaṇa, breaking one of the walls

\(^{16}\) The Buddhist *mandala* of Bhaktapur includes Buddhist shrines, monasteries and *cībhāḥ* monuments but also the mother goddesses *Aṣṭamātṛkā* and Surya Vināyak Gaṇeśa. It is actualised by Buddhist processional music groups during the month of *gālā*, as explained in chapters 3.3 and 3.4.
and spilling the contents. In the early 1980s, this slope was reforested with pine trees that have grown into a fine plantation. The reservoir has been left untouched since the event that Hari Govinda related. One of the famous Licchavi period stone images in the temple courtyard of Cāṅgu Nārāyaṇa depicts Lord Viṣṇu sitting on his mount, the snake-devouring eagle Garuḍa.

In the Kathmandu Valley, traditional water sources are protected by Nāga snake gods, said to promote fertility and continuous flow of water. As everyone can see, a Nāga’s care does not extend to modern urban water systems. However, what Hari Govinda saw during that cataclysmic event was this: Not a black cloud covering the sky with the sun shining above but Garuḍa spreading his mighty wings, carrying on his back Lord Viṣṇu in all his glory. Having spotted the Nāga, Garuḍa pulled the angry snake (the tornado’s roaring funnel) up into the sky for his

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Fig. 2: Bhaktapur mandala showing in the outer rhomboid area the Aṣṭamātṛkā among trees, in the second area eight Bhairavas and Mahāsiddhas, in the third area eight Ganeśa-s with other gods, and in the triangular centre three Ganeśa-s and Tripurasundarī dancing with two goddesses. Next to the rivers lie cremation grounds with jackals looking for bones. The borders show the distant surroundings, left the Himalayan peaks north of Bhaktapur with Langtang (7234 m) and Shishapangma (8027 m), right the south view with Phulchowki hill (2791 m). (painted by Madhu Krishna Chitrakar in 1987 after an older prototype)
afternoon snack. Now without the Nāga’s protection, the water basin was devastated and ran dry. For the past eighty years, nobody has dared to repair it after divine interference with this frail human structure.

Thus it became clear to me that the old generation of Bhaktapur Newars perceived the world in a way dramatically different from my own. I probably would have seen something uncommonly dull, as the national weather report. Soon I realised that Hari Govinda’s magical view of the world was no exception. In fact, the entire local mythology had been superimposed over the landscape (urban and otherwise), and people were living happily in daily communion with their gods. As I was taught during drumming apprenticeships, the divine presence needs to be actualised during processions and town rituals with the help of musical invocations called dyah lhāygu. These compositions work like telephone numbers connecting the drummers’ minds with the divine energies residing in shrines, temples and other religious artefacts. Played in the proper context, dyah lhāygu invocations can open a portal to the realm of the gods. By tapping those divine energies, musicians are rewarded with inspiration. In fact, everybody is. During festivals, Newars tend to consume gallons of home made thvā (rice beer) and aylāh (spirit), ensuring a most generous flow of inspiration.

Caste prescribed not only the locality of your house but also what kind of daily work to pursue, whom to marry (ideally within the same caste), and exactly where to be cremated at the respective ghāt at the river banks. Crossing the social divide was unacceptable. Untouchable sweepers had to live outside the old town walls in small huts made of dried mud bricks and thatched with straw, whereas houses of other castes included three to four floors and burnt pvalā apā tiles as roofing. Almost every family owned a house—with the exception of most Jugi tailor-musicians who were allowed to occupy the upper floor of some public satah gate houses. In 1983 people lived at a caste-related distance to the Malla palace and their tutelary deity Taleju. High-caste ritual specialists and families of earlier courtiers lived close to the palace and Nāy butchers and other low castes at the periphery of the town. The Jyāpu farmers’ quarters occupied most of the space in between. They range in the middle of the caste hierarchy. (Map 3)

Besides spectacular temple squares, traditional architecture included hundreds of multi-pupose phalcā shelter buildings with a row of carved pillars on the front side, donated by local people for public use. Such multi-purpose shelters were dotted all over the town, frequently next to temples, most of them used by song groups singing for the gods during evening hours. Temple squares had dabū stone platforms used by music groups and also for the performance of masked dances. All musicians and dancers were males.

In 1983 there were one hundred and thirteen song groups performing on a daily basis in phalcā shelters. The three genres of devotional group singing included—starting with the oldest—sixty-three dāphā, one kvakhĩcā dhalcā, thirty-six dhalcā, and thirteen rās bhajan and gyānmālā bhajan groups. The imported genres dhalcā bhajan and rās bhajan are similar to popular North Indian genres of devotional group singing. A Buddhist version of rās bhajan,
gyānmālā bhajan was created in the 1940s at Svayambhū and initially banned by the Hindu ruler of Nepal, Juddha SJB Rana. Dhalcā groups play dhalak (dholak) as accompanying drum. Bhajan groups use tamal, bām (tablā, bāyām) and arven (harmonium). The much older genre dāphā is responsorial group singing with the accompaniment of lālākhī drums, cymbals and natural trumpets. At an age before television and with long gaps between radio broadcasts, music was a common evening occupation for the male Bhaktapurian and had an important function in promoting participation and socialization. Today (2021) this dense musical landscape is a matter of the past. With very few exceptions, most surviving groups perform only during festivals. As these are oral traditions, there is increasing danger that part of the repertoire will be forgotten or survive as impaired versions. In offering a notated version of almost all drumming repertoires of Bhaktapur as teaching and learning aid, this publication will hopefully help to prevent the loss of these musical traditions.

A survey carried out by my first field assistant Ganesh Man Basukala in 1983/84 identified over two hundred music and dance groups:
Navadurgā pyākhā (important cult and annual masked dance cycle performed by Gāthā gardeners)

30 dance groups (exact number and genres changing every year) performing during sāparu and Indra jātra festivals, including Bhaila pyākhā performed by potters, Mahākāli pyākhā, Rādhākṛṣṇa pyākhā and many other dance genres. The numerous ghētāgiśi stick dances preceding the cow effigies during sāpāru are not included. Their number varies every year.

23 dhimaybājā (processional drumming of farmers)

3 dhā̃bājā (processional drumming of farmers)

9 nāykhĩbājā (processional drumming of butchers)

2 kā̃bājā (processional playing of large natural trumpets)

3 Sāymi gūlābājā (Buddhist processional music of oilpressers)

3 Śākya and Vajrācārya gūlābājā (Buddhist processional music of gold- and silversmiths)

4 bā̃surikhalaḥ (transverse flute ensembles as part of dāphā and navadāphā groups)

9 Jugi groups (playing shawms, fipple flutes, tamva kettledrum and marriage band music)

5 Gā̃ne bards (singing songs with sāraṅgi fiddle accompaniment)

1 group of farmers singing ballads during sāparu

36 dhalcā bhajan

1 kvakhĩ dhalcā

13 bhajan (Hindu rās bhajan and Buddhist gyānmālā bhajan)

63 dāphā (song group with lālākhĩ drums, cymbals, natural trumpets)

6 navadāphā (dāphā plus additional ensemble of nine navabājā drums accompanied by Jugi shawm players)

In addition, there were three Buddhist vocal genres, tutah hymns, gvarā/gvārā songs with instrumental accompaniment, tantric cacā/caryā songs and—probably already extinct in Bhaktapur during the 1980s—tantric Buddhist dances, cacā pyākhā.20

With the exception of Jugi tailor-musicians, all other genres of Newar music took place without payment. In 1963, King Mahendra Shah issued the bhūmi sudhār act, a land reform with dramatic consequences for the entire Newar culture. The guṭhi land endowments donated to music groups by earlier sponsors were confiscated by the state—in exchange for the installation of ill-equipped guṭhi saṃsthān offices that were to look after temple maintenance and town rituals. Since then, musicians had to finance their own performances. This is one of the chief reasons for the rapid decline of the entire Newar musical culture.

Like every ancient Hindu city, Bhaktapur has a processional route, the pradakṣina. It meanders through Bhaktapur in a big loop, touching most of the important temples and shrines—with the exception of most of the Aṣṭamātrkā goddesses at the periphery of the town. It is along this route that most processions and dynamic aspects of town rituals proceed, invariably clockwise, sometimes in two to four hours, sometimes in the course of several days. As will be shown in the following chapters, this is where music and dance play a decisive role in consolidating Newar

20 cf. chapters 3.4, 3.5, 4, 11.14, 11.18, 11.19
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society and its values of participation and contribution. Circumambulation of a religious object in the proper manner is a way of showing respectful adoration, of leaving offerings and receiving blessings, a chance for accumulating merit and for seeing and being seen. (Map 4)

Niels Gutschow’s maps with local place names of Bhaktapur can be found in the appendix. Two detailed charts of the local calendar in relation to lunar phases, festivals and agricultural cycles can be found in Gutschow’s Stadtraum und Ritual der newarischen Städte im Kathmandu-Tal.21 Newari and Sanskrit terms are translated in the Glossary. Newari musical terms with translations are listed in the Dictionary.

21 Gutschow 1982, pp. 10–11
2 Apprenticeship and the Cult of Nāsaḥdyāḥ

The cult of the music god Nāsaḥdyāḥ and rituals connected with apprenticeship of music are outlined in earlier publications\(^1\). The Lord of Music and Dance is called with musical offerings *dyāḥláygu*\(^2\), as his blessings are needed for any music performance to succeed. The cult of the music god must be one of the oldest in the Kathmandu Valley. Every Newar settlement has at its centre a shrine of Nāsaḥdyāḥ. If a village is too small to have a Nāsaḥdyāḥ shrine, the oldest drum serves as a portable shrine. The god is believed to reside in drums. Each of the Bhaktapur's twenty-four shrines of Nāsaḥdyāḥ is paired with a smaller shrine of his destructive aspect, Haimādyāḥ. (Figs. 3–9)

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\(^1\) Ellingson 1990, Wegner 1986 and 1992b

\(^2\) lit. 'calling the god'

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*Fig. 3:* Shrine of Thāthu Nāsaḥdyāḥ with Nāṣah *pvaḥ* hole in the central brass plate, signifying the flight lane of the Lord of Music and Dance, that passes in a linear progression of divine energy (cf. Wegner 1992b) through the shrine and adjacent buildings. During rituals, offerings are given to Nāṣahdyāḥ, Haimādyāḥ (at his shrine around the corner and his flight lane crossing that of the Nāṣah shrine at an angle of 90°), Gaṇeš, Kumār (both depicted on the brass plate), Betāḥ (central stone figure between two guardian lions), two Khicā dogs holding human limbs and to the invisible divine attendants Nandi and Bhrṛgi (located left and right on the brick wall). This is where most music students of the upper town are initiated into the cult of Nāṣahdyāḥ that includes blood sacrifices at the shrine. Years after I took this photo in 1984, a crude woodcarving was added above, depicting Śiva as Nṛtyanāth. Of South Indian origin, Nṛtyanāth is now popularly identified with Nāṣahdyāḥ.
Some of these shrines are more important than others. They attract music groups from larger areas. For example, most music apprentices from the entire lower town visit the shrines of Nāṣahmanā Nāṣah (also called Mū Nāṣah) and Haimā. The realms of influence of the main Nāṣah shrines point to Bhaktapur’s early history when the town grew from a cluster of ancient villages, each with their own Nāṣah shrine.³ (Fig. 5, Map 5)

Every shrine has empty holes signifying a flight lane of the music god. Such flight lanes pass through a series of characteristic holes in brick walls of several adjacent buildings. The flow of divine energy must not be blocked. This concept of a linear progression of divine energy is not known in India. It appears to be an ancient concept in Nepal and Tibet. Almost all flight lanes proceed horizontally. The only exception is Kabilās Nāṣah located in the pavement of the palace

³ cf. map 5
2 Apprenticeship and the Cult of Nāśāhdyaḥ

Fig. 5: Mū Nāsah of the lower town at Nāsahmanā

Map 5: Areas of the main Nāsah shrines of Bhaktapur (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)
square. Its flight lane points vertically into the sky and is known to connect with the cave of Kabilās Nāsah near Nuvakot, two days walk northwest of the Kathmandu Valley (Map 6). Newar music groups from Bhaktapur and Kathmandu organise pilgrimages to carry out blood sacrifices at the cave and have a picnic on the plateau above. In March 1984 I was invited by farmers of Yātā to join such a pilgrimage of their dāphā group and play dhimay during the Nāsah pūjā. Whilst the men were busy with their Nāsah ritual at the cave, the women went a little further down to another cave that was the seat of the goddess Sasudyaḥ, the local name for Sarasvatī. Having arranged their weaving shuttles and offerings, they performed a pūjā for the goddess, asking their work at the loom to be blessed. According to local belief, Kathmandu’s oldest Nāsahdyah at Golkupakha (ward no. 29) came from Kabilās.

The local folk story of Kabilās Nāsah’s flight from Bhaktapur to Nuvakot refers to the Mahābhārata epic. Prince Bhīmsen was known for his exceptional physical strength and fitness that came along with a certain lack of intellectual refinement. It occurred to him that he wanted to learn singing. So he approached Nāsahdyah and asked him to be taught. The music god invested much time and effort in training this powerful student, but to marginal effect. In learning music, a modicum of intelligence is essential. When this is absent, discipline alone cannot replace it.
Bhīmsen used to practise singing during lonely walks in the fields. He met a farmer who told him that he had been attracted by Bhīmsen’s voice as he had mistaken it for the bleating of his missing sheep. Bhīmsen did not like this. He thought highly of his voice and blamed his teacher. His warrior blood boiled and he wanted to kill Nāsaḥdyah. The god knew what was coming and preferred to withdraw to a mountain cave at Kabilās where only his devotees can reach him.
Fig. 8: Haimādyah in Kvāthādau, related to Thāthu Nāsah around the corner in Tacapāḥ

Fig. 9: Nāsahpvaḥ (left) with embossed brass plate in the wall of the Navadurgā ḍṛṣṭaḥḍa in Gaḥchē and Haimāpvaḥ (right) in a garden wall in Yāchē
To start a drumming apprenticeship, would-be students of a neighbourhood approach the most prominent drummer of their choice. They address him as ‘Guruju’ and observe a respectful attitude towards him\(^4\). For example, during ritual feasts, he occupies a seat of honour and is offered the cooked head and tail portion of the sacrificial animal\(^5\). Apprentices are expected to ask him for permission before touching their food. The teacher instructs the students to prepare a clean room\(^6\) with a \(\text{gvākhã}\) wall niche for keeping the music gods. In the case of \(\text{navadāphā}\) and a few other initially well-bestowed groups, a special \(\text{dāphāchẽ}\) building serves for keeping musical instruments and for instructing apprentices. In all other cases, a room in a private home is designated as a teaching and practice room for the duration of the apprenticeship. No outsider is allowed access to this room after the gods have occupied their wall niche. The niche is covered with a piece of cloth protecting the gods from the eyes of possible intruders. Students worship the gods twice a day and practise in their presence. The teacher arrives every evening to check their progress. New lessons are only taught during auspicious weekdays, Thursday (assigned to Nāsaḥdyaḥ), Saturday (Nārāyaṇa), Sunday (Surya) and Tuesday (Gaṇeśa).

Music apprenticeships begin on a Thursday and are structured by the following rituals:

1. \(\text{Nāsaḥ sāle pūjā}\) (transferring and installing the music god in the practice room),
2. several \(\text{khêtlu pūjā}\) (starting a new drum and/or a new major composition),
3. \(\text{hane pūjā}\) (before practising with accompanying instruments),
4. \(\text{pirāne pūjā}\) (coming-out ritual with major blood sacrifice and procession presenting new drummers to the neighbourhood), and
5. \(\text{carthi pūjā}\) (sacrifice and picnic at Ināre\(^7\), asking the guardian Gaṇeśa for blessing)

If anything goes wrong, this should be amended with a \(\text{chemā pūjā}\) (asking for forgiveness). When displeased, Nāsaḥdyaḥ does not hesitate to unleash his wrath, causing doom and disaster. Fortunately, in Newar culture there is a solution for everything. A \(\text{chemā pūjā}\) at the Nāsaḥ shrine with a modest offering of eggs and other items suffices to soothe the raging god and bring back his blissful aspect. To illustrate the reliability of this proven method, my teachers gave the following examples:

Five boys were in the middle of their flute apprenticeship when one of them lost his mother. That caused his ritual impurity for a year and prevented him from partaking in the \(\text{pirāne pūjā}\). As a result, he fell ill. The astrologer recommended a \(\text{chemā pūjā}\) for Nāsaḥdyah. When this was done, the boy recovered.

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\(^4\) This is in no way comparable to the quasi-religious adoration that a guru enjoys and promotes in the context of Indian classical music.
\(^5\) If you happen to be the teacher and don’t want to eat those grizzly bits, hand them over to the person next to you who will be absolutely delighted. This is how it is done: Accept head and tail with your LEFT hand, pretend to admire the smell with joyous approval, before getting rid of them in a charming manner.
\(^6\) ‘Clean’ means, the floor is washed with a mixture of cow dung and water, then dried before arranging straw mats to sit on. These \(\text{sukhû}\) straw mats provide a habitat for a jumping and biting gang of \(\text{kusi}\) (Pulex irritans), with their number increasing until the end of the apprenticeship.
\(^7\) Surya Vināyak Gaṇeśa south of Bhaktapur
The Sāymi oilpressers of Gvahmādhi started an apprenticeship of Buddhist processional gālabājā music. Soon it became evident that the candidates were unable to learn the compositions. After a year of abysmal suffering, the teachers gave up, deciding to perform pirāne pūjā at midnight, so that nobody would witness the deficient performance. Nāsaḥdyaḥ did witness the rotten music and took offence. The anxious oil pressers immediately arranged for an elaborate chemā pūjā and managed to reconcile the god before disaster struck.

As a rare feat, Hari Govinda Ranjitkar succeeded in stealing four cocks in one go for his pirāne pūjā. A jealous neighbour\textsuperscript{8} watched him and proceeded to blackmail him. Soon after this incident, the nasty neighbour fell seriously ill. For two years he wasted away until his bones were shining through his skin. An astrologer revealed the cause and advised to pacify Nāsaḥdyāḥ, protector of drummers and chicken thieves, with a chemā pūjā. The patient recovered.

Nāsaḥdyāḥ is known to favour students who commit petty theft as a test of courage. Stealing sacrificial animals makes better drummers, for sure. That is what gurujuš tell their students with a wink. Timid faint-hearts are advised to grab a cauliflower. (Fig. 10)

Obviously, a certain dose of playful mischievousness is a necessary ingredient in a growing musician, if it comes together with the ability to practise until the respective problem is solved. The time for stealing sacrificial animals is Wednesday evening, as the sacrifice has to happen on Nāsaḥdyāḥ’s day, Thursday. It does not take much courage to pinch a chicken. Stealing a male goat requires advanced skills, shrewdness, creativity, nimble legs, tolerance to the animal’s rich body odour, and Nāsaḥdyāḥ’s divine assistance. Before approaching the animal of his choice\textsuperscript{9}, the student picks up a few leftover rice grains from a recent ritual at the Nāsaḥ shrine. Charged with the god’s magic, these grains have to touch the animal’s head, ensuring that it remains calm during the procedure and does not give away Nāsaḥdyāḥ’s devotee to its keepers. They would certainly not be amused. From first-hand experience I can testify that the charm works beautifully with most animals kept in Bhaktapur. Only ducks are immune to the spell. They become agitated, making quacking alarm noises. Stay clear of ducks, is my advice. (Figs. 11–13)

\textsuperscript{8} In Bhaktapur everybody appears to have jealous neighbours who can get absolutely vicious at times.

\textsuperscript{9} Sacrificial goats should be completely white or completely black. No cheating with shoe polish, please!
Fig. 11: Sujaman Banmala demonstrates the method of stealing a chicken for Nāsaḥdyah in four steps. Step 1: Collect sacrificial grains at the Nāsaḥdyah shrine.

Fig. 12: Step 2: After sprinkling the grains on the chicken, grab it.

Fig. 13: Steps 3 and 4: Stow away the chicken and go home, as if in deep and pleasant thought.
Apprenticeship rituals always address both qualities of Nāsaḥdyah, the creative, inspiring aspect and the destructive force that causes mistakes in music. These opposed qualities are represented not only by the pair of related shrines of Nāsaḥdyah and Haimādyah but also by the two drum-heads, the higher sounding one (Nāsaḥ) and the lower sounding one (Haimā). Only in the case of the pair of the kettledrum nagārā, the lower sounding drum is called Mā̃kaḥ—in accordance with the terms used in Kathmandu and Patan. Consequently, the system for keeping Newar drums demands that drums standing on the floor or hanging from a wall hook must show the Nāsaḥ head and conceal the Haimā head. This is strictly observed and believed to create a beneficial aura for humans to live in.

Usually, apprenticeship rituals at the shrine of Nāsaḥdyah are carried out by the teacher who purifies and decorates the shrine with prescribed offerings, before addressing the god with prayer, supervising the sacrifice and further proceedings. Every Nāsaḥ pūjā is preceded by offerings

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10 This could refer to Mahākāla Bhairava.
11 When I became a teacher of dhimay, it was expected that I learned all those tantric ritual skills to initiate my students in the proper manner.
at the local Gaṇeśa shrine and to Kumār residing in a carved stone inserted in the pavement in front of every Newar house entrance. (Map 7)

A Nāsaḥ pūjā always includes a smaller pūjā for Haimādyaḥ whose shrine is found in the vicinity of the Nāsaḥ shrine. Nāsaḥdyaḥ receives the blood of male sacrificial animals. Haimādyaḥ prefers young female chickens.

Before the proceedings start, the lady of the house with the practice room is asked to prepare four large plates with offerings for the gods. She purifies the floor where the plates are arranged to receive the following offerings:

- **nīnā**  
  ritually clean, untouched water,

- **tulbālā**  
  scarlet cloth to be shredded into strips that are tied around participants' necks,

- **svā**  
  flowers,

- **svāmā**  
  flower garlands,

- **abīr**  
  red powder,

- **bhvisinhāḥ**  
  orange powder,

- **gvaḥjā**  
  fried beaten rice mixed with water and shaped into six cones,

- **janakvakhā**  
  cotton threads,

- **kīga**  
  husked rice,

- **tecvaḥ**  
  raw barley,

- **baji**  
  toasted beaten rice,

- **musyā**  
  fried soya beans,

- **māri**  
  flat bread,

- **lābhā**  
  garlic pods,

- **pālu**  
  peeled pieces of ginger root,

- **nā**  
  dried fish,

- **nyā**  
  distilled liquor or rice beer,

- **khē**  
  raw eggs,

- **phalphul**  
  fruit,

- **ita**  
  cotton wicks,

- **dhupā̃y**  
  incense powder in curled paper rolls,

- **dhũ**  
  incense sticks,

- **sukunda**  
  ritual brass oil lamp filled with

- **tā cikā**  
  mustard oil, and

- **salicā**  
  tiny clay cup for catching soot.

Only for a Nāsaḥ sāle pūjā the necessary items include two kisali, small clay cups filled with husked rice with an areca nut on top and a coin sticking out of the grains. If available, there should also be white dhvaphaḥsvā and incense. The Nāsaḥ sāle pūjā serves to entice both, Nāsaḥdyaḥ and Haimādyaḥ into the areca nuts where they reside for the duration of the apprenticeship. The gods are kept in the wall niche to encourage the students who direct their prayers at them.

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12 Jasminum officinale, white jasmine blossoms with seven to eight petals
During the final *pirānē pājā* they are brought back to their shrines and released from the nuts. Showing respect for the music god, those carrying the offerings must walk barefoot, ignore the inescapable layer of muck and phlegm coating the brick pavement and keep their balance whilst walking and sliding along.\(^1\)

When the small procession arrives at the Nāsah shrine, teacher and students circumambulate it clockwise, showing respect to the god and at the same time absorb some of the spiritual energy emanating from the shrine. The teacher purifies the altar with water, decorates it with flowers and places the *tulbāḷā* cloth above the brass plate with the Nāsah hole. Out of respect for Nāsahdyaḥ and the god’s flight lane that must not be blocked, he does not stand exactly in front of the flight hole but tries to keep his body a little aside. He proceeds by smearing red and orange powder on all the places where members of Nāsahdyaḥ’s entourage are depicted or known to be. They also receive one rice dough cone and one *janakvakhā* cotton thread each. The two *kisalī* clay cups with rice grains and betelnut, coins and all edible items including raw eggs are placed on the altar below the Nāsah hole.

If there are funds for a more elaborate tantric ritual, a ritual specialist called Ācāju (Karmācārya) of the Paṅcatathariya caste is called to carry out the ritual in a grand, professional manner. Having purified the shrine with water and after an initial prayer, the Ācāju proceeds to paint several magic diagrams on the altar with rice flour. Three among them (nos. 1, 4, 5) include overlapping triangles with a *bindu* seed in the centre, symbolising male and female energies in creative union. Several diagrams (nos. 1, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15) include one or several *kvaye* flames in different sizes that look like the number 6. In a special basket, the Ācāju brings twenty-two small figures shaped as *gvaḥjā* cones and mounds. Consisting of beaten rice and water, they are decorated with red *bhvisinhāḥ* powder and black fried soya beans *musyā* inserted as eyes. These and other objects are placed on top of the diagrams. The Ācāju decorates the shrine, offers flowers, incense, water, *thvā* rice beer, *aylā* liquor, edibles including raw eggs that are perforated with a match and all the other paraphernalia listed above. He applies series of magic *mudra* gestures, whilst reciting chains of magic *mantra* syllables. Thus he invokes Nāsahdyaḥ, Ganeś, Kumār, Betāl and the Navadurgā. Finally he rings a bell suspended at the side of the shrine, to actualise the benevolent divine energies for success of this rite of passage. (Figs. 14, 15)

**Detailed meaning of the diagrams and of offerings arranged on them**

1. Nāsahdyaḥ in union with his Śaktī
2. Ganeśa: a *gvaḥjā* cone made of beaten rice and water placed on top
3. Kumār: a *gvaḥjā* cone in the shape of the diagram placed on top
4. Betāl
5. *baukuṇḍā*: a clay cup filled with a mound of beaten rice paste decorated with fried soya beans. This is Nāsahdyaḥ *yā mhutu*, ‘Nāsahdyaḥ’s mouth’.
6. *pātra*: rice beer or spirit
7. *kalas maṇḍap*: dry fish and water

\(^1\) Regular town cleaning started only in 1989
With its lavish preparation, intense observation of every minute detail, and only half-revealed procedures involving all senses, this elaborate ritual becomes a special focusing tool for approaching the gods in the proven manner. The aim is, to bring about a divine response that can be felt at a deeper level in our human existence. If performed correctly, the ritual opens a portal between the world of humans and the realm of the gods. It remains open for the initiated musician as a
potential means of addressing the gods with the help of musical invocations. In the context of Newar culture, music can be a powerful tool of communication and union, reaching out beyond the limited world of human affairs to access Nāsaḥdyāḥ's magical bliss, the wondrous source of artistic inspiration.

During the *pirāne pūjā*, the Ācāju or in his absence, the Guruju blocks the central *Nāsaḥpvah* flight hole in the metal plate with an edible *dhaubāji* paste\(^\text{14}\), to ensure that the god does not drift away. The face of Nāsaḥdyāḥ is applied on the paste with red powder and three tiny silver eyes, indicating the divine presence\(^\text{15}\) during the following blood sacrifice. (Fig. 16)

A blunt knife of impressive dimensions is also carried to the Nāsaḥ shrine, along with the sacrificial animals. The blade is purified and decorated with red and orange powder, flowers and rice grains. Sacrificial animals are asked for their consent to be sacrificed. Sudden shaking of the hair (goat) or the head (chicken) is said to signal agreement, as it matches the South Asian human gesture of letting one's head dance in eager approval. To make the omen work, water is sprinkled on the head or splashed against the belly of the goat. This helps to release the desired effect. Goats and chickens dislike being wet and shake the water off. If they only knew what fatal chain of events that movement triggers, their reaction would be more cautious. Nāsaḥdyāḥ appears to tolerate cheating. Immediately after the head is cut off, the gushing blood is sprinkled over the

\(^{14}\) a sticky mixture of yoghurt and beaten rice

\(^{15}\) Ācāju's father identified this painted face as Bhairava's. Perhaps he was referring to the only Nāsaḥdyāḥ that is part of a Bhairava temple, on the groundfloor front of the Taumādhi Bhairavnāth temple.
Fig. 16: Dhaubāji paste with the god’s face (red powder mark and three silver eyes inserted), blocking the Nāṣaḥpvaḥ passage during my first pirāne pūjā, 23/3/1984
brass plate with the Nāsah hole and over all members of Nāsahdyah’s entourage. The severed head of the sacrificial animal is placed on the altar. Two lit oil wicks are placed on the head. Black soot is caught in an upturned salīcā clay bowl. (Fig. 17)

If stray dogs are present and happen to bark during the proceedings, this is considered a very good omen for Nāsahdyah’s acceptance and support. (Fig. 18)

The body is carried around the shrine, then gutted and the intestine cleaned and blown up to a snake-shaped balloon. This is draped around the brass plate as an adorning offering. Tiny strips of skin from the neck portion—in case of chicken, with feathers—are cut off and offered to Nāsahdyah and his entourage. A few of these skin strips are taken home to be stuck above the entrance of the house in a respectful gesture towards the house gods. (Figs. 19, 20)
Fig. 19: The goat intestine is blown up as an offering to Nāsaḥdyah. Strips of chicken skin are stuck like a crown to the head of the snake-eating demon Chepah (Kirtimukha), 23/3/1984
Fig. 20: Nāsaḥdyāḥ in union with his Śaktī as cosmic creative energy (painting by Madhu Krishna Chitrakar)
Before students play what they have learnt as an offering to Nāsaḥdyah, the teacher lifts the covered drums a few inches off the ground for each student to offer a coin, flower petals and husked rice to the music god residing in every drum and touch the drum with his forehead. The teacher then places the drum on the student’s lap. (Figs. 21, 22)

In response, the students offer prayer and a small gift to the teacher, usually a Nepali cap and a coin. After this, all the students play their lessons together, starting with the musical offering dyahlhäyg. If a student feels blocked by stage fright, he may throw a raw egg at the brass plate. As its contents spill over the already messy shrine, the inhibition dissolves, enabling the student to play their repertoire with confidence. When the music is finished, the edible paste with Nāsaḥdyah’s face is plucked off and distributed as edible divine blessing (prasād) among all participants who
consume it with joy, as this is the first food they are allowed to eat on a pūjā day. At the end of
the ritual every participant receives a red bhvisinhāh mark on the forehead and a vertical line of
black soot drawn with a match above the tikā. The black mvahani line signifies participation in
a blood sacrifice.

Students and teacher are honoured by students’ relatives who offer new caps, tie white betāli
turbans around their heads, sprinkle red powder over them, apply orange tika marks, a dab of
yoghurt at the right temple16 and rub red powder on the cheeks, rounding off the total effect with
flowers. As a reward for his teaching efforts, the teacher receives a cap and a matching set of

16 in case of females, on the left temple
shirt and trousers, nā and survāh. A preliminary samaybaji meal consists of beaten rice, a potato dish, raw garlic and ginger, toasted soy beans, fried buffalo meat, the half-done portion of goat’s neck, washed down with several cups of rice beer.

17 consisting of beaten rice, a potato dish, raw garlic and ginger, toasted soy beans, fried buffalo meat, the half-done portion of goat’s neck, washed down with several cups of rice beer

18 Flowers serve as a vehicle for divine blessing that is transmitted by touching the devotee’s head

During the procession home, elated students present themselves to the public as fresh drummers, filled with a sense of accomplishment. The entire neighbourhood takes interest in the new drummers and people comment on their playing. (Fig. 24)

On arrival at the practice house, water is splashed on the lintel of the entrance, red powder smeared and a strip of feathery chicken skin stuck to it as an offering to the house gods. In the practice room, the teacher puts Nāṣāḥdyah’s blessings in form of flower petals on everyone’s head. Students receive the blessing with the respectful expression “Bagya ti, Guruju!” A grand bhvē feast is prepared and consumed. At the end, the students escort the teacher home with a drum procession, honouring him by playing the sacred dyahlhāygu invocation in front of his house.

On the following Saturday, teacher, students and helpers carrying cooking vessels and food-stuff for a grand picnic proceed to Surya Vināyak Gaṇeṣa to thank the god with a carthi pūjā that
includes a blood sacrifice. The shrine lies at a forested ridge two kilometers south of Bhaktapur, a famous picnic spot. At the end of February rhododendron trees on top of the ridge begin to bloom. Youths collect these glowing red *taku svā̃* flowers to present them to their girlfriends who tie them to their hair knot. At the start of the procession, teacher and students play *dyahlhāygu* for Nāsahdyah, before proceeding with processional drum patterns. The next *dyahlhāygu* is played at the destination, as an offering to Gaṇeśa. Only on the way back home, other gods receive a short version of *dyahlhāygu*. This includes, among others, a sacred tree that is circumambulated and the local Hanumante river, as it is perceived as flowing from Lord Śiva 's head. Bhaktapur's Hanumante is a minor tributary to the holy river Gangā, the source of fertility to the plains of North India.

The teacher's involvement does not end here. In case of processional drumming apprenticeships, he continues to lead the new group for at least a year, playing either the lead drum or a pair of *bhuchyāḥ* cymbals. During processions he teaches the students how to read the townscape of old Bhaktapur as a musical score, selecting and adjusting the musical patterns according to the locality. Every drummer needs to identify all the gods on the way and play musical invocations, in order to open the portal to the spiritual power inherent in those shrines. Whilst passing the shrines in the prescribed manner, either a short version of *dyahlhāygu* is woven into the ongoing processional patterns, or the procession stops in front of the most important gods to salute them with the complete *dyahlhāygu*. Playing such musical invocations for the gods can be compared to dialing a complex telephone number. If you play/dial correctly, the connection with the source of inspiration is established and the music reaches another quality. It is *THIS* that musical processes aim at, both in tantric Hindu and tantric Buddhist contexts: Inspired music and dance can reveal that our true nature is cosmic creative energy.

*Navabājā* drummer are initiated along similar lines, with blood sacrifices to be carried out with each of the nine drums that are taken up. Ideally, the student learns the complete set of compositions for the first drum, *dhā̃*, before proceeding to the next instrument, *kvatāḥ*, and so on, until at last the *nagarā* repertoire is taught as a set. The final stage of the apprenticeship includes at least a week of practicing with all accompanying instruments, cymbals, natural trumpets, shawms and fipple flutes. Learning all seventy-five *navabājā* compositions by heart with the help of drumming syllables requires not only assiduous practice, a good memory and the blessings of the music god, but also the means to cover all expenses for rituals, feasts and making or repair of instruments. It takes more than a year to complete the *navabājā* apprenticeship. To minimise costs, *navadāphā* groups tend to teach students in a group, with each student learning only one or two drums. Nowadays there is a tendency to reduce the repertoire of each drum to one or two compositions, usually the easier and more popular ones. This practice causes other compositions to be forgotten. Students of *navabājā* learn during performances how to adjust the drum compositions to the shawm melodies. Students of *lālākhĩ* learn how to adjust the drum accompaniment to the different length of *dāphā* songs.

In October 1984 my *dhimay* drumming friends and I were invited to lead an extremely rare event, a Nāsah *pūjā* procession with ritual offerings at every single Nāsah shrine of Bhaktapur.

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19 *Navabājā* is an ensemble of nine different drums accompanied with cymbals, shawms, fipple flutes and natural trumpets, cf. chapters 5.3 and 6.
A few other gods on the way (Byāśi Gaṇeś, Mahākāli, Bhīmsen, Vatsala) were included. This was organised by farmer families of Byāśi, with over five hundred participants. It took the whole day and ended with a grand feast. The old processional route for this comprehensive Nāsaḥ pūjā had been documented for a Naṭeśvar pūjā in 1894. Ninety years later this route had been blocked in places by urban growth. A sacred route cannot be changed. We had to climb ladders and planks leaning against those brick walls, sheds, and other obstacles. As far as I know, this was the only procession of its kind until today. (Map 8)
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 mandala, the spiritual townscape, by means of playing musical invocations. In this way, being part of this mandala 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 biskāh, 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 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,

2 April the 9th or 10th
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)
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, dyah svagā biyegu on the 4th of Vaiśākh. During the festival all the gods leave their dyahchẽ 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 Bhadrakāli 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 pith for dyah svagā 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 pradakṣinā that extends on this occasion to some extra loops, as not a single god should miss the musical and other offerings. Dyahlhāygu is played in front of every shrine and svagā offerings put to actualise the blessings of all the gods and goddesses for the coming year.

Gods receiving tāhā dyahlhāygu during a dhimay procession on the day of dyah svagā biyegu

(Starting from my home, see map 9 below)

Nāsāḥdyāḥ, Bālkumārī, Salā Gaṇedyaḥ, Bhailadyaḥ, Kutipvakā Gaṇedyaḥ murti, Kutipvakā Gaṇedyaḥ degaḥ, Kamalvināyak Gaṇedyaḥ, Navadurgā, Bhailadyaḥ, Nārāyandyah, Gaṇedyaḥ, Sujamādhī Nāsahdyāḥ, Vākupati Nārāyandyah, Brahmayāṇī dyahchẽ, Talātūchi
3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

Ganedyaḥ, Mahcvaḥ Bhailadyaḥ (Seto Bhairav), Brahmayānī murti and Dattātreya (one invocation for both), Tacapāḥ Bhisīdyaḥ, Inācvaḥ Nāsahdyah, Maheśvarī murti, Cvarcā Ganedyaḥ, Jhaurvahī Dipākārā (Gvahmādhī Ajājudyaḥ), Gvahmādhī Ganedyaḥ, Sukuldha-vakā Bhisīdyaḥ, Tripurasundarī, Dahi Vināyak, Durupadyāḥ (Pārvatī), Kvachē Nāsahdyah, Kumbārī, Bhailadyaḥ, Nārāyandyaḥ, Gāhhitī Bhailadyaḥ (Sabhūgah Bhailadyaḥ), Kāsi Viśvanāth, Lākulācē Ganedyaḥ, Ināre Ganedyaḥ (Suryavināyak Ganedyaḥ), Bvulucā Bhailadyaḥ (Sveta Bhairav), Gorakhnāth, Jyathā Gaņeṣ, Ganeṣ, Nāsahmana Haimādyah, Nāsahmana Nāsahdyah, Maṅgalācē Ganedyaḥ, Manakāmanā, Ganedyaḥ, Bārāhī dyahchē, Cvānā Ganedyaḥ, Phaitvakā Ganedyaḥ, Itācē Ganedyaḥ, Lokeśvar, Indrayānī, Kabilās Nāsahdyah, Taleju, several gods including Ganedyaḥ in one go, Bālākhu Ganedyaḥ pith, Bālākhu Ganedyaḥ mūrti, Cvachē Nāsahdyah, Chumā Ganedyaḥ, several gods including Tuchimalā Bagavatī, Mahākālī dyahchē and pith, Mahākālī mūrti, Yācē Ganedyaḥ, Haimāpvaḥ, Nāga, Sasudyaḥ and Mahādev in one go, Mahālākṣmī, Bhailadyaḥ, and Nāsahdyah.

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

The basic routine with gods carried along the pradaksinā 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, dhābājā, and in special cases nāykhībājā. Instrumental processional ensembles with melody instruments could be transverse flutes with dhalak or pachimā drum accompaniment (bāsurīkhalaḥ), or mixed ensembles with transverse flutes, harmoniums, and violins with magaḥkhī 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 phvā vānegu, a water-begging procession can help. Boys from farming families walk along the pradaksinā with pots and pans, shouting ‘Hara Hara Mahādyah, vā vāye dyah!’—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!’
did appeal to the absent-minded god[^5]. Monsoon broke two days later and the harvest was saved. (Fig. 27)

The day of *gathā̃mugaḥ carhe* derived its name from *gathā̃mugaḥ* 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. *Dhā̃bājā* drummers have their turn to create the mood and accompany the rapid *gathā̃mugaḥ* 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 Svayambhū *purāṇa* from the second half of the fourteenth century, mentions Buddhist groups from Kathmandu, visiting Svayambhūnāth every morning during the Buddhist processional month of *gūlā* (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 *gūlābājā* groups.

[^5]: *Indra* is responsible for rain but addressing Mahādyah (Lord Śiva) helps even better.
[^6]: I collected over ninety samples in one hour, definitely hardcore and unfit for publication
organised by Sāymi oilpressers of Bhaktapur and two oilpresser groups of Banepa\textsuperscript{7}. Buddhist Vajrācarya priests and Śākya gold- and silversmiths organise a different kind of gūlābājā with drums accompanied with Western trumpets and clarinets played by Jugi tailor-musicians. The aim of Buddhist gūlābājā 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\textsuperscript{8}. Invocations for Nāsaḥdyaḥ are played at the beginning and end of every procession. For example, cow processions with ghētāgiśi stick dances during the sāpāru festival\textsuperscript{9} on the day after Śrāvaṇ fullmoon proceed exactly along the pradakṣiṇā. To remember the dead and lead them to heaven, tāhāsā̃ cow effigies are carried around, with stick dances performed in front along the way.\textsuperscript{10} (Fig. 29)

\textsuperscript{7} also Patan gūlābājā includes horns and drums
\textsuperscript{8} cf. chapter 1.
\textsuperscript{9} in Nepali gājātrā
\textsuperscript{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 tāhāsā straw cow leading the final group of cow effigies along the pradakṣinā (photo courtesy of Bikas Rauniyar)
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 people's 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), Salā Ganeś (3rd day), Chumā Ganeś (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 10: Sāpāru procession of Bhairava as tāhāsā straw cow along the pradakṣinā, with three extra rounds in each of the numbered squares (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)
Map 11: Processions of Indrāyanī (1st day), Salā Ganeś (3rd day), Chumā Ganeś (4th day) and Akāś Bhairav (5th day) during Indra jātrā (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

Fig. 32: Kajilal Shahi (nāykhĩ) and colleagues playing nāykhĩbājā in front of a painting of Ākāś Bhairav, 1985
of Chumā Ganeś, 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 nāykhībājā 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). Brahmāyaṇī (no. 1) is visited again on dasami (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)

Map 13: Navarāt processions to the Aṣṭamātrkā shrines with all dyahāygu invocations played whilst returning, shown as small circles (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)
ends on Mahānavami with processions to Tripurasundarī (no. 9), in the centre of the Bhaktapur mandala. 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\textsuperscript{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\textsuperscript{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 dyāḥlhāygu-s for all the gods along the pradakṣinā, actualising the complete Bhaktapur mandala. (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, dyāḥlhāygu. 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\textsuperscript{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 ghāṭ 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.

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

During the full moon night of Phālgun (February/March), a fertility ritual starts at the Bhīmsen temple bordering Dattātreya square, using only a section of the _pradakṣinā_ to move on to Brahṃayanī _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. 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 Brahṃayanī _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 Brahṃayanī _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.
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.
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\(^\text{15}\). (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\(^\text{16}\).

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.

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\(^{15}\) cf. Wegner 1988

\(^{16}\) cf. Preface in Wegner 1988, where a method for neutralising the black magic of *sībājā* is explained
3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

Sībājā sequence in relation to locality

(death processions depicted in map 14 below)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pattern</th>
<th>Destination: Cupī ghāṭ</th>
<th>Destination: Brahmāyanī ghāṭ</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>from the house to Cvachẽ chvāsa (major street crossing)</td>
<td>from the house up to Dattātreya chvāsa (major street crossing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>up to Sukul dhvakā chvāsa (major street crossing)</td>
<td>up to Sūjamādhī chvāsa (major street crossing)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>up to Kvāchē chvāsa (major street crossing)</td>
<td>up to the foundation stones of Bhaktapur’s ancient town gate (old town ends here)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>up to Calāku chvāsa (major street crossing)</td>
<td>up to Khyāḥ pvukhu (pond for bottom-wash after obeying nature’s call)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>up to Durgā pīṭh</td>
<td>up to Dyaḥ Ilācā Gaṇeṣ pīṭh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>up to lane leading to Bhadrakālī pīṭh</td>
<td>up to Brahmāyaṇī khyah, burying site for infants (mimapvumā mācā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>passing this road crossing</td>
<td>up to path leading down to river bank (Brahmāyaṇī ghāṭ kvahā vānegu lācā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>up to sītātpvucā bridge</td>
<td>crossing Brahmāyaṇī bridge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>up to the path leading down to the funeral site. The nāykhĩbājā group and the women stop at the southeast corner of the pīṭh.</td>
<td>up to Brahmāyaṇī pīṭh. The nāykhĩbājā group and the women stop at the southeast corner of the pīṭh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>The eldest son lights the cremation pyre by putting the straw torch at the head of the corpse.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>The music stops. The relatives wait at the phalcā. A few sīguthī members watch the body turn into ashes that are thrown into the river. It is a tributary of the holy Ganges.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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. The ensemble combines cylindrical *dhimay* drums of the South Asian *dhol* type with two different pairs of cymbals. In 1986 I wrote, ‘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

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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 Mūlāchē, Bhaktapur 1984
3.1 Dhimaybājā

Fig. 38: Yāchē dhimaybājā with sichyāh-player (r.) checking the windows for girls, 1992
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.\textsuperscript{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 dyahlhāygu 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\textsuperscript{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

\textsuperscript{19} cf. Wegner 1986, p. 29
\textsuperscript{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 Yāchē 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,
3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

Map 16: Dhimaybājā groups with shrines of Ganeśa 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)
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)
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 Nāsah 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:

![Image of dholka head](image1)

\[tā, \, tī, \, nā, \, nā, \, re, \, lī\]

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 cikā (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, ghē 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:

![Image of dholka head](image2)

\[ghē, \, ghū, \, jhī, \, kā\]

\(^{21}\) For a detailed documentation of masalā preparation and application see chapter 6.12
Stroke combination:

dhā = tā + ghē

A special effect is achieved by first playing tā, then a resonant ghē. 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 ghē 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 zichyāḥ play a similar pattern, bhuchyāḥ in slow speed and zichyāḥ in double tempo. The strongest accent is on the first stroke (Fig. 45).

Fig. 45: Processional dhimay (DH.) pattern nyāḥ with bhuchyāḥ (BH.) and zichyāḥ (SL.) accompaniment above

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[22] see chapter 7.4
All Bhaktapur dhimay groups use this combination with bhuchyaḥ and sichyaḥ. 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 Casukhyah 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 bhuchyaḥ and two pairs of sichyaḥ. 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:
3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

1. *Dyahhlhāygu*. The long invocation *tāhā dyahhlhāygu* 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 dyahhlhāygu*. It is never played when the procession passes a shrine without stopping. For that purpose, only the last four lines of *tāhā dyahhlhāygu* are woven into the processional pattern. This short version is called *cicāhhāhgu dyahhlhāygu*. The final strokes of *cicāhhāhgu dyahhlhāygu* 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 dyahhlhāygu*, 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 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 *dhā̃* repertoire by another group entered the *dhimay* repertoire and became an instant hit with all *dhimay* bands. 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. 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 *dhol*-type drumming traditions among other ethnic groups of Nepal, for example the Limbu and Majhi people of East Nepal, one would discover radically different repertoires with different cultural meaning.

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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.
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 repertoire includes a dyāhlāygu having similar patterns as in Bhaktapur but played at half tempo. (Fig. 47)

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

Another aspect of dhimay drumming processions is dance, dhimay pyākhā. 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 Inācvā, Bhaktapur, covering the three kilometres in a state of bliss. (Figs. 48–50)

26 local pronunciation of dhimay
28 cf. his YouTube presentation ‘Music Diaries Nepal’
3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

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 pyākhã (1987)

Fig. 50: Bhaktapur’s biggest dhimay played by a farmer of Cvarcā at Yahsīkhyāḥ on 1st of Vaiśākh 1985
3.2 Dhābājā

Dhābājā combines one or two dhā 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 Nāsahdyāḥ flanked by two drummers, Nandi and Bhrṛṅgi, one of them playing dhā. The other drum played for the god is kvatāḥ. The repertoires of both drums include dyahlhāygu invocations. During the New Year festival, members of the dāphā group playing for Thāthū Nāsahdyāḥ suspend a small painted ilā canopy under which they perform for the god. The painting on the lower side of this ilā shows Nāsahdyāḥ as half male and half female Ardhanareśvara in a dancing pose, accompanied by Nandi and Bhrṛṅgi playing dhā and kvatāḥ. (Fig. 51)
Fig. 52: Dhābājā drumming in Yaḥśikhyāḥ during New Year morning 1984

Fig. 53: Dhābājā drumming at Brahmāyaṇī during Vijayādaśamī morning 1985
Presumably older but less popular than dhimaybājā, dhābājā was mostly part of some dāphā groups that incorporated the set of instruments for specific processions. For example, dhābājā and the dāphā drum lālākhĩ with thick-walled taḥ cymbals alternate in accompanying the stick dance ghēṭāgiśi that precedes cow effigies during the town ritual sāpāru. Dhābājā 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 sichyāḥ but they reverse the drum, holding the dhāḥkathi drumstick playing the Haimā drumhead with the left hand. Farmers hold the dhāḥkathi with the right hand, playing the higher sounding Nāsaḥ drumhead with the left hand. (Figs. 52, 53)

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

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

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

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

Dhā 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 dyahlhāygu played by dhā. Following the dyahlhāygu, the solo dummy 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 dhā 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 dhā drum are explained in chapter 6.1.

3.3 Nāykhĩbājā

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)
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 included one or several nāykhī drums and one or several pairs of sichyāḥ cymbals. (Fig. 55)

Kajilal Shahi of Jēlā was responsible for playing the piece bāre khī during the procession of the five Dīpankara Buddhas on pañcadān carhe. The Buddhas interrupted their procession at twenty-two places 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 Yudhīṣṭhira’s shame of his disastrous gambling passion. (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 pradakṣinā

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 Nay butchers situated at the periphery of Bhaktapur (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

Fig. 55: Náykhī drum and a pair of sichyāḥ cymbals (photo courtesy of Bernd Karl Rennhak)
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 mvaḥani. Before the 1970s, an ensemble of eighteen large natural trumpets kā̃ 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. On the evening of Mahānavamī, Kajilal slaughtered the khame buffalo for the Navadurgā at Brahmāyaṇī pīth before the Navadurgā dancers ‘stole’ their masks in Yāchẽ and delivered a portion of the meat to the mask maker. This ritual duty alternated between Kajilal’s Jēlā nāykhĩbājā and Byāsi nāykhĩbājā, 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 nāykhĩbājā 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 nāykhĩ drummer during the Navadurgā visit to Yātāchẽ. I had to play the pūjākhĩ pattern and carry one end of the heavy bamboo pole on my right shoulder. Kajilal

A kā̃bājā ensemble was resurrected in 2019 and accompanied the Navadurgā to Brahmāyaṇī with a new set of kā̃ trumpets made of copper
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. 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.

The Nāy of Bhaktapur have six senior leaders. Every year these Nāy nāyah 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 nāyah 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
twenty-five buffaloes for Taleju, they emerge from the Golden Gate before noon on the day of Vijayādasamī, where their local nāykhĩbājā 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 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, nāykhĩbājā together with Jugi shawm players preceded the eleven Ekanta-Kumārī on their way from the main Kumārī’s residence at Kvāthādau to their āgamchẽ in Mulāchě (Fig. 58).

On the day of pāsaḥ carhe, a Duī 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
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. During death processions for kings and priests, the Jugi shawm players had to play rāg Dīpak with their curved pujā mvalī 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 bhagā39 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 paṅcaibājā 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. 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 nāykībājā repertoire includes the following drum compositions:

- dyāhlāygu: 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 Dipaṅkara 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 nāykībājā 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 nāykī drum in the different contexts of navabājā and gūlābājā. 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 nāykībājā 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

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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 Kajila’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.\textsuperscript{41} In order to notate the compositions, I decided to apply the set of drumming syllables used by my navabād 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\textsuperscript{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 gulābājā. 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:

\[
/\text{kvī} \quad o \quad o \quad \text{kvī} \quad o \quad o \quad \text{kvī} \quad o \quad / \\
/\text{kvī} \quad o \quad o \quad \text{kvī} \quad o \quad o \quad \text{kvī} \quad o \quad /
\]

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:

\[
/\text{da} \quad \text{na} \quad \text{pā} \quad \text{dā}/ \quad \text{o} \quad \text{dā} \quad \text{pā} \quad \text{drkha}/
\]

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

\[
\text{drkha} = \text{danapā}
\]

Good luck!

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

\textsuperscript{42} opened in 1996
3.4 Sāymi gūlābājā

Gūlā, 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 gūlā, 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, caiṭya), shrines (degah), and other places of Buddhist worship in the Kathmandu Valley and beyond. Whilst processing, they play the so-called gūlābājā-music that is mostly instrumental, dominated by drums.

The first written version of the Brhad-Svayambhū purāṇa mentions Buddhist processional music groups circumambulating the Svayaṃbhū Mahācaitya every morning of gūlā, playing animal horns and drums. In the 1980s, gūlābājā groups of Sāymi oil pressers from Bhaktapur and Banepa played invocations with horns and drums 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 gūlābājā, 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 gūlā in the 1980s, three Sāymi gūlābājā and three Śākya gūlābājā groups used to carry out their daily processions in and around Bhaktapur every year. (Fig. 59)

The invocations of Sāymi gūlābājā music could be part of an unbroken tradition predating the fourteenth century. I presume that drums other than the older dhā, pastā, nāykhī and dabadaba were added to gūlābājā during the later eighteenth or nineteenth century, in an attempt to create a Buddhist navabājā, following the model of the early navadāphā groups founded by King Bhūpatīndra Malla (ruled 1696–1722). For special occasions like dhalãpa grain offerings by pious Buddhist families, Bhaktapur’s and Banepa’s Sāymi gūlābājā groups played most drums used in navabājā. Jugi tailor-musicians accompanied these drums with shawms and fipple flutes. With the exception of short pūjāmvālĩ and dyahlhāygu 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 gūlābājā:

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.

43 from the third quarter of the 14th century
44 for a detailed study of processional and ritual activities during gūlā 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 gūlā could be awareness of the approaching end of the world. 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 gūlā. 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.

In 1975 Gutschow and Kölver counted 129 Sāymi oil presser households in Bhaktapur. These families live in three neighbourhoods, Sākvalā/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 gūlābājā ensembles in Bhaktapur are named after the residential areas Sākvalā, Gvaḥmādhī and Vāṃśa Gopāl.

48 Bernhard Kölver hazarded this fascinating conjecture during a discussion with me.
Sāymi call their kind of gūlābājā ‘ṇakha 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 gūlābājā 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 dhā 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 dhā 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 paṅcatāla 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 gūlābājā 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 dyahlhāygu. Extra instruments including dhimaycā, nāykhĩ, kvakhĩcā, the pair of kettledrums nāgarā, 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 gūlābājā group. Such dhalãpa grain offerings are organised by wealthy Buddhist families keen on improving their merit. A ritual specialist of the highest Buddhist Vajrācārya caste, a so-called Gubhāḥju manages all ritual details for the gūlābājā group. During grain offerings, he performs an elaborate ritual ensuring blessings for the musical instruments and for the donor family. (Fig. 61)

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grain</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>jāki</td>
<td>husked rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vā</td>
<td>unhusked rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>cvah</td>
<td>unhusked wheat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tecvah</td>
<td>barley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bāji</td>
<td>toasted beaten rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>chucū</td>
<td>wheat flour</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaygu</td>
<td>dried peas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myā</td>
<td>red lentils</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lāvjā</td>
<td>maize</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>musyā</td>
<td>fried soya beans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mārikasi bājā</td>
<td>pot with flat bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gvapacā</td>
<td>pot with money</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svāmā</td>
<td>flower garlands</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>janakvkakhã</td>
<td>cotton threads</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Fig. 61: Ritual specialist Gubhāḥju Gyan Ratna Vajrācārya playing a handbell with vajra handle during a Sāymi gūlābājā procession 1985
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 dyahlhāygu are the same as those played before the daily start of the procession at the shrine of Nāsahdyah. The Gubhāḥju invokes Nāsahdyah, 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 abîr 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, khīpvu and dhādiganã and the dhā 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 dehrã and tatāli. Pachimā plays partāl. Dabadaba plays a piece without name50 with flute accompaniment. Kvakhĩcā plays calti. Nagarā plays dehrã and brahmatāl. Dhalak or dhā conclude with cavã, 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 gūlā 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
Sāymi gūlābājā group could not remember the longest dhā composition cavā. He had to refer to the solo drummer of Dattātreya navadāphā to restore the composition.

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

During daily gūlābājā processions, Sāymi males living in Sakvalā gather at six a.m. at the near-by shrine of Thāthu Nāsahdyah. 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
tutaḥ hymns from a hand-written songbook containing the song texts (Fig. 63). A nāykhĩ drummer asks arriving Jugi tailor-musicians to accompany him with shawms, to lend dignity to the ongoing pūjā. Every morning they play the piece pūjāmvālĩ. (Fig. 64)

When everyone has arrived and the ritual offerings and prayer for the music god completed, Nāsahdyah 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 dyāhlhāygu for pastā drum and natural trumpets follow, alternating with three powerful dyāhlhāygu for dhā 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, kvakhīcā and dabadaba each play one short dyāhlhāygu for Nāsahdyah, 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 Nasahdyah shrine with a piece called *dyah cākā hulegu*, 'circumambulating the god'. They proceed with processional drum patterns to the monastery where the Dīpankara Buddha of Kvāthādau resides and further via Kvāthādau, Gaḻchē, Sujamādhi and Tacaṇpāḥ to the destination of the procession, the *dhalāchē* house in Sakvalā (no. 17 on map 20). The *dhalāchē* serves as

Fig. 65: Sākvalā oil pressers play *dyahlāygu* with *dhā* drums and alternating animal horns at the shrine of Thāthu Nāsaḥdyah. 1986

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

Fig. 67: Sākvalā oil pressers circumambulate Thathu Nāsaḥdyah with *cāti* goat horns. August 1987
3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

Map 20: Daily morning procession of Sākvalā oil pressers, with numbered musical offerings for Nāsaḥdyah (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 gālābājā groups of Tekhācva, Gvahmādhi and Sākvalā, ending in their respective dhalāchē houses (N = Nāsaḥdyah, H = Haimādyaḥ, circle with dot = dhalāchē; map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)
a temporary place for ritual gatherings during gūlā. 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, Sākvalā, by means of playing dyahīlhāygu. In the course of the processional month, the dhālāchē becomes the temporary centre.
of a monumental protective Buddhist mandala—actualised by the total sum of invocations played during gūlābājā processions. (Figs. 68–70)

Several among the older dhā and pastā compositions played during procession have syllables written above my drum notation\(^52\), like for example:

\[
\begin{align*}
/ & \text{T}I \ D\text{U} / \text{T}I \ D\text{U} / \text{T}I - / \text{D}U - /
\end{align*}
\]

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 tititālā 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\(^54\):

\[
\begin{align*}
/ & \text{ĀR}Y\text{A} / \text{T}ĀR\text{Ā} / \text{TĀ} - / \text{RĀ} - / \text{BUDDHA} / \text{DHARMA} / \text{SAṄ} - / \text{GHA} - /
\end{align*}
\]

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

horn ensemble sounding:

\[
\begin{align*}
/ & \text{T}I \ T\text{I} / \text{T}I \ T\text{I} - / \text{T}I - / \text{DUDU} / \text{DUDU} / \text{D}U - / \text{D}U - /
\end{align*}
\]

\(^{52}\) 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 dhalâché house, the musicians announce their arrival, playing dhalâché sidhaykegu dyâhlâygu (‘invocation for arrival at the dhalâché’), to be followed by the piece svanâ thâ vâne-bale (‘climbing the stairs’). The procession ends on the first floor of the building with dyâhlâygu in front of a growing mound of tiny clay caitya-s.

A dhalâché house must have on the ground floor a small room (nyâchĩ kvathā) for storing holy water, another room (câ kvatâh) 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 (dyâhkuthi), guarded and kept in a state of purity by six dhyaḥbâri attendants. These young oil presser men fast during the month of gûlâ, eating only one vegetarian meal per day 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 kikâpâ of Lokeśvar at Thâpâlâchê. (Fig. 71)

![Fig. 71: Dyahaḥbâri in attendance of the dyakhuti containing the growing hill of black votive clay caitya-s, 1985](image)

The dyakhuti shrine contains the daily growing hill of small caityas (in Newari: cibhâ), moulded of black clay by oil presser women under the supervision of a Vajrâcarya priest (Gubhâhju). Under his expert guidance the women produce a total of one hundred and twenty-five thousand votive caityas, to be submerged at the confluence of two rivers (triveni) at Hanumân Ghât at the end of gûlâ. At this confluence there resides a mighty Nâgarâjâ, snake guardian of all springs and rivers. He is present in the main room of the dhalâché as a paper effigy (nâgwa), prepared by a member of the Citrakâr painters’ caste, looking like many intertwined snakes with a single split tongue

---

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

56 Newari for Avalokiteśvara, Bodhisattva of compassion
in the centre. The nāgva’s presence ensures a peaceful atmosphere in the house where so many people gather during the month of gūlā.

Before the auspicious caitya production can start at the dhalāchē, ritual purification and collection of water and clay at prescribed localities needs to be accomplished. Having shaved their heads during the previous day aūsi (the day before the new moon), the dhyaḥbārī attendants collect holy water (nyāchĩ kah vānegu) from five places on the periphery of Bhaktapur, Maṅgal Tirtha, Siddha Pvkhu, Hanumān Ghāt, Kamal Pvkhu 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 Pvkhu (Vajrajugini)
South: Hanuman Ghāt (Namobuddha)
West: Siddha Pvkhu (Svayambhū)
North: Kāsan Khusi, (Khadjagjugini)
Centre: Maṅgal Ghāt

57 Only the oil pressers from Sākvalā leave out Maṅgal Tirtha.
The Sākvalã oil pressers who leave out Mangal Ghāṭ, place a second pot with water from Kamal Pukku 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 nhāykã), 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, Svaẏamabhū and Karuṇāmaya of Buṅgamati. As the processional month proceeds, all these gods and holy places are circumambulated and musical invocations played by the gūlābājā 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 (sā̃cva), 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 gūlā, the manager of the dhalāchẽ 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 dhalāchẽ 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 (dyahpalā), 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...
life. The emerging clay caitya is carefully placed on a tray, decorated with flowers and later on transported to the guarded dyahkuti 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 khir rice pudding on sāpāru day. (Fig. 72)

The Gubhāhju chants prayers in Sanskrit followed by Newari instructions for preparing clay caitya-s (dyahpalā thāyagu):

\[
egin{align*}
Om \text{ basudhye svāhā.} & \quad \text{Take out the clay!} \\
Cāḥ \text{ likah!} & \quad \text{Roll the clay!} \\
Om \text{ vajra bhavāye svāhā.} & \quad \text{Oil the clay!} \\
Cāḥ \text{ gyalā gyalā yāy!} & \quad \text{Put it into the mould!} \\
Om \text{ araje viraje svāhā.} & \quad \text{Press it tightly!} \\
Cāḥ \text{ cikane ṭhuñe!} & \quad \text{Cut off extra clay!} \\
Om \text{ vajra dhātu garbhe svāhā.} & \quad \text{Insert a grain of rice!} \\
Cāḥ \text{ thāsāsa duthane!} & \quad \text{Take it out of the mould!} \\
Om \text{ vajra mudga rāḥ mākvataye mākvataye humphaṭ.} & \quad \text{Put it on the tray!} \\
Cāḥ \text{ thāsāsa kvtale!} & \\
Om \text{ vajra kāṣṭaḥ chedaye chedaye humphaṭ.} & \\
Cāḥ \text{ dhyene!} & \\
Om \text{ dharma dhātu garbhīye svāhā.} & \\
Cāḥ \text{ duthane!} & \\
Om \text{ dharma ratne svāhā.} & \\
Thāsā pīkāye! & \\
Om \text{ supratiṣṭhita vajra āśane svāhā.} & \\
Āsane taye! & \\
\end{align*}
\]
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 dyahpalā attendants to carry the tray to the temporary shrine (dyahkuti). There he empties the tray and returns it to her. The growing mound of votive clay caityas in the dyahkuti shrine receives daily offerings of red powder and—on the arrival of the gūlābājā procession—musical offerings. Sākya and Vajrācārya groups may perform their gūlā 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 dhalāchē—the sponsor of the house, the dhyāhbārī attendants and the women producing miniature clay caityas—enjoy a special bonus. In the case of death happening in their families during gūlā, 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 dhalāchē. (Fig. 73)

![Fig. 73: Oil presser women preparing votive clay caityas in the dhalāchē, 1985](image)

On Wednesdays and Saturdays the gūlābājā groups expand their processions to include the shrines of the eight mother goddesses at the periphery of Bhaktapur and Sūrya Vināyak Ganeś at Ināre. Long-distance pilgrimages to some important caityas 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:
3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

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

1. Nālā (Karunamāyi/Lokeśvar) and Banepā (1 dhalāpā invitation)
2. Namobuddha/Namarā Bhagvān
3. Panauti (2 bāhās, caitya)
4. Chobhar (Ādināth Lokeśvar)
5. Chobhar Ganeśa
6. Buṅgamati (Buṅgadyyah)
7. Swayambhū
8. Nilvārāhī and Thimi, (3 dhalāpā invitations)
9. Vajrayoginī and Sankhu (1 dhalāpā invitation)
10. Bauddha (rarely observed)

The second last day of the processional month is reserved for cibhāḥ pūjā. The Sāymi and Śākya gālābājā groups followed by the Sāymi and Śākya women visit every single caitya in Bhaktapur,
the men offering dyahlāygu, 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 dhalãchẽ. The next layer is established with the help of gūlābājā during daily morning processions in the area near the dhalãchẽ58. Other layers include all caityas in Bhaktapur, the shrines of the Aṣṭamātṛka at the periphery of the town, Sūrya Vināyak Gaṇeš and ten destinations in the Kathmandu Valley and further east. All this is achieved with the help of musical dyahlāygu invocations played at the respective localities in the course of one month, gūlā.

On the following day of paṅcadān carhe, the five Dipākarā 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 Dipākarā Buddha of Kvāthādau leads the other four Buddhas. As explained in chapter 3.3, the leading Buddha's
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 nāykhībājā playing the piece bāre khti. 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 gūlābājā 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 gūlā, 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. Dyahbāri attendants carry the remaining holy water. The gūlābājā 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

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

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

Fig. 74: 125,000 caitya-s on the move, 1986
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 Sākvalā with the music of the *pachimā* drum with shawm accompaniment. No horns are played. This is the end of *gūlā* activities.

For the past twenty-five years, the three Sāymi *gūlābājā* groups of Bhaktapur found it impossible to finance annual apprenticeships with the prescribed Nāsaḥ *pūjās*, *dhalāchē* 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 *gūlābājā* compositions are included in chapter 11.13 of this publication—with the exception of the lost *dabadaba* pieces. Since 1986 attempts were made in Sākvalā to restore some of those pieces. (Fig. 77)

The drum repertoire of Sāymi *gūlābājā* derived from various sources and different strata of the musical history of the Kathmandu Valley. The combination of animal horns and *dhā* drums for playing invocations may go back to the early practice of Buddhist processional music mentioned in the *Bṛhad-Svayambhū 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 *pāvtā* natural trumpets. Oilpressers play the *dhā* drum in a way similar to the Śākya *gūlābājā* 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 *dhā* in the Hindu context of *dhābājā*, *navabājā* and accompaniment of masked
Fig. 76: Submersion of the palanquin with the bigger clay caitya-s at Hanumān Ghāt, 1986
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 gūlābājā 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 dhā and pastā could hint at a certain influence of invocations played by Śākya gūlābājā. 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 tutah hymns and play Newar folk melodies with their bāsuri flute ensembles. During evenings of the month of Māgha, the head of the family may read the Svasthānī Vrata Kathā61 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 gūlābājā

Vajrācārya and Śākya are artisans, Buddhist monks and householders. Some Vajrācārya 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. 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 gūlā processions and rituals demand considerable physical and financial effort. They are a demonstration of an ancient minority’s identity and wealth. Gutschow and Kölver counted two hundred and nine Buddhist priests and gold- and silversmith households in Bhaktapur. (Map 26)

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

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

Map 26: Śākya and Vajrācārya households in Bhaktapur (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)
group members during the months before gūlā. The pirāne pūjā at the completion of the drumming apprenticeship is performed on the day of aūsi (new moon), just before gūlā starts. (Fig. 78)

During gūlābājā processions, Śākya and Vajrācārya play only two kinds of two-headed drums, dhā̃ and nāykhī²⁵. 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 Śākya artisans of Bhaktapur with Lhasa⁶⁶. There are several dhā̃ drums and at least one nāykhī. The louder dhā̃ group includes two different pairs of cymbals called bhuchyāḥ and taḥ. The nāykhī drum is accompanied with a pair of light brass cymbals called sichyāḥ. Dhā̃ and nāykhī 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 dyahhlḥa̱ggyu invocation. In this way both

Sākya artisans of Bhaktapur with Lhasa⁶⁶. There are several dhā̃ drums and at least one nāykhī. The louder dhā̃ group includes two different pairs of cymbals called bhuchyāḥ and taḥ. The nāykhī drum is accompanied with a pair of light brass cymbals called sichyāḥ. Dhā and nāykhī 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 dyahhlḥa̱ggyu invocation. In this way both

Fig. 78: At the beginning of gūlā Śākya and Vajrācārya goldsmiths arrange offerings to the music god on their gūlābājā instruments at the shrine of Inācva Nāsahdyḥ during August 1986 (right: my personal dhā̃ drum)

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.

Whenever dhā is played in the context of gūlābājā, the drummer holds the drumstick in the left hand to play the Haimā hide. The Nāsāḥ hide is played with the right hand using several fingers to produce the dr and r drum rolls. This is exactly the reverse of the way dhā 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

Fig. 79: Punhi Rāj Śākya playing my red dhā drum with golden Chinese ‘long life’ decoration pointing at the special relationship of Śākya artisans with Lhasa, August 1986

Whenever dhā is played in the context of gūlābājā, the drummer holds the drumstick in the left hand to play the Haimā hide. The Nāsāḥ hide is played with the right hand using several fingers to produce the dr and r drum rolls. This is exactly the reverse of the way dhā 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 gūlābājā and Prajāpati gūlābājā of Thimi.
more sense when virtuosic *drkha* drum rolls and volume are called for. When the *nāykhĩ* drum is played in *gūlābājā*, 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 *gūlābājā* combines several *dhā̃* drums playing the same processional patterns together, creating a loud, solemn impact. Moving at a stately gait, their *gūlābājā* signals disciplined presence and never makes people dance. (Figs. 79, 80)

When either *dhā̃* or *nāykhĩ* 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. When it comes to demonstrations of hierarchy, the Buddhist ideal of compassion is readily forgotten. (Fig. 81)

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68 This applies to right-handed drummers.
69 When Simonne Bailey participated in Śākya *gūlābājā* 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 Śākayas.
Starting in the late 1980s, some gūlābājā groups added more dhā and nāykhī 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.

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

As the dhā 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 nāykhī drummer plays his dyahlhāygu for the Buddha residing on the first floor. This distribution of two different musical functions among dhā drummers and nāykhī continues up to the Caturvarṇa Mahāvihār in Sākvathā (no. 4). Here, on completion of the third processional dhā piece, roles reverse. From now on the nāykhī drummer plays processional music and the dhā 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.
the dhā 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 gūlābājā 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 Indra-varṇa Mahāvihāra and proceed via Pasi Khyah (Gvaḥmādhi), Sukul Dhvakā (Bhimisen), Taumādhi Nārāyaṇa Caukh (no. 2), Bvalāchẽ Bahī, Bārāhi, Vāṃśa 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 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 dhalāchē.

70 see chapter 3.4
3.5 Šākya and Vajrācārya gūlābājā

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

Whilst following their daily standard routes that lead through all residential areas of Šākyas 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 Šākya 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 (Buṅgadyah) of Buṅgamati, Ādināth Lokeśvara of Chobhar, and Svayaṃbhū, a problem occurred in 1986, as the following procession schedule (gūlā 1986), of the Inācva group reveals.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>date</th>
<th>route/destination</th>
<th>shortcut/excuse</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5/8 aūsi</td>
<td>Palikhyaḥ Nāsaḥ</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6/8</td>
<td>standard route to 8/8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9/8</td>
<td>standard route</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10/8 to 11/8</td>
<td>standard route</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12/8</td>
<td>Surya Vināyak, Barāhī</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13/8</td>
<td>standard route</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14/8</td>
<td>standard route with shortcut via Thāthu Nāsaḥ</td>
<td>because of Chandranath Darśandhāri’s sore foot</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15/8</td>
<td>standard route</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16/8</td>
<td>Kumārī, Badrakāli, Brahmayānī</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17/8 and 18/8</td>
<td>standard route</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19/8 gūnī pvunī</td>
<td>Thāthu Bahī, Kuthu Bahī, Kālu Daha</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20/8</td>
<td>Thāthu Bahī, Kuthu Bahī</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21/8 to 25/8</td>
<td>standard route with shortcut (Chandranath’s foot)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26/8</td>
<td>Kamal Vināyak</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27/8</td>
<td>standard route with shortcut (rain)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28/8 and 29/8</td>
<td>standard route</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30/8</td>
<td>standard route with shortcut (business at home)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31/8</td>
<td>standard route</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1/9</td>
<td>morning: standard route, evening: mātā biyu vānegu</td>
<td>(light offering procession: visiting all Buddhas)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2/9 paṃcadān carhe</td>
<td>morning: standard route, evening: Taumādhi</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3/9</td>
<td>picnic at Godāvari, visiting Karuṇāmaya at Bāregāon</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4/9 aūsi</td>
<td>standard route with shortcut</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5/9</td>
<td>Hanumān ghat, submersion of caitya-s</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

1986 was a nābvulāgu (having five Wednesdays) gūlā, allowing for five Wednesday processions to the following far away destinations: Namobuddha, Vajrajoginī (near Sāku), Svayaṃbhū,
Karunamaya (Buñgadiyah at Bungmati), 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 Aṣṭamātrīka (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 mandala of gods and goddesses. Their importance as protectors of Bhaktapur makes their inclusion into otherwise Buddhist oriented processions mandatory. This applies also to Surya Bināyak Ganeśa, one of the four guardians Ganeśas of the Kathmandu Valley. (Map 28)

During the final five days of gūlā, ritual activities accelerated. The cibhā pūjā procession on 1st of September (see 1986 schedule above), also called mātā biyu vānegu, combined the
Śākya men and their gūlābājā music with the women distributing rice grains and burning oil wicks at all Buddhist artefacts in town.\(^{71}\) Stone caityas 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 Dipaṅkara 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 Dipaṅkara Buddha is also called Ajajudyaḥ, the grandfather god—another explanation for the drooping head. The Dipaṅkara 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

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71 processional route see chapter 3.4
72 lit. the fourteenth day (of the lunar month) for giving five kinds of alms
peeled ginger root, then flavoured with red chillies, jī and imu seeds fried in oil. 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. My teachers Punhī Rāj Śākya and Nucheraj Buddhacārya were willing to teach me Śrī Kṛṣṇa gvārā and Nityanāth gvārā, 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 Dipākarā Buddha in Kvāṭhādau. 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: gvārāh, Kathmandu pronunciation: gvārā
77 Nṛtyanāth is another name for Nāṣaḥdyaḥ and also used for Lokeśvar, Bodhisattva Avalokiteśvara
could be almost as old. They are accompanied with dhāṁ, not nāykhĩ. The song texts of the two gvarā that I learned include the names of various gods and shouted or sung commands ‘dye’ or ‘hā 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 gvarā 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 |
| palemā | 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 | 10 mātrā (2 + 2 + 2 + 2) | TIN CHU TIN TIN CHU |

gvārā yā dyaḥlhāygu

Nityanāth gvārā, Saṭapāramitā gvārā, Viśvantar gvārā, Lokeśvar gvārā, Manicuḍ gvārā, Maṇjuśrī gvārā, Sā̃y gvārā, Saṅginī gvārā

In his publication ‘Bailaḥ va gūlā bājā yā bol’, Gopal Prajāpati79 of Thimi transcribes one gvarā in letter notation, Bhūkhaṇḍa gvārā.

Nine gvarā 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 conveniently take the flute parts for such processions. (Figs. 84, 85)

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

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. 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 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

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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
3.6 Flute, Harmonium and Violin Ensembles

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

Fig. 86: Sujamādhi nāgacā pyākhā performing in front of the Dattātreya temple during sāpāru 1989
3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

**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
calti, dehrā (8 mātrā), rikhā (6 mātrā) and kharjati (7 mātrā). 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 bāsuribājā 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 ōtp play the higher pitched notes. (Fig. 89)

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

Whenever bāsuribājā 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 shawl 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 bāsuri khalah’
3.7 Jugi Tailor-Musicians

Jugi 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 mvālĩ, 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 yogis, the Jugis are not cremated but buried. They have this in common with Mahantās 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 Adinātha. 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):

\[
\begin{align*}
/bhugumugu/bhũ & \ tā \ /chā \ tā \ /ji \ tā \ /kānemate/su \ tā / \\
/talejāki/da \ thē & \ /talejāki/da \ thē \ / /talejāki/da \ thē / \\
/halathẽ & \ /bilathẽ \ /chā \ tā \ /ji \ tā \ /kānemate/su \ tā / \\
/jay \ tā & \ /jay \ tā \ /chā \ tā \ /ji \ tā \ /kānemate/su \ tā / \\
/jakithike/bajidã & \\
/jay \ tā & \ /jay \ tā \ /chā \ tā \ /ji \ tā \ /kānemate/su \ tā / & \text{Come outside!} \\
\end{align*}
\]

There's rice upstairs, I hope.

\[
\begin{align*}
/talejāki/da \ thē & \ /talejāki/da \ thē \ / /talejāki/da \ thē / \\
/halathẽ & \ /bilathẽ \ /chā \ tā \ /ji \ tā \ /kānemate/su \ tā / \\
/jay \ tā & \ /jay \ tā \ /chā \ tā \ /ji \ tā \ /kānemate/su \ tā / \\
/jakithike/bajidã & \\
/jay \ tā & \ /jay \ tā \ /chā \ tā \ /ji \ tā \ /kānemate/su \ tā / & \text{Give some more!} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Bless you!

\[
\begin{align*}
/halathẽ & \ /bilathẽ \ /chā \ tā \ /ji \ tā \ /kānemate/su \ tā / \\
/jay \ tā & \ /jay \ tā \ /chā \ tā \ /ji \ tā \ /kānemate/su \ tā / \\
/jakithike/bajidã & \\
/jay \ tā & \ /jay \ tā \ /chā \ tā \ /ji \ tā \ /kānemate/su \ tā / & \text{Bless you!} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Rice is expensive, bajĩ cheap.

\[
\begin{align*}
/jakithike/bajidã & \\
/jay \ tā & \ /jay \ tā \ /chā \ tā \ /ji \ tā \ /kānemate/su \ tā / & \text{Come outside!} \\
\end{align*}
\]

Refrain kānemate su tā 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 lādhvākha) 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 pūjāmvālĩ 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. mahālĩ
87 lit. ‘split ear’, owing to their large earrings, cf. Unbescheid 1981
88 Bhaktapur's Jugi graveyard is called Jugi goh. It lies in a small grove east of Chupin ghāt.
89 caretakers of magnificent math dwelling-places for ascetics
90 beaten rice
3.7 Jugi Tailor-Musicians

Fig 90: Jugi playing tamā and khvālimāli at Cāṅgu Narāyaṇa 1985

Fig 91: Four Jugi shawm players accompanying Yāchē Ganeś navadāphā (Tirtha Man Nāpit playing pachimā) with Gujarāṭī mvālī during a Nāṣaḥ pājā procession along Nāg pukhū in 1983
3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

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

Fig. 93: Remains of a broken kahāl played during Chumā Gaṇeś jātrā 1984
3.7 Jugi Tailor-Musicians

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 Mahākāli pyākhā. (Fig. 92)

A broken kahāl (straight conical bore natural horn) was played in Bhaktapur to accompany Chumā Gaṇeś during his New Year jātra\(^{93}\), in a poor attempt to imitate a trumpeting elephant (Fig. 93).

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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 Kāṃphaṭa ascetics
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\footnote{Gutschow and Michaels 2005, p. 49 ff.} explains this with their ritual function as the city’s ‘internal absorbers of pollution’. Jugs 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 \textit{cakrapūjā}$^{95}$ for the \textit{preta}$^{96}$ in front of the house of the dead person, then accept and consume food prepared in the name of the deceased. This \textit{Jugibvah} food was offered with the hope to distract the wandering souls of the dead, feared by the living who seal their homes with multiple charms.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{map29.png}
\caption{The 41 Jugi households in Bhaktapur 1987 (map: Niels Gutschow, in: Levy 1990, p. 181)}
\end{figure}

\footnotetext[94]{Gutschow and Michaels 2005, p. 49 ff.}
\footnotetext[95]{Only Jugs can perform a \textit{cakrapūjā}.}
\footnotetext[96]{wandering souls of the dead, feared by the living who seal their homes with multiple charms}
3.7 Jugi Tailor-Musicians

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

Fig. 96: Jyāpu farmers playing jantabājā music in Yāchē 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. 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, ñram, saed ñram, disko ñram, slāiṭ tramban and trampeṭ.

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 mvālı shawms, 1985
3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

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.

Thālāchē sanyabhajan
5 Jugis, 1 Duīcā
Instruments: 4 mvālĩ, 1 dhalak, 1 jhyālicā

– Playing every morning and evening: sanyabhajan at Mahālakṣmī pith and Mahākālī pith (earlier payment: 28 pāthī grain) and Taleju (earlier payment: 23 pāthī grain from Taleju guthi) Baiśākh 2nd playing for Mahākālī-Mahālakṣmī jātrā
– Mvahani Navami: playing for Yāchē Ganeś navadāphā during viewing of Navadurgā masks
– Ekadasi: playing for the Navadurgā on their way from Tālākva to Navadurgā dyahchē
– Dvādasi: playing for the Navadurgā on their way from Bvalāchē to Navadurgā dyahchē, standing in front of Mahākālī dyahchē (payment: 1 mānā grain per day)
– During gūlā: Playing every morning with Inācva Śākya gūlābājā (Payment to be negotiated)
– Twenty-two times per year: playing for Yāchē Ganeś 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: khā/ngi 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
3.7 Jugi Tailor-Musicians

- *Gũ punhi*: Playing with the initial *ghētāgisi* stickdance organised by *Gūthī samsthān* (payment: 25.- Rs. to be shared among group members)

![Jugi with Gujarāti mvālĩ and Duũ with dhā announcing the beginning of sāpāru, Śākvathā 1983. Until 1963, 32 Jugis played on this occasion. Later *Gūthī samsthān* offered only 25 Rs. to the entire group. Since then, only 1 Jugi and 1 Duũ participated with ill feelings.](image)

**Fig. 100:**

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

- Playing every morning and evening: *sanyabhajan* at Surya Vināyak Ganeś (earlier payment: 4 *murī* grain) and Vārāhī *pith* (earlier payment: 1 *murī* and 3 *pāṭhī* grain)
- Cait 30th and Baiśākh 1st playing at Yāḥśĩkhyaḥ
- Baiśākh 1st and 2nd playing for Vārāhī *jātrā*, 3rd for Duũ *jātrā* (with Duũ playing *dhā*)
- *Gũ punhi*: Playing with the initial *ghētāgisi* stickdance organised by *Gūthī samsthān* (payment: 25.- Rs. to be shared among ten group members—even in 1983 this was a ridiculous amount) (Fig. 100)
3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

Taumādhi *sanyabhajan* (Fig. 101)
9 Jugis and 1 Duĩčā (torchbearer)
Instruments: 6 *mvālĩ*, 1 *turĩ 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* (*nāykhī*)
- 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 mvālī, 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 Yāhṣikhyāḥ
- 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)
- Gū punhi: Playing with the initial ghētāgisi stickdance organised by Gūthi samsthān (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 cakrapājā after death and collect chvāsa offerings during fullmoon and festivals for 40 households in Tacapāḥ, 30 households in Byāsi, 20 households in Khācā and 10 households in Yātā.

Yāchẽ sanyabhajan
6 Jugis
Instruments: 4 mvālī, 1 tamva, 1 jhyāli

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

Duīcā pokharī sanyabhajan
10 Jugis
Instruments: 7 mvālī, 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 mvālī, 1 tamva, 1 jhyāli

- Playing every morning and evening: sanyabhajan at Brahmayānī pith (earlier payment: 7 murī grain), also playing for Bhairav, Taleju, Mahākāli and Suryavināyak Gaṇeś
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 occasionally, rāg Dīpak was also played for expired descendants of Malla kings.

Fig. 102: Gaṇeś Mān Kapāli playing rāga Dīpak with pūjā mvālī and Puni Mān Duī̃ accompanying with dhā at my home 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 gūlābājā. Ganeś 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.
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 *kvakhǐcā* during *navabājā* performances and *kvakhǐcā* and the hourglass drum *dabadaba* in Sāymi *gūlābājā*. (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 *sā̃j*.

The tip of the wooden *kvẽku* peg should have precisely the same diameter as the narrow end of the *sā̃j* pipe.
3.7 Jugi Tailor-Musicians

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

Fig. 110

Wrap a strip of cloth around the cotton.

Fig. 109

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...

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

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

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

Use a sharp blade to cut out a tiny crescent-shaped wedge out of the broader base of the trapezium.
Carefully slot the wooden peg up through from the cotton bound edge.

The view from the side

Tie a piece of cotton yarn around the narrow end of the trapezium, pull the ends tight and make a knot.
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Fig. 121
Use your teeth to pull the knot tight.

Fig. 122
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. 123
Use a sharp blade to make a final straight cut through the ends of the tuki.
Now place the complete tuki set on the wooden body of the instrument and start playing.

This should be the result.

After moistening the reeds, blow hard. The pipe should emit a loud squawk.
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. *Mvālī* 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 *mvālī* 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. *Mvālī* 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)

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 mvālī* (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\(^\text{101}\) 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

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

\(^{101}\) up to 80 % alcohol!
Fig. 128: Old pājā ṁvāḷī with silver bell (photo courtesy of Christian Schneider)
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:

**Svagamālī** was played long ago as part of the marriage ritual, when bride and bridegroom saw each other for the first time.

**Pūjāmālī** 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 Nāyah gives each Jugi a flower carrying Bhairava’s blessings. The piece was also played during the pūjā preceding Sāymi gālābājā 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 *lālākhī* compositions but with that similarities end. In comparison,

102 *Cali* is an exception. For *lālākhī* 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 Čāṅgu 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 Kābājā

Kābājā (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 Aṣṭamāṭṛka processions. Eighteen Sāymi kā-players from Gvahmādhi (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 Brahmiyaṇi. They also played on Bhagasitī during the annual death procession of the Navadurgā from their dyahchẽ to Brahmiyaṇi where the masks were cremated. For this duty the kā-players were given five pāṭhī beaten rice and a feast per year. They also accompanied the mothergoddess Indrāyaṇi during her Indra jātrā procession and were given six māna rice grain and one pāṭhī beaten rice by the Indrāyaṇi 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.
3 Town Rituals and Processional Music

Fig. 130: Kā-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 kā-players for free. Sāymi kā-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 kā 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: Kā-players during the Viṣṇudevī jātrā, December 1989
In South Asia dance was always considered as the visible, four-dimensional and dynamic realisation of music, saṅgīta. Like most other Newar gods and goddesses, Nāsaḥdyah is depicted in painting and sculpture as a dancer. Nowadays identified with the South Indian Nṛtyanātha, he is the Lord of the Dance. As dancers, the gods unleash and spread their divine powers. As dancers, humans can attain exalted states of consciousness, if there is proper music to induce the transition. There is no better device for losing human identity and the limitations of this body, than wearing a dance mask. In Newar masked dances, masks identify the gods and their entourage. Great care is required by the mask-maker when he produces the clay masks for the Navadurgā dancers of Bhaktapur. Not only the exact size and shape of a mask is prescribed but also every detail of the painting applied to it. When the dancers come out during mvahani to perform their annual dance cycle in and around Bhaktapur, people touch the masks to share in the blessings of the Navadurgā. Masks are the seats of the gods they represent, as Nāsaḥdyah resides in the drums.

The Navadurgā of Bhaktapur are one of the many so-called Aṣṭamātṛka dances of the Kathmandu Valley, where tantric mother goddesses make their appearance together with various male gods like Gaṇeśa, Mahādeva and Bhairava—all the characters spreading the powerful blessings of the gods. Referring to the Bhāṣāvaṃśāvalī chronicle, Veda Nath Regmi mentions that Jala pyākhā of Harisiddhi could be the oldest Aṣṭamātṛka dance with an obscure origin during the Licchavi period and documented revival during the reign of Amar Malla of Kantipur (1530–1538).2 Amar Malla also introduced the Pacalī Bhairav pyākhā of Kathmandu-Tekhu, the Rudrāyaṇī pyākhā, the Ākāś Bhairav jātṛā, the Manamaiju jātṛā, the Bhadrakālī pyākhā, Śvetakālī pyākhā, and perhaps also the Bāgh Bhairav jātṛā of Kirtipur. Śrī Nivās Malla of Lalitpur started the Gā pyākhā around 1563 and added nine nights of performances to the Katī pyākhā established by his father Siddhinarasimha Mallā. Suvarṇa Malla of Bhaktapur (1505–1519) established the Navadurgā pyākhā and the Nīl Vārāhī jātṛā/ Mahālakṣmī pyākhā of Bode, both dances after 1512.

The climax of the annual masked dance Katī pyākhā at full moon in front of the Patan palace, is the killing of the proud and powerful demon king Hiranyakaśipu by way of divine interference. When the angered demon is about to slay his own son Prahlād—a secret devotee of Lord Viṣṇu—the god comes to Prahlād’s rescue in the form of Narasimha, half human half lion. The battle between god and demon takes twenty exciting minutes before the demon king falls. In the

1 Regmi 1987
2 cf. Iltis 1987
3 performed annually by the people of Naka Bahila
4 Viṣṇu’s fourth avatār
1980s older people told me that they had witnessed the actual death of the dancer who danced the demon—a human sacrifice. Whenever I witnessed this dance, the dancer fell unconscious and had to be revived with a splash of holy water. The part of Hiranyakasipu had to be taken by a fat member of the Citrakār painter caste whereas the god used to be danced by the Malla king himself. Later this role was given to a Brahman. A similar masked dance was performed in Kathmandu where Pratāpa Malla (1624–1674) is known to have danced as Narasiṁha.

In the case of Patan’s ancient masked dance Gápyākhā, the transition of the dancers is induced by the Nāsaḥ pūjā performed in Nāgbāhāḥ—prior to the initial public performance on a stone platform in the main street. The young dancers of the Šākya and Vajrācārya background—with their heads shaved and in costumes but not yet with masks—each come forward to perform a short dance in front of the Nāsaḥ shrine. Two assistants suspend a painted cloth showing the dancing god with his two dancing drummers, Nandi and Brṅgi between the human dancer and the shrine. (Fig. 133)

Even before their dance offering to Nāsahdyah, the dancers start to tremble and need to be supported and carefully led to the shrine. When they finally wear their dance masks, the transition is complete. The gods have taken seat in human shape to spread their blessings during the performance. On the dabu stone platform surrounded with a thick crowd, helpful chalk marks guide the dancers to find their way despite their altered state of mind and limited view through tiny eye holes. (Fig. 134)

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5 founded around 1663 by Śrīnivāsa Malla, performed annually for nine days, starting Ghaṭasthāpanā
In the case of the Navadurgā pyākhā of Bhaktapur, trance is induced by different means. Members of the Gāthā gardener caste take turns in performing the annual Navadurgā dance cycle. Before the Navadurgā leave their dyāḥchē god house, a vertical soot line is drawn across their forehead with a nail that rests in a silver box filled with soot from the khame buffalo sacrifice during Mahānavami. The silver box is attached to the dyāḥkhĩ drum that accompanies their processions and dances. That soot suffices to induce their transition into beneficial vampires. (Fig. 135)

There are other masked dances where trance is not involved, for example the Bhaila pyākhā performed by the potters of Bhaktapur. There are various stick dances presented during sāpāru and many dances where dancers wear costumes. The ancient cacā pyākhā that the Vajrācārya perform in the secrecy of their clan god house āganĉhē was not performed with masks—contrary to contemporary tourist shows. The dancers wore white frocks. Until recently, dances were exclusively performed by males—when required by the character, cross-dressing males. During the past twenty years, some schools trained children of both genders in performing some traditional dances adapted to this purpose. During the New Year festival 2019, a dhimay group included girls presenting an abysmal fantasy Bollywood style dhimay dance wherever few people cared to watch their presentation.

Evidently, with over twenty regular performances throughout the year, navabājā provided a most valuable reservoir of well-rehearsed compositions for most dance groups where musicians are likely to forget things without regular practice and need to have rehearsals before the annual performances during the sāpāru week or the following Indra jātra. Allusions to masked dances in drum compositions are not restricted to navabājā. The lālākhĩ drum repertoire includes dance patterns when it accompanies dāphā songs. For example the cvakh piece for dāphā accompaniment.

Fig. 134: About to enter a state of trance, Gā pyākhā dancers pray to Nāsaḥdyāh.
includes patterns of the otherwise forgotten nā pyākhā⁶ and of bhālū pyākhā⁷ that is still performed at night during the sāpāru week. Whenever those famous patterns are heard, everybody present associates the dances and their characters.

Fig. 135: Gā pyākhā dancers are in a trance and led carefully to the stone platform where they wear the masks to perform the initial series of spectacular masked dances

6 fish dance
7 bear dance
4.1 Cacā pyākhã and Pañcatāla

Among the oldest surviving dance forms is the Newar Buddhist cacā pyākhã, caryā dance. Like caryā songs, caryā dance was introduced in the Kathmandu Valley before the 15th century when tantric cults had permeated earlier Buddhist practice. Cacā pyākhã evolved as a medium for the dancer to embody divine qualities of the gods depicted during the dance, to become a god or a Buddha/Bodhisattva for a few moments. It belongs to the secret āgam category of Newar ritual music and dance that is accessible only to initiates and performed in the secrecy of the clan god houses of Newar Buddhists, the āgamchē. There are exceptions to the secrecy. Starting with discussions in the 1950s, there have been attempts by some Vajrācāryas to popularize some of the less sacred caryā songs and dances of the so-called bāhye kind (about deities). These were taught to students of other castes and later even to foreigners, resulting in regular classes and performance-oriented presentations with fancy costumes and masks. Songs and dances of the guhye category are about highest esoteric practices and remain taboo to outsiders. When ethnomusicologist Arnold Bake made his brief silent documentary film of caryā dance in 1956, this was only possible in a forest near Kathmandu where nobody else could watch the proceedings.

![Fig. 136: Vajrācārya priests during a navagraha pūjā at Bhdrakāli, Kathmandu, Mahānavamī 1991 (left upper corner: Richard Widdess during fieldwork)](image-url)

8 see Widdess 1992, 1997, 2004
A rare public event where the general public was welcome to witness caryā dance in a ritual context, was the annual performance of a navagraha pūjā for peace on the nine planets. This pūjā was performed with the combined forces of Vajrācārya priests of Kathmandu, Patan and Bhaktapur on the day of Mahānavamī at Bhadrakāli, Kathmandu and included brief dances and songs. The ritual was meant to balance the harmful karma inflicted by the mass slaughtering of sacrificial animals all over Nepal on that very day. (Fig. 136)

Fig. 137: Vajrācārya performing the Pañcabuddha dance at Svayaṃbhū during Buddhajayantī 1992
Another public occasion occurred at the Svayaṃbhū mahācaitya on the day of Buddhajayantī, the day of Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and nirvāṇa. According to Newar calendars, this falls on Vaiśākh fullmoon in early May. In the morning Vajrācāryas gathered at the mahācaitya to perform the Pañcabuddha dance in front of the five shrines of these Buddhas, the dancers wearing brocade costumes, wigs and crowns. (Fig. 137)

On the same day, an elaborate procession with a bone relic of the Buddha started at Sīghahbāhā, passing through central Kathmandu. This included several music groups, among them Vajrācārya males with several natural trumpets pāytāḥ, tāḥ cymbals and the compound drum pañcatāla. At prescribed localities, they played the short tvāka dyahlāygu invocation, trying to sight-read the drumming syllables that were written down in extra large letters and carried in front of the struggling musicians. Nobody appeared to know the piece by heart. (Fig. 138)

Similar instrumental ensembles accompany caryā dances in the secrecy of the āgaṃchē. The fact that during every public performance the pañcatāla drummer depends on sight-reading even a short written notation testifies to the rarity of such events and also to the extreme difficulty—as I soon came to know—of learning these compositions by heart. The pieces are almost devoid of

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9 Tibetans celebrate Buddhajayantī one month later, in June.
10 cf. Mrigendra M. S. Pradhan 1996
Fig. 139: Pañcatāla ensemble playing dyahlhāygu during the pirānē pūjā of Patan's gā pyākhā, 1991. The drummer reads the syllables from a hand-written copy. In the background two dancers without masks are awaiting their first dance in front of the shrine of Nāsaḥdyah. Dancers and musicians are of the Vajrācārya and Śākya community.

Fig. 140: Pañcatāla instruments and copy with the notated drumming syllables, Patan 1991
rhythmic elements and repeating structures and proceed at a very slow tempo. Traditional caryā dances were performed in a systematic manner during a so-called cakra pūjā. This was an elaborate and expensive affair that could be afforded only once in a decade, if at all.

Some cacā pyākhā drum compositions were performed every year during the first week of mvahani in Patan where Śākya and Vajrācārya dancers present the spectacular Aṣṭamātṛkā dance gāpyākhā that was installed in 1563 by King Śrī Nīvās Malla of Lalitpur11. Those unfamiliar with Newar culture may wonder how it is possible to have tantric Hindu gods and goddesses impersonated by Buddhist dancers with paṅcatāla accompaniment provided by an instrumental ensemble of Vajrācāryas and Śākyas. When this masked dance was founded during the 16th century, Buddhism and Hinduism had already co-existed for centuries and were assimilated by Newar culture that offered a safe haven to a multitude of groups and cults. The worship of Bhairava and the Aṣṭamātṛkā mother goddesses is a central cult in every Newar town, whether Bhaktapur with its Hindu majority or Buddhist Patan. (Figs. 139–141)

11 old name of Patan
The āgaṃchē of Bhaktapur’s Vajrācāryas in Yatachē was within hearing distance from my roof terrace and I remember the muffled sounds of cacā singing across the courtyard between the buildings—on one occasion even during a śraddha ancestor ritual in a Śākya neighbour’s home. But when I asked to learn their drumming repertoire, I was told that it did not exist in Bhaktapur. The door remained shut until I met the only person who was willing to teach outsiders.

The late Ratnakaji Vajracharya of Kathmandu (Fig. 142) was open-minded enough to initiate me with a Nāsaḥ pūjā—no blood sacrifice; an offering of eggs and flowers sufficed—at the lāykū Nāsaḥdyah shrine next to the New Road roundabout (Fig. 143). He taught me the complete repertoire of the pañcatāla drum at his home, reciting the compositions from his family manuscript and demonstrating the playing techniques. The playing technique of pañcatāla is compatible with that

Fig. 142: Ratnakaji Vajracharya teaching at home 1992

Fig. 143: Lāykū Nāsaḥdyah with offerings, next to the New Road roundabout, Kathmandu 1992
of Bhaktapur’s compound drum kvatāḥ\textsuperscript{12}. But the pañcatāla drumming syllables and patterns do not have anything in common with the kvatāḥ repertoire.

In Ratnakaji’s manuscript compositions are written in Devanāgarī script, with two curious signs representing frequently occurring groups of four drumming syllables. A circle with a cross stands for the four strokes galascaka and a circle with a curved line stands for four strokes takūnyekā, indicating a turn for the dancer. The manuscript includes directions for the dancer’s movement along a triangular line as the clock moves. Ingeniously, these drumming syllables serve as a combined memory aid for four different areas of musical expression, recitation, drumming, playing of natural trumpets and dance with an elaborate ‘language’ of meaningful mudra gestures. (Fig. 144)

When Ratnakaji recited the syllables, he used two different pitches, the basic note and the fifth (S and P in Bhatkhande notation). In my notation, syllables written in the lower boxes are to be recited as the basic note. Syllables written in the upper boxes are to be recited as the fifth

\textsuperscript{12} documentation of kvatāḥ playing technique see chapter 6.2
above the basic note. During recitation, almost every note was consistently presented with small
inflections, little slurs and waves indicating how the natural trumpets are supposed to play. The
total effect of his recitation resembled a tone language. In my notation, these embellishments
appear as wiggly lines above the boxes. The following example shows the initial four lines of \textit{mu dyahlhāygu}. The capital letters T and C above the system represent the cymbal strokes \textit{tīn} and
\textit{chu}. Syllables in capital letters at the beginning of the piece are not drumming syllables but are
sung by the drummer as a time signal to other players:

\begin{verbatim}
/Ā - Hā - - /Hā - Hā - - /CA - CA - /CA - HAḥ - o /
\end{verbatim}

Sung time signals may appear several times within one composition. Drumming syllables are
written in small letters (systems 3 and 4 in the example below). A horizontal line in a box means
that the previous syllable continues to sound. A small circle in a box is a rest. (Fig. 145)

When my \textit{paścataḷa} apprenticeship was complete, I met the Bhaktapur Guruju who earlier had
refused to teach me\textsuperscript{13} and I showed him what I had learnt in Kathmandu. He admitted that the
compositions were exactly the same as those that he had, as the repertoire had come from Kath-
mandu to Bhaktapur. According to him, those few Vajrācāryas in the Kathmandu Valley who
were capable of playing the pieces, had to combine forces during important \textit{pūjās}. In 1992, the
number of initiated \textit{caryā} dancers had dwindled to twelve individuals. Ratnakaji had already
mentioned that it was this critical lack of manpower and concern for the impending end of their
tradition that had caused some Vajrācāryas in 1957 to opt for teaching compositions of lesser
ritual importance to outsiders. Other Gurujus had insisted on complete secrecy—whatever the
consequences. The Bhaktapur Guruju played one piece for me. The syllables were mostly what I

\textsuperscript{13} He asked me to remain anonymous, fearing criticism from his community.
had learnt in Kathmandu. But his way of playing the drum was different (see second chart below),
sometimes using other drumheads than Ratnakaji. Sometimes he used longer rests and different
pitches during recitation. It did not significantly alter the result. Finally, he offered to teach me his
complete paṇcatāla repertoire. Chapters 11.18 and 11.19 include both, the Kathmandu repertoire
and what remains of the Bhaktapur tradition of paṇcatāla.

The following charts of drumming syllables and basic patterns of the paṇcatāla offer compar-
ison between the Kathmandu tradition taught by Ratnakaji Vajracharya and the Bhaktapur way of
playing. Three lines represent the compound drum’s three heads that are played with dampened,
open and ringing strokes. (Figs. 146, 147)

Kathmandu paṇcatāla:
Loud ringing strokes nā and yā are produced by the right hand on the higher sounding head of
the horizontal lālākhǐ drum and are represented by a circle on the middle line. Open (ki, gi, ci,
tū, tye, da, nye, nwa, sī, galascaka) and dampened (di) strokes produced by the right hand on the
same drumhead are represented by a dot and a cross on the middle line.

Open (dha, dhā, dhye, ji) and dampened (di) strokes produced by the left hand on the lower
sounding head of the horizontal lālākhǐ drum are represented by a dot and a cross on the lower line.

The upper line represents the small head of the drum tied vertically in front of the lālākhǐ. It
is played with both hands producing only dampened (ta, tan, tā, takũnyekũ) sounds.

The paṇcatāla drum repertoire of Kathmandu includes the following compositions: Mū dyāhl-
hāygu, tvāka dyahläygu, svā chāya, jhapa tāla, jhapa yā kau, eka tāla, jati, durjamān, bhramarā,
sani, caspati, trihudā, jhāka, chādana, mangala, lapaha, khatākāra, vatikā, pyēgamātha, māthe
yā kau and sunyamātha.

Bhaktapur paṇcatāla:
Loud, ringing sounds never occur. The correlation between syllables and playing technique
appears arbitrary and inconsistent. I take this as a proof of a sadly neglected tradition of paṇcatāla
playing in Bhaktapur and recommend using the much more dependable Kathmandu version of
surviving paṇcatāla compositions. It represents a living tradition, not a half forgotten one. Bhak-
tapur bhramarā has a brief mantra pvaṅgā solo, a recitation and a few drum strokes whereas the
Kathmandu bhramarā does not have an additional drum section.

The paṇcatāla drum repertoire of Bhaktapur includes less compositions. The following pieces
of the Kathmandu repertoire were missing: tvāka dyahläygu, pyēgamātha and māthe yā kau.
Kathmandu Pañcatāla

Higher sounding head of lālākhī (right hand)

ṇā, yā (loud, ringing)

ki, gi, ci, tū, tye, da, nye, nva, sī (open)

dī (dampened)

Lower sounding head of lālākhī (left hand)

dī, dhā, dhā, dhye, ji

Drum tied in front of lālākhī (both hands)

ta, tan, tā

Stroke combinations

jhī, jhē, thā

dha ga, di gi

ṅā di

takunā, khatyenā

takūnyekū

galascaka

Fig. 146
### Bhaktapur Pañcatāla

**Higher sounding head of lālākhi (right hand)**

\[ ki, ci, ji, tū, tye, da, di, nā, nye, nva, yā, sī \text{(open)} \]

**Lower sounding head of lālākhi (left hand)**

\[ gi, di, dha, dhā, dhi, dhye, ra \]

**Drum tied in front of lālākhi (both hands)**

\[ ka, ga, gā, tā, tan, tye, thā, dā, dā, na, nye, nva, ra, sī \]

**Stroke combinations**

\[ jhī, jhē, thā \]

\[ dha ga \]

\[ nā di, di gi \]

\[ takunā, khatyenā \]

\[ takūnyekū \]

\[ galascaka \]
A typical sequence of *caryā* dances performed during public shows in Kathmandu in the 1990s by dancers trained by Ratnakaji Vajracharya—including his talented son Prajwal Ratna Vajracharya and five more dancers

14:

- Ṣodaśa lāsya—dance of sixteen offerings (for three dancers)
- Mañjurī (three dancers)
- Pañcabuddha (five dancers)
- Āryatārā and Amoghasiddhi (two dancers)
- *Mandala nṛtya va yoginī*  
- Gaṇeś  
- Nairātmā  
- Bhairava  
- Arṇapūrṇa  
- Śimha murtī  
- Māyājālā (sad, about illusion, only for ritual)  
- Bajrayoginī  
- Bajrapāṇī  
- Lokeśvar  
- Āryatārā

Performance of this programme takes approximately eighty minutes. Prajwal allowed me to photograph his demonstration of different postures and *mudrā* gestures applied during those dances (Figs. 148–154).

His father and *guru*, Ratnakaji Vajracharya told the story of the origin of *pañcatāla* compositions:

Surtavajra Vajrācārya was a powerful tantric Buddhist yogi who practised spiritual self-discipline *tapasyā* at Guhyeśvarī near Paśupatināth. He attained supernatural magic *sidhī* powers and created the drumming syllables and compositions for the *pañcatāla* drum, weaving in powerful *mantras*. To master these *mantras*, his disciples were required to face the true nature of their existence by practicing austerities at the *masān* cremation site. They were afraid of this special *sādhana* discipline and learnt only the plain drumming syllables that they passed on. Surtavajra left the Kathmandu Valley to pursue his practice at Kāśī (Benares) where local people built a small *caitya* for him. Uttering a special *mantra*, he transferred the monument to Kathmandu. It stands at Śīghaḥbāhā (Śīghatamahāvihāra) or Kathesībhū as the centre of the big *caitya* later built around it. Next to this *caitya* stands the *āgāchē* where the highest *caryā* dances were performed in secrecy.

14 according to their programme notes
Figs. 149–150: Prajwal Ratna Vajracharya demonstrating cāryā dance postures
4 Dances

Fig. 151: Prajwal Ratna Vajracharya demonstrating caryā dance postures

Figs. 152–154: Prajwal demonstrating mudrā gestures, the most prominent element of caryā dance
Stylistically the *pañcatāla* repertoire stands apart from all other Newar drum traditions. It is slow and serene in character, almost entirely free of identical repetitions. With the complete absence of lively rhythms, the effect of the pieces resembles that of a slow *sūtra* recitation. The *pañcatāla* drum and the natural trumpets could be later additions to an essentially vocal practice. The number of cymbal strokes that go with the long *mū dyahlhāygu* is one hundred and eight—symbolizing perfection and also the number of beads in a Buddhist *mālā* rosary and of the emanations of Avalokiteśvara, et cetera. I presume that much more symbolic meaning is woven into these compositions and could perhaps be revealed after initiation into the dance practice.

### 4.2 Navadurgā *pyākhā*

Members of the Gāthā gardener caste take turns in performing the annual Navadurgā dance cycle that was introduced by King Suvarṇa Malla of Bhaktapur (1505–1519). The caste ranges at the same ritual level as other lower occupational castes, blacksmiths, barbers, painters, oilpressers, torch bearers, dyers, palanquin bearers, etc. According to legend their musical instruments—the barrel-shaped *dyahkhĩ* drum, the hourglass-shaped *damaru/dabadaba* drum, the pair of heavy *tāḥ* cymbals made of bronze and the large pair of flat *jhyāli* cymbals made of brass—were stolen in Harisiddhi and brought to Bhaktapur during the early 16th century when the Navadurgā dance started. The *dyahkhĩ* carries a small silver mask of Kālī in front of the ram’s horns representing Nāṣaḥdyāḥ tied to it. It also carries a silver container with a nail pointing into black *mvahani* soot preserved from the *khame* buffalo sacrifice during Mahānavamī. Before the Navadurgā leave their *dyahchẽ* god house for processions, a vertical line is drawn with sacrificial soot on every dancer’s forehead, supposedly transporting them into another state of consciousness. (Fig. 155)

Originally, the Navadurgā roamed as bloodthirsty man-eaters in a forest near Nala. They were tamed and subdued with magic. A Brahman with rare tantric skills and strong charms succeeded in turning them into a beneficial troupe of powerful divine protectors. A scary uneasiness remains, as no charm was strong enough to suppress their vampire habits. Painted fangs on their masks betray their lust for blood gushing from the severed jugular vein of sacrificial animals. They maintain a playful but disturbing habit of catching children—reluctantly releasing them after a few seconds—with their veins intact.

Until the general use of mobile phones in Bhaktapur for the past twenty-five years, taking pictures of the Navadurgā remained strictly taboo. The dancers are bound by an oath not to reveal any detail of their sacred tradition. This concerns also their music. As a resident of Bhaktapur I was obliged to respect their rules and over the years we became friends. In 1988, ten young Gāthā men chose me as their teacher of the *dhimay* drum. But discretion had to be maintained. Sorry, dear reader, but the study of the music of the Navadurgā remains to be documented by a future ethnomusicologist—possibly of educated Gāthā background. My colleague under the German Nepal Research Programme, the architectural anthropologist Niels Gutschow is much

15 Gathu in Kathmandu Newari.
16 The only other drum carrying such horns is the *kvakhĩ/dhā̃* played during navabājā performances.
taller than I and capable of staring down a charging elephant, let alone an angered Bhaktapur mob. His impressive photo documentation of Navadurgā dancers and maps of their proccessional routes provide rare insight into this cult. In 1990 and 1991 the Norwegian anthropologist Tordis Korvald applied her considerable charm as a fearless young lady from Bergen, and the Navadurgā instantly adopted her as permanent company.

A miracle!

18 Korvald 1993
During the rainy season Bhaktapur is left without protection of the Navadurgā. The dance masks are cremated on the day of Bhāgasiti (May/June). During monsoon the gods await reincarnation whilst people suffer from seasonal infectious diseases. This is regularly highlighted by the Municipality’s efforts in spraying white chlorinated lime powder in the mucky areas bordering the brick pavement of Bhaktapur’s less populated roads. On the day of Ghatāmugaḥ carhe (July/August) the advent of the new life cycle of the gods is heralded by a procession of Navadurgā dancers clad in white frocks and preceded by four Jugi shawm players and Sāymi oilpressers playing natural kā̃̃trumpets. They proceed from their dyahcē in Gachē to the potters’ quarter Tālākva. The Navadurgā nāyah draws a mandala on the head potter’s hand, blesses him for successful work and gives him a silver coin as an advance for various clay vessels that the Navadurgā are going to collect on Mahāśṭhamā. The Navadurgā collect black clay to deliver it at the mask-maker’s workshop in Yāchē. There they kneed the clay and divide it into proper portions, before consecrating the clay portions with a chicken sacrifice and returning to their dyahcē where the Jugi and Sāymi musicians are invited for a feast. Also the khaṃe buffalo arrives at the Navadurgā dyahcē, to be fattened up and taken good care of until it is sacrificed on Mahānavāmā at Brahmāyaṃī.

On the same day of Ghatāmugaḥ carhe people build ninety Gathā̃mugaḥ disease demons in different localities of Bhaktapur. They use straw bundles and sticks for limbs, a painted round tray for a menacing face and a prominent arrangement of two grapefruits and a whopping straw phallus for male sexual organs. At dusk, the naughty effigies are pulled out of town and burnt at the periphery to the cheers of the crowd. Mothers purify their babies in the smoke. It is the beginning of the festival season.

Until mvahani (September/October), the mask-maker Purṇa Chitrakār builds the dance masks to prescribed size and paints the glorious faces of the gods. The Navadurgā masks include the gods Śiva, Gaṇeśa, Maheśvarī, Brahmāyaṃī, Kumārī, Bhadrakālī, Vārāhī, Indrāyaṃī, Mahākālī, Sinha, Bhairava, Dumha and Śveta Bhairava. Arguably they are the most beautiful and perfect dance masks made in the Kathmandu Valley. They differ in material, size and painted detail from similar masks sold in tourist shops. Dancers support the heavy masks with a turban protecting their heads.

Apprenticeship of new dancers starts during the month of Śrāvaṇ (July/August). Every morning at 3 a.m. they wash their face and offer prayer at Brahmāyaṃī. In the evening they visit Jēlā Nāsahdyāṇ with small offerings and prayer. The guru teaches them in their respective homes where both aspects of the music god, Jēlā Nāsahdyāṇ and Haimādyāṇ are present in the form of betelnuts on rice mounds kept in clay cups. Each dancer practises alone at home until one month before Mahāśṭhamā. During this final month all dancers rehearse together in the courtyard behind the Navadurgā dyahcē. In the evening of Mahāśṭhamā, the dancers are initiated at the shrine of Nāsahdyāṇ in Jēlā. The drum, the two pairs of cymbals and the ankle bells for the dancers are placed on diagrams prepared with flour by the officiating tantric Ācāju ritual specialist. The instruments are decorated with flowers and other offerings to Nāsahdyāṇ who resides in them and enables the annual re-appearance of musical sound. In turn, the dancers receive their ankle-bells

19 cf. chapter 3
20 cf. chapter 2
21 cf. photo on p. 159
from the Ācāju who then proceeds to prepare the sacrificial ram for the sacrifice. As soon as the ram is sacrificed at the shrine of Nāṣahdyah, the dancers rush to be the first one to drink warm blood from the animal's severed throat. Accompanied with dyahkhī and cymbals they perform the initial dance of their annual cycle—still without dance masks—before returning to their dyahchē for a feast. In a niche on the ground floor of the dyahchē the huge khame buffalo munches his fodder. He has another day to live.

In the late afternoon of Mahānavamī, the mask-maker displays the finished masks in the courtyard below his workshop in Yāchē. Thousands of Bhaktapurians pass through this courtyard to worship the masks and behold them in their glory. On the following day the masks will be soiled with sacrificial blood and red powder. In front of the temple of Yāchē Gaṇeṣa the local navadāphā group performs. Gradually people disperse until the Navadurgā dancers arrive late at night to collect the masks and carry them to the Brahmāyaṇī shrine east of Bhaktapur. It is inauspicious to watch them in the process. People keep away. Outsiders are prohibited from watching the earlier proceedings at Brahmāyaṇī. With the expert assistance of a senior Nāy butcher, the khame buffalo is sacrificed as part of the ritual of the annual rebirth of the Navadurgā in their new masks. Carrying chunks of buffalo meat, seven Navadurgā dancers proceed to Yāchē to provide meat as payment to the mask-maker before returning to Brahmāyaṇī with the new set of masks in their baskets.

In the early morning hours of Vijayā Daśamī a huge crowd arrives to take a purifying dip in the river—nowadays only a brief sprinkle of polluted river water or only a gesture suggesting sprinkling—and receive blessings from the Navadurgā. After a sleepless night and soaked with buffalo blood, the Navadurgā dancers distribute blessings in the form of flowers, food and ritual pasūkā garlands of differently coloured threads. The dancers rest until the late afternoon when the festive crowd returns to witness the sacred moments when at dusk the dancers put on the masks one after another and enter Bhaktapur in a glorious procession. The masks are brimming with powerful divine presence. The crowd escorts the gods into Bhaktapur in a grand manner. Cotton sheets are spread for the shivering dancers to proceed on with their bare feet. People touch the masks, then their forehead with their right hand to partake in the divine energy. Processional music groups arrive with flowers and edible offerings. The arrival of the Navadurgā is a supreme moment of bliss. Until the early 1960s an ensemble of eighteen Sāymi oilpressers preceded the gods with natural kā trumpets, producing an ominous, powerful roar. Behind them followed the percussion ensemble of the Navadurgā with their rattling hourglass-drum and the scattered rhythms produced by dyahkhī and special cymbals. No other music sounds like that of the Navadurgā. At night it is instantly identified from a distance. Other music ensembles escort the Navadurgā at times, starting with the butchers' nāykhibājā, the natural trumpets played by oilpressers, further dhimaybājā, dhābājā and ensembles of transverse flutes bāsuri. These processional music groups play at the same time but never together with the Navadurgā. Stylistically apart, the music of the gods appears to come from another source beyond musical compatibility. People love making funny allusions based on drum patterns. The following citation of the basic

22 For several decades, this was the duty of my teacher of nāykhibājā, the late Kajilal Shahi.
23 shivering indicates being possessed
processional Navadurgā pattern is a joke referring to the notorious alcohol consumption of the dancers. The words imitate the five beat metre and the cymbal strokes:

/ 1 2 / 3 4 5 / 1 2 / 3 4 5 /
/khẽ  o / kāl  o o / bhatti  o / thvã  o  o /

Khẽ kāl translates as ‘fry scrambled egg’, bhatti thvã as ‘local rice beer bar’, meaning:

‘Here comes the bar!’

Having entered Bhaktapur at the eastern gate, the Navadurgā attend their first invitations for ritual dyahbhvaykegu feasts, before proceeding to the Golden Gate leading to the Taleju temple in the palace compound of the Malla kings. The Taleju priests meet the Navadurgā in front of the gate, before they proceed to the inner múlcok to greet Taleju. It was on this occasion when King Raṇajit Malla and his royal guest from Gorkha, Prthvīnārāyaṇa Sāha awaited the Navadurgā, that Bhairava presented prasād not to the King of Bhaktapur but to his cunning guest who was already planning to conquer the Malla kingdoms24. Every year the priests come outside with two insignia of the Malla kings, a sword and a horse. Together with the gods they walk along the pradakṣiṇā, first through the Lower Town, then the Upper Town. Hindu kings were considered avatārs of Lord Viṣṇu. So it was natural for them to keep good relations with other gods—definitely excellent publicity. If after 1769 the deposed Malla kings were reduced to symbolic representation in absentia, the Sāha (Shah) kings of Nepal and their queens visited the Navadurgā every Daśamī full moon in their dyahchẽ, to receive blessings in the form of a tika mark on the forehead and prasād. Every year, King Birendra Shah and later his brother Gyānendra donated a new set of costumes to the dancers. When monarchy was abolished in 2008, the Navadurgā lost important royal sponsors.

During private invitations to the Navadurgā people welcome the gods to feast and dance in front of their homes. Usually a piglet is sacrificed by ripping out its little heart. After a brief dance, Bhairava slits the skin open with a sharp fingernail, tears out the heart and throws it in front of the roofed palanquin of the oleander goddess Siphvadyaḥ. In front of the pot with oleander branches stands a wrought silver plaque depicting Mahālakṣmī. The mask of Mahādeva is tied to the roof pinnacle. This palanquin is always carried along when the Navadurgā attend private invitations and during their twenty-one neighbourhood visits. Immediately the other dancers arrive, keen on drinking their share of fresh blood. On special occasions, a family may offer pañcabali, five different sacrificial animals. In 1984 I witnessed a pañcabali offering in Kvāchẽ where the horrified buffalo calf watched with bulging eyes as the frenzied dancers sunk their teeth into its neck. During dyahbhvaykegu food and drinks are offered in excess. The dancers drink much, eat little and carry the rest home. Each of them has a grubby cotton bag attached to the right side of his coat, containing a mixture of food, raw meat and fruit. When the dancers want to offer a special treat to someone they are fond of, their hand disappears in the bag and emerges with a squeezed

24 according to Nepālikabhūpavamśávalī 108–111, see Bajracharya and Michaels, 2016, p. 97
mixture of its contents that is offered as *prasād*, edible blessing. It should be eaten only by those who know exactly what they are doing.25

Before the 2015 earthquake, every full moon after *mvahani* was the day when the Navadurgā visited my home, a splendid 19th century structure inhabited by various descendants of the wealthy Śākya merchant who had built the house and had donated massive silver waist bells to the dancers. On this full moon occasion the dancers arrived not only wearing those precious waist bells but also with their portable palanquin and the severed head of the *khame* buffalo. A drummer and a *sichyāh* cymbal-player of the Nāy butcher caste used to walk in front of the Navadurgā, playing the *nāykhī* piece *pūjākhī* whilst carrying the reeking buffalo head. From personal experience as *nāykhī* drummer I can certify to the physical challenge of playing the *pūjākhī* piece during the procession from the Navadurgā dyahchẽ to my home in Yatāchẽ, with a bamboo pole resting on my right shoulder, carrying the dangling buffalo head. The gods receive offerings in exchange for distributing blessings. Before the feast begins, Kumārī holds a skull cup filled with rice beer and dances a polite beer-offering dance in front of the palanquin of the oleander goddess Siphvadyah with the silver plaque of Mahālakṣmī. Having had their feast and a taste of fresh piglet blood, the Navadurgā used to come upstairs for a sip of cognac—their stomach lining being in superb condition.

The most significant event after the *khame* buffalo sacrifice follows eight days after Mahānapamī. It is called *bihi*, the blood-drinking ritual. For a week after the sacrifice, the *khame* blood and brains are left to decay in big clay pots kept in the Navadurgā dyahchẽ. The *bihi* ritual starts in the evening with Kumārī dancing in the courtyard of the *math* next to the Dattātreya temple, before the Navadurgā proceed to Gaḥchẽ where the remaining gods dance spectacular individual dances until those ghastly refreshments arrive from the Navadurgā dyahchẽ. During gaps between the individual Navadurgā dances, the butchers entertain onlookers by playing their lively dance piece *calti*. In the 1980s, the blood drinking ritual combined five different music ensembles playing simultaneously, lending significance to this event. It was the prime occasion for the earlier Gaḥchẽ navabājā to play. The ensemble did not survive King Mahendra’s ‘land reform’. Owing to the late hour, the climax of the ritual attracted only a handful of onlookers. On the arrival of the decayed blood and brains, the Navadurgā reveal their lust for blood in a telling display of frenzy.

When I trained ten Navadurgā dancers as *dhimay* drummers, I asked them casually how they could possibly consume those revolting things with such relish. “In everyday life we would not touch such things. When the goddess possesses us, it tastes like the most delicious food. It happens as soon as the mark of soot from the silver container tied to the drum touches our forehead,” was the answer. Before the Navadurgā leave their dyahchẽ, a vertical soot line is drawn across their forehead with that nail in the silver soot container. That suffices to induce their lucid state as divine beings—their beneficial powers mixed with a streak of the old vampire habit. Communicating with them when they were in this state reminded me of certain situations in the psychedelic age back in the late 1960s. (Map 30, 31)

25 *Prasād* must not touch the ground. My advice: If you are not equipped with a resilient stomach lining, give the clammy lot to a child, make big eyes and say ‘*prasād*’. Children love this.
4.2 Navadurgā *pyākhā*

*Map 30:* Navadurgā annual visits to twenty-one neighbourhoods (map: Niels Gutschow, in Levy 1990, p. 233)

*Map 31:* Navadurgā visiting localities in and around Bhaktapur (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)
During winter and spring the Navadurgā observe a demanding schedule of visiting twenty-one neighbourhoods of Bhaktapur where they perform their popular ṅalakegu ritual, literally ‘fishing’. This abbreviation for ‘catching a victim’ hints at earlier human sacrifice in the olden days. Invariably, a local processional music group proceeds to the Navadurgā dyahchē to escort the gods to their neighbourhood and back. In addition to neighbourhoods the Navadurgā visit nineteen villages within the realm of the old kingdom of Bhaktapur and beyond. They go to Paśupatināth at night to bang against the door of the locked shrine, in a robust greeting to Lord Śiva who prefers to avoid direct encounter. The doors remain shut. They also visit the distant Nāsahdyah cave at Kabilās near Nuwakot. (Fig. 156)

The annual cycle of Bhaktapur’s Navadurgā terminates on the day of Bhāgasiti (May/June). The dancers enact their death in the dyahchē, falling on their back like May beetles. The tuning paste attached to the left drumhead of the dyakhī is scraped off and the sacred music dies,

26 Gutschow 2017 offers an exhaustive photo documentation of the ṅalakegu ritual and the compulsory pantomime, a love scene or pas-de-deux of Śveta Bhairava and Mahākāli.
27 cf. Michaels 1994, chapter IV

Fig. 156: Ganeśa dances, supported by watching mother goddesses Brahmāyāṇī, Maheśvarī, Kumārī and Indrāyaṇī with mudra gestures. The masks of Mahākāli and Vārāhī are kept hanging at the wall. Annual Navadurgā visit to Sākvalā 2018 (photo: courtesy of Rajkumar Manandhar)
too. A death procession heralded by butchers playing their death music sībājā and—up to the 1960s—eighteen oilpressers playing kā̃ trumpets proceeds to Brahmāyanī where the masks and the tuning paste are cremated on a lotus-shaped carved stone in front of the shrine. The gods are dead, but not completely. They are said to reside in the flooded paddy fields, taking a temporary appearance as tiny little fish until the dry season arrives and the time for reincarnation as powerful protectors of Bhaktapur.

Before mvahani the Kulu drum-maker repairs and tightens the sacred dyahkhī drum. Both drumheads are made of nāk hides. Owing to its special status as the seat of Nāsahdyah during the annual dance cycle, the Kulu has to perform a chemā pūjā on completion of the drum repair, asking the god for excuse for having touched the drum with his feet in the process of tightening the drum straps. Before the 1980s this required a blood sacrifice. Later the god had to be content with an egg—for economic reasons. The original dyahkhī drum from the early sixteenth century must have been replaced at least once. This one carries the inscription (siddham) śrī śrī sumati (ja)ya jītāmitra malla devasana dayakā samvata (N.S. 805?) vaiśākha śu di śubha. Unfortunately the carving of the date is damaged but it is clear that King Jitāmitra Malla (r. 1673–1696) donated this drum that is still in use. (Fig. 157)

**Fig. 157:** Shankha Bahadur Kulu performing chemā pūjā for the repaired dyahkhī drum. The ancient ram horns representing Nāsahdyah, the silver mask representing Mahākālī and the metal container for sacrificial soot are tied to the drum after delivery to the Navadurgā. September 1990

28 nāk: female domestic yāk, Bos gruniens
Not only musical instruments have a symbolic function. It appears to be typical of Newar culture that almost everything can have another meaning or several layers of meaning. This was very confusing when I began to learn the language. A ‘flat elephant’ means one thousand rupees, a ‘pirāne pūjā’ of a drumming apprenticeship means that someone became pregnant, having stomach pain means being jealous, etc. Almost everything can have sexual meaning—definitely when it comes to ‘drums’ and ‘drumming’. It takes years before one can speak Newari with confidence and without causing perpetual merriment. Until then it feels like treading on thin ice.

4.3 Sāpāru Dances

Sāpāru is a major town ritual for the living to celebrate the dead, escort them to heaven and dance away grief and sadness caused by the loss of a family member. Conceived to bring a smile to the face of a mourning princess, sāpāru required the combined efforts of all Bhaktapurians who exploded on royal command into a hilarious carnival with dances, cross-dressing and theatrical entertainments. The remedy worked. When the princess observed the proceedings, the corners of her mouth began to twitch. She smiled, she giggled and soon lost all regal reservation, roaring with laughter and producing tears of mirth, causing the entire court to indulge in general merriment. Her cure became immensely popular and had to be repeated every year on the day after Gū punhī (July/August). The festival is announced on full moon evening by a pitiful little stick dance organised by the local guthi samsthān office. An underpaid Jugi shawm-player and a dhā̃-drummer play an instrumental version of the identifying song, a dialogue:

*Tāhāmacā ganā taye?—Gvakhā pvāle taye.*

*Gvakhā pvāle manhyā sā.—Khusī cuīka chve.*

Where to dump the tall cow?—Put it into the wall niche.
It will not fit in the niche.—Dump it in the river.

Could there be a gentler vehicle for leading departed souls to vaikuṇṭha than a cow? Every bereaved family prepares a cow effigy to be carried along the pradakaśiṇa route. These ‘cows’ can be of six varieties. The most common variety is called tāhāsā̃, literally ‘tall cow’—in comparison to the small cow effigy used for dead children and shouldered by one person, with eyeholes for orientation. It carries a painted face of a cow, straw horns and a photo of the person who passed away during the past twelve months. In front of the tāhāsā̃ cow effigy, family members and friends dance the popular ghẽtãgiśi stick dance (Fig. 158). Small cow effigies for children are carried along the pradakaśiṇa route without music and dance during the night before the main festival day. In the 1980s the festival extended to an entire week of masked dances, theatrical sketches and

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29 abode of Nārāyaṇa
30 cf. chapter 3
31 cf. Widdess 2006
4.3 Sāpāru Dances

Fig. 158: Ghētāgiśi stick dance during sāpāru, preceding two tall cow effigies (in the background), 1988
ballad singing. These were presented every night along the pradaksīna, for a maximum number of people to watch at leisure. For the past thirty years stick dances have been performed not only on the first day in front of approximately five hundred cows leading departed souls to heaven but also without cows for the entire week, with banners highlighting some political agenda or just for the fun of it, the ‘Look at me!’ agenda. It is said that there was freedom of speech guaranteed during presentations—an exception during the absolute monarchy before 1990 and even more so during the restrictive Rāṇā regime (1846–1951). Even today, actors proclaiming political criticism prefer to remain unidentified and on the safe side, wearing masks or cotton bands covering their face. When we reconstructed the Dhaubhadel Śivalaya in 1995 to accommodate Kathmandu University’s Department of Music, some members of the local Stalinist party attacked me in style, using Gāĩcā pyākhā as their propaganda mouthpiece during sāpāru week. Those who insisted on complete control of Bhaktapur perceived the university department as an intruder. Fortunately things calmed down over the years into relaxed co-existence.

The gods, too, make their appearance during the first days of the sāpāru week. The cow processions end with Bhairava participating as a giant straw cow effigy together with his consort, Ajimā. Two days later Bhairava in the company of a smaller palanquin with a statue of King Girvāṇ Shah are carried along the pradaksīna, on the first day through the lower town and on the second day through the upper town. Other processions of gods include Sūrya Vināyak Gaṇeś, Lokeśvar, Caṇḍeśvarī (every twelve years), Dattātreya and Vārāhī. These processions are announced by several music groups walking in front, raising expectations with a deafening mixture of various processional music genres—all playing and singing simultaneously at maximum volume that makes even the buildings tremble in the presence of the gods. In 1983 we identified the following dances presented during sāpāru week. They proceed stepwise along the pradaksīna, every night performing in two or three squares where instantly audiences gather to enjoy the spectacle. (Figs. 159–171)

- māka pyākhā (monkey dance, virtuosic stick dances with special costumes and choreography, with dhā and lālākhī accompaniment): 2 or 3 groups,
- bhālū pyākhā (bear dance with lālākhī accompaniment),
- mhvayakhā pyākhā (peacock dance),
- salā̃cā pyākhā (horse dance),
- kalālicā pyākhā (old ‘woman’ dancing with basket used for ritual offerings with): 3 groups,
- jaṅgali pyākhā (thug dance),
- khyāḥ pyākhā (naughty spirits dance with lālākhī accompaniment): 3 groups,
- nā pyākhā (fish dance),
- Hanumān pyākhā (dance of the monkey hero with lālākhī accompaniment),
- khicā pyākhā (dog dance with lālākhī accompaniment): 3 or 4 groups,
- nāgācā pyākhā (dance of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa with flute ensemble): 6 or 7 groups,
- phākãdāli pyākhā (butterfly dance with lālākhī accompaniment): 3 or 4 groups,
- lusi pyākhā (pestle dance): 3 groups,

32  cf. chapter 3
175

— kavācā pyākhā (skeleton dance with lālākhĩ accompaniment): 5 or 6 groups,
— natuvācā pyākhā (dance with taro leaves): 3 groups,
— kapā̃y phenigu pyākhā (cotton spinning song sung by ‘ladies’ at spinning wheels with māḍal and harmonium accompaniment): 6 or 7 groups,
— Jyāpu-Jyāpunī pyākhā (farmer ‘women’ serving drinks to farmers with lālākhĩ): many
— Bhaila pyākhā33 (masked dance of the potters, with dhā, lālākhĩ and pvaṅgā): 3 groups,
— Gāĩncā pyākhā (Gāine bard with toy sāraṅgī or sticks accompanying the song): many groups,
— jhyāure pyākhā (‘modern’ dance with pairs representing various ethnic groups): many groups,
— Rāmāyaṇī pyākhā (bhajan with children dressed as Rāmāyaṇa heros, with tablā and harmonium): 3 groups,
— khyāla pyākhā (song with māḍal accompaniment and pair dances of farmers, mendicants, joker and quarreller): 2 groups,
— nāṭak (street theatre): many groups, and
— kha pyākhā34 (opulent dance drama about Mahābhārata episodes accompanied with song, several drums, cymbals, bāsuri, pvaṅgā and mvālĩ).

33 see chapter 4.4
34 see chapter 4.6

Fig. 159: Bhālā pyākhā during sāpāru week 1988. The sleeping ‘bear’ crouching in the centre is ready to pounce when angered by two clowns.
Fig. 160: Sujamādhi bāsuri khalah accompany their grandsons’ Rādhākrṣṇa pyākhā during sāpāru 1988. Rādhā and Krṣṇa pinch each other’s cheeks as part of their foreplay.

Fig. 161: Salācā pyākhā (horse dance), 1987
4.3 Sāpāru Dances

*Fig. 162:* Khyāh pyākhā (naughty ghosts dance) 1988

*Fig. 163:* Māka pyākhā (monkey stick dance) 1988
Fig. 164: Cross-dressing (Jyāpu-Jyāpunī pyākhā), 1986

Fig. 165: Lākhe pyākhā (man-eating rākṣasa dance), 1986
4.3 Sāpāru Dances

Fig. 166: Gāicā pyākhā (singing bards' dance), 1988

Fig. 167: Garuḍa eagle, a character of kha pyākhā, 1987
Fig. 168: Kapāy phenigu pyākha (cotton spinning song with beautiful ‘ladies’ at spinning wheels), 1990

Fig. 169: Bhaila pyākha (Bhairava dance), 1988
4.3 Sāpāru Dances

Fig. 170: Khicā pyākā (dog dance), 1988

Fig. 171: Kavācā pyākā (skeleton dance), 1988
For the past twenty-five years, girls have increasingly participated in stick dances and theatre presentations. Some private schools prepared parades, theatre and dances presented by boys and girls.

The ghētāgiśi stick dance is accompanied with two alternating percussion ensembles, one or several dhā drums with pairs of bhuchyāḥ and sichyāḥ cymbals and the lālākhĩ drum with tāḥ cymbals. The notations of each drum’s patterns are included in chapter 11.17. Before the procession starts, both percussion ensembles play their respective dyahlhāygu invocations. The dance begins when either one ensemble starts with the basic dance pattern and some of its variants in an even metre. Each pattern is repeated. On the final tā stroke of each line, the pair dancers’ sticks meet with a clacking sound. When the lead drummer feels that the situation asks for more fire, he switches to a shorter version of the basic pattern that comes in triple metre, having shorter intervals between the clashing stick climaxes. Before everybody gets exhausted, the drummer plays an accelerating roll, signaling a change of percussion ensembles. The other group starts the same procedure from the beginning, allowing the earlier drummers to rest for a few minutes. In this way the procession trundles along the pradakṣinā route—with necessary interruptions for drinking water. Whenever they pass a temple or a shrine, the respective god or goddess is honoured with dyahlhāygu. After two to three hours the procession reaches the starting point where the organising family invites all participants for food and drinks. The drums and cymbals are immediately passed on to another procession. On this day, drums are in high demand and may take the round several times. The cow effigy is dismantled and unusable parts are dumped in the river—as the song suggests. Now everybody looks forward to the colourful performances of song, dance and theatre at night, anticipating an entire week of joyous entertainment.

4.4 Bhaila pyākhã

One of the most spectacular masked dances performed during sāparu week at night, Bhaila pyākhã deserves a special chapter in this publication. Rather than telling a story, this is a set of different masked dances presenting Bhairava and his entourage of mother goddesses (Mahākālī, Kumārī, and Vārāhī) and demonic characters infesting cremation grounds—several bloodthirsty Vetālas, a Bhūcā, two dogs and two skeletons. Two acrobats in furry costumes are the undisputed highlight of the show. These Khyāḥ dancers present an instructive variety of erotic acts to the cheering crowd, highlighting sex as an antidote against death. At the finale of the show, a joker cum lion tamer appears with his beasts, a lion and a tiger. He teaches them to bow in front of the gods and serve them as vehicles. The gods dance to the raucous sounds of several dhā drums, bhuchyāḥ and sichyāḥ cymbals and natural trumpets pvangā. Nāykhĩ is played only for one short piece before dhā drums take over again. The dancers who perform in pairs, Khicā (dogs), Kavãcā (skeletons) and Khyāḥ need the softer accompaniment of lālākhĩ and tāḥ cymbals. Other drum patterns are also part of the dhābājā and navabājā repertoires. In the context of Bhaila pyākhã they are played much slower, allowing dancers to synchronize their movements with the drumming. Some key patterns appear also in the lālākhĩ accompaniment of dāphā songs, reminding singers of the dancing gods. (Figs. 172–181)
town. After the 1988 earthquake and with massive building construction taking off during the following decades all over the Kathmandu Valley, brick production became a huge business that brought handsome revenues to the town council issuing permits for installing industrial brick kilns. Vast agricultural farmland around Bhaktapur was lost, polluted or built on. Farmers had sold their land, many finding themselves as a new proletariat. Food prices soared, as it had to be imported. Looking from my rooftop in 2002, we counted one hundred and thirty ring kilns with their chimneys belching out black soot and sulfur dioxide. Air pollution had become a deadly menace. Respiratory problems were the chief cause of death. Industrial ring kilns needed hundreds of cheap workers who lived on the site. Wages were so low and working conditions so abysmal that this attracted more and more seasonal workers from extremely poor rural areas of West Nepal. Despite getting skin eruptions caused by the acidic fumes, needy Bhakapurians used to kneed mud and bake bricks ahead of the expensive New Year festival, to afford sacrificial animals and compulsory gifts for family members. All this made some potters rich whereas most of them remained poor.

It has been the pride and privilege of Bhaktapur's potters to organise and present the spectacular masked dance Bhaila *pyākhā* during the nights of the *sāpāru* week (July/August). The dance group of Tālākva collaborated with tourism entrepreneurs to present staged performances combined with stylish dinners. The potters of *Taulāchē* had always financed their annual masked dance with difficulty. In 1988 Jagadish SJB Rana decided to help this dance group with new costumes, wigs and a set of eight new *pvāṅgā* trumpets.
Fig. 172: Kumāh potters of Taulāchẽ performing Bhaila pyākhā with dhābājā (sāpāru 1988). Mahākāli (left) and Varāhī (right) threaten demons with swords and skull cups.

Fig. 173: The new pvaṅgā trumpets accompanying a Bhaila pyākhā performance in Yātāchē (1989)
Two dogs are part of Bhairava’s entourage. They dance a popular duet where the least appealing habits of dogs occupy a prominent place. They frighten children with growling and barking. They even pee on the audience—everything in rhythm, of course.

The composition dhamāk for the navabājā drums dhimaycā, nāykhīcā, dhalak, pachimā and nagarā uses the typical patterns of Khyāḥ pyākhā, the dance of naughty ghosts that lurk on rooftops at night and paralyze people in their sleep. The victim is unable to move and unable to shout. Paralysis begins in the lower legs before it swiftly moves upwards. Before morning arrives, it vanishes. This kind of nightmare appears to be a common experience with Bhaktapurians—perhaps reflecting the tight rules and restrictions of traditional Newar society. The dance is performed by equally naughty and capable young men wearing fur costumes and dangling tongues. Their acrobatics and demonstrations of erotic postures are a favourite with audiences—everything in rhythm, of course.

Simonne Bailey accompanied the Taulāchẽ dancers over a decade with the natural trumpet pvaṅgā. She observed how all the children in the neighbourhood practised the moves and were clearly impressed by the selected cast members. The skeletons were always the youngest boys. Later they graduated up to be dogs and after they might become other minor gods like Vetāla, Bhūcā or Kumārī. She was impressed with the strong community spirit but noticed also that this was changing by 2014 because of school homework. Some of the boys were barred from dancing because school became more important to families paying school fees. The Taulāchẽ group surpassed the other Bhaila pyākhā groups because they used mature men for the main characters and not callow youth which lacked stature.
Fig. 175: Bhaila pyäkhä performed by potters of Taulāchē: Bhairava leading his entourage through a circular dance, brandishing a sword and a skull cup for collecting sacrificial blood (August 1988)

Fig. 176: Silver bracelets worn by Mahākālī
4.4 Bhaïla *pyākhā*

*Fig. 177:* Bhaïla *pyākhā*: Fastening Khícá’s ankle bells during a performance by potters of Taulâché 1988

*Fig. 178:* Khyâh *pyâkhâ* performed by potters of Taulâché, August 1988. A pair of Khyâh doing it to public glee.
Fig. 179. Bhaila pyākhā: mask of Mahākāli made by Purna Chitrakar
4.4 Bhaila pyākhā

Fig. 180: Bhaila pyākhā: Kavācā pyākhā performed by potters of Taulāchē, August 1988

Fig. 181: Potters of Taulāchē accompanying Bhaila pyākhā with dhā, bhuchyāḥ and tāh, 1988
The complete transcribed drum repertoires of Bhaila pyākhā, Khicā pyākhā, Kavācā pyākhā and Khvāh pyākhā are included in chapter 10.6. Drumming syllables differ a little in comparison with similar navabājā compositions. The number of pattern repetitions depends on the dancers completing a circle or a specific movement. When I learnt this repertoire and was allowed to accompany the dances, it struck me like a revelation that I was watching a four-dimensional realisation of the drum patterns and their sacred meaning—all this generated by music emanating from my drum. The beauty of this experience was overwhelming.

4.5 Mahākālī pyākhā

Mahākālī pyākhā is a masked dance based on an episode of the Märkanḍeya Purāṇa where the mothergoddesses slay arrogant daitya demons. Despite contradictory legends of origin narrated by dancers, there is no evidence that the music is older than the late 17th or 18th century. Unlike the ancient cult of the Navadurgā with their masks containing the power of the gods, Mahākālī pyākhā is a spectacular entertainment celebrating the popular triumph of good over evil. It sets the mood for the advancing mvahani festival that celebrates the victory of the goddess Bhagavatī over the demon. The masks are briefly worshipped by the dancers before the performance but not by the public. In contrast to the Navadurgā masks, they are treated as part of the costumes, not as vessels of divine bliss.

The programme of a Mahākālī pyākhā includes mostly complete navabājā compositions to highlight characters and stages of the drama:

1. dyahlhāygu (all dancers pray to Nāsaḥdyaḥ for a successful performance)
2. jati (the mothergoddesses: Mahākālī, Mahālakṣmī and Kumārī)
3. partāl (Mahākālī dances with one Betāḥ, two Khyāḥ and two Bhvucā)
4. dehrā (Mahālakṣmī dances with one Betāḥ and two Kavācā)
5. calti (Kumārī dances with one Betāḥ and two Khyāḥ)
6. kavācā khĩpvu (two Kavācā)
7. dhamāk (two Khyāḥ)
8. jangāli khĩpvu (two humans from the jungle)
9. partāl (Lākhe, a scary but fascinating ogre)
10. calti (Kumārī slaying the demon Sumbha)
11. dehrā (Mahālakṣmī slaying the demon Nisumbha)
12. partāl (Mahākālī slaying the demon Mahesāsur)
13. dehrā (the three goddesses Mahākālī, Mahālakṣmī and Kumārī combined)
14. kvakhĩcā me (the three goddesses receive offerings from a ‘farmer woman’)
15. dhẽtidhã dhā (a lion trainer cum joker teaches Śinhga and Śer how to bow to the goddesses)

35 see Okuyama 1981
36 also called Devī pyākhā
Among fifteen items, eleven are also navabājā compositions played by dhā, pachimā and nagarā drums with cymbals and—the latter two drums—shawm accompaniment. Jati is a special piece for the mothergoddesses and their entourage—without demons, of course—to dance a circular dance where the goddesses proceed into the centre and end with a united stamp, telling all demons to take heed.

In the 1980s, Bhaktapur’s six Mahākālī pyākhā groups performed in Bhaktapur only for touristic events, like ‘Traditional Dinner & Masked Dances’. Traditionally Mahākālī pyākhā was presented during Indra jātrā in Kathmandu where the Mahākālī pyākhā dance groups from Bhaktapur performed for local sponsors. After registration at the Hanumān Dhokā palace the groups moved from neighbourhood to neighbourhood. All the groups received payment by His Majesty’s Government (HMG). Some of these groups gave weekly tourist performances in Kathmandu hotels. This could explain the odd inclusion of Lākhe dance that was never a Bhaktapur tradition. Lākhe dance is popular in Kathmandu and in the western part of the Kathmandu Valley. The ogre is said to spontaneously grab a child for human sacrifice from amongst fascinated onlookers—only in the olden days, of course. But Lākhe dance with its wild and erratic movements has lost none of its fascination. During the 1980s and 1990s the most professional group was Bahatāle Devī pyākhā. Contrary to other groups where children take the minor roles, this group used only adult male dancers who were handpicked from different localities and different castes on the basis of their performance skills. This group was paid Rs. 2,500 for a hotel performance. His Majesty’s Government paid Rs. 3,450 for four performances at Hanumān Dhokā during Indra jātrā. The group received a minimum of Rs. 500 for performances on private invitation during the Indra jātrā week. A phalicā porch was supplied for dancers and musicians to sleep in. (Figs. 182–191)
Fig. 183: Mahākāli slaying an evil Daitya demon to the accompaniment of pachimā (Bahatāle Devī pyākhā)
4.5 Mahākāli pyākhā

Fig. 184: Lākhē dance during a recording session of Bahatāle Devī pyākhā in Yātāchē 1988

Fig. 185: Jagadish Rana (far right) watching the apotheosis with lion and tiger (Bahatāle Devī pyākhā)
4 Dances

Fig. 186: Kumāri (Bahatāle Devī pyākhā)
Fig. 187: Kavācā mask (Bahatāle Devī pyākhā)
Fig. 188: Demon making noise with his waist bells (Bahatāle Devī pyākhā)
Fig. 189: A strapping Kavācā (Bahatāle Devī pyākhā)
Fig. 190: Charging Lākhe demon (Bahatāle Devī pyākhā)
Fig. 191: Giving the lion a final touch (Bahatāle Devī pyākhā)
4.6 Kha pyākhā

An astounding achievement among Newar dance dramas created during the Rāṇā period, kha pyākhā was put on by one hundred and fifty farmers of Byāsi. Kha pyākhā enacted the Mahābhārata episode of King Virāṭa at whose court—the ruins lie east of Birātnagar—the exiled Pāṇḍava brothers found refuge. Starting with the sāpāru week, it took twenty-eight days to perform and was presented on dabu stone platforms in four localities of Bhaktapur. Dancers acting as royals wore embroidered Rāṇā style costumes. Owing to immense production costs involved and no external funding available, kha pyākhā was not sustainable. In 1987 there was an attempt to revive a few dances that allowed me to document a rehearsal in Byāsi. Most of the accompanying drumming pieces were compiled from the lālākhǐ and navabājā repertoires. As with the earlier foundation of navadāphā groups, a similar concept of including all possible sources of musical sound must have been at work. This extravagant dance drama required singers, two lālākhǐ drums with four pvaṅgā natural trumpets, dhā, dhalak, pachimā, nagarā drums, bhuchyāḥ, sichyāḥ, tāḥ, baucā (jhyālicā) cymbals, ten transverse flutes bāsuri, four pvaṅgā trumpets and four Jugi musicians playing mvālĩ shawms. (Figs. 192–194)

Fig. 192: Character from kha pyākhā of Byāsi, 1987
4.6 *Kha pyākhā*

*Figs. 193–194: Characters from *kha pyākhā* of Byāsi, 1987*
A complete performance of *kha pyākhā* comprised of sixty-six different dances and drumming pieces:

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<th>Accompaniment</th>
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<td>2. Sarasvatī</td>
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<td>3. Sutra</td>
<td>jati</td>
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<td>4. Nāti</td>
<td>mandalā</td>
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<td>5. Yudhisthira and five others</td>
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<td>6. Dhritadāsa and army (100)</td>
<td>cvakh</td>
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<td>7. Dhauma Ṛṣi (3)</td>
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<td>9. Rādhikā</td>
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<td>10. Kutyāḍi</td>
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<td>11. Birāt Rājā</td>
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<td>12. Ṣedume Dhāgo</td>
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<td>13. Jimuta Madi</td>
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<td>14. Achau</td>
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<td>15. Bindubāsinī</td>
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<td>17. Birātādī</td>
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<td>18. Kṛṣṇa Khalag</td>
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<td>28. Sudeśa Nādi</td>
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$^{37}$ spelling as given by Byāsi informant
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5 Song Groups, Bards and Beggars

The South Asian song genre **bārahmāsa** depicts human emotions in relation to the changing moods and characteristics of nature during the twelve months of the year. The twelve months fall into six seasons **ṛtu**. The six seasons are called **vasanta**, **grīṣma**, **varṣa**, **śarad**, **hemanta** and **śiśira**. There are additional songs related to festivals and to stages of fieldwork. Newar song genres and their seasons:

**Vasanta**: **basanta me** and **rāg sāraṅg** were sung/played from Śrī pañcamī up to **hvali** fullmoon during the month of **phāgun**. **Hvali me** were sung from **aṣṭami** to fullmoon, **cīr sā̃skār** and **cīr dāhā** only during fullmoon night. After **hvali** fullmoon **ghātu** songs were sung.

**Grīṣma**: **ghātu** songs were sung up to the Bhaktapur New Year. After the **liṅga** fell on Baiśākh 1st (**biskāḥ**), **svarat** songs followed for one month.

**Varṣa**: The rainy season began with rice planting songs **pvāre me**, then transplanting songs **sinā-jyā me**, then weeding songs **thukājyā me**. These were only sung in the fields. To ensure fertility, fertile women had to sing planting and transplanting songs. **Silu me** was sung during the month of Śrāvaṇ, as Śrāvaṇ fullmoon is the time for pilgrims to reach the sacred **tīrtha Silu** (Gosāiṅkuṇḍa). In the 1980s, during the evenings of the **sāpāru** week, a group of farmers living in Sujamādhi proceeded along the **pradakṣina** route, singing two of the most famous ballads, **silu me** and **sādes** whilst carrying a large hand-written songbook with the complete text. The ballads were presented with much emotion, gesturing, even weeping at the tragic climaxes. This is but one example of the vast repertoire of **me** that **bā̃suri bājā** draws their repertoire from. (Figs. 195, 196)

**Śarad**: The festival season was the time for **mārsi** songs in **rāg mālāśrī**.

**Hemanta**: **Burā̃jyā me** were sung when preparing rice grain to ferment for beer production. When carrying the major amount of harvested rice grain home for sun-drying and later storage, a big mound of rice was left in the field and covered with bundles of straw where it fermented for two weeks until the grain reached the desired brown colour and moldy flavour for rice beer (**thvā**)

---

1 Spring starts on the day of Māgh pañcamī (middle of January).
2 the exception being Cvarcā bā̃suri-dhimay-khalaḥ who took all their instruments to play in the field in support of their women who did the sowing
3 called **hākuvā**, lit. black rice
production. When there were no vehicles, this grain was carried home after a *pūjā* for Lord Gaṇeśa. These joyous grain-carrying processions were held with song and panache. All this joy vanished in the late 1980s when real estate business and brick factories uprooted agriculture. (Fig. 197)

Śiśira: During the cold season, praise songs for the gods were helpful for keeping warm. These could be sung during any season, for example *Dasavatār me*. During marriage processions, one heard *duḥ dhāṅkegu me*. This song refers to the earlier custom of the groom’s party that carries the bride to the groom’s home in a hammock. The song was sung as soon as they leant the bamboo pole *duḥ* with the hammock against the bride’s house, to announce the time of her departure. All this has been replaced long ago with decorated vehicles and Hindi film songs. *Tvaphā me* and *mārā me* were sung during the month of Māgha. There were countless songs relating to gods—useful during any season. As some gods have their special day or days of the week, those songs were sung on the appropriate day.

During the 1980s, itinerant Gäine bards with their *sāraṅgī* fiddles sang their Nepali song repertoire in villages and at bus stops all over Nepal. Perceived as a typical aspect of Nepali folk culture, these professional musicians belong to the untouchable Gandharva caste. During the 19th century, five Gäicā—as they were called in Newari—and their families had been permitted to settle at the northern periphery of Bhaktapur in Bhvalāchẽ Ligācā, arguably the filthiest lane in town. Before
Fig. 196: Farmers of Sujamādhi singing *silu me* during a recording session 19/8/1983.

Fig. 197: Farmers of Sujamādhi, each person carrying 80 kg of grain whilst dancing and singing *būrā̃jyā me*, 1986.
the land reform in 1963 there was land that supported their musical duties during Newar festivals. During *mvahani* nights they had so sing *mārsi* songs in Newari in front of houses assigned to them. As this happened between midnight and 3 a.m., most people perceived these songs in their dreams. During an age without motorized traffic, this had a lovely, soothing effect—a surprise gift\(^4\) to an audience that was only half awake and went back to slumber with a smile. What luxury!

\(^4\) This was much nicer than the aggressive stomping routine of night watchmen disturbing everybody’s sleep in Indian suburbs, demonstrating that they are on duty and making sure that they do not encounter burglars.
The last active singer, Kṛṣṇa Gopāl Gāine sang mvañhāni songs in Newari, starting during the first night of mvañhāni at the Taleju temple. During the following festival nights he sang for twelve neighbourhoods in the upper and lower town. During Mahāśṭhamī he sang in front of the Taleju temple in Kathmandu, during Mahānavamī in the Taleju courtyard in Bhaktapur. Two weeks later he sang during dugupūjā, and during Bhaktapur’s New Year festival on 3rd of Vaiśākh for the Mahākālī-Mahālkṣmī jāṭrā, all this amounting to performances in sixty-six localities. People living in the assigned houses used to give him grain and straw after the rice harvest. To feed his family, Kṛṣṇa Gopāl went fishing in ponds and rivers. Endowed with exceptional charisma, he also worked as a vaidya healer, a skill learned from his father. He also toured villages around Bhaktapur to play and sing in Nepali. In 1988 we recorded his complete repertoire, fifteen hours of songs. He had written down the song texts in five thick volumes. They were photocopied and bound and later kept in the library of Kathmandu University’s Department of Music—along with his sāraṅgī that I was able to purchase from his family after he passed away. His nephew Bharat Nepali works at the department as sāraṅgī teacher and is much in demand as a studio musician in Kathmandu. (Fig. 198)

During the 1990s, many Gandharvas had left their traditional occupation in search of alternate ways of survival. One exceptionally talented Gandharva, Ram Saran Nepali achieved international fame during concert tours with the tabla-player Homnath Upadhyaya. They played mostly for expatriate Nepali audiences in the U.S. and other countries. In 1990, Ram Saran suddenly arrived at my home and poured out his troubled feelings. He suffered from the conflict between his artistic vision of beauty and peace that he found in nature and the depressing social reality in Nepal as an uneducated member of his despised caste. He sang for us a dukha song that exposed his intense suffering. It was presented with sublime artistic conviction. Ram Saran Nepali passed away in 1995. (Fig. 199)

In 1986 an itinerant bard arrived at the Dattātreya temple, to stay with his small family, a Baul from Bengal (Fig. 200). He and his wife sang ecstatic bhakti songs of longing of the human soul for union with Lord Viṣṇu, accepting occasional offerings from locals and tourists. They

5 In 1988 Niels Gutschow produced a map of these locations. Gutschow 2017, p. 426
accompanied themselves with the typical Baul instruments, plucked drum ānanda laharī, dotār lute and ghuṅgrū ankle bells. Poorly equipped to cope with the Himalayan winter, they left Bhaktapur after much shivering and coughing. (Fig. 201)

In 1983 two destitute Brahmacārī singers arrived from Far West Nepal to stay for two years. They came from one of the country’s poorest regions where some families were forced to sell their children into prostitution or slavery in India, as they were unable to feed them. These undernourished boys had been told to leave their village for seven years and spend a pious life in purity on their path in search of divine help. Their only equipment was a small ektāra drone.
instrument (Fig. 202), to accompany two begging songs that they learnt before being sent away. The two songs were loosely based on episodes of the Rāmāyaṇa epic, one of them a gruesome ballad of a beheaded damsel. Neither the songs nor their rendition appeared effective in feeding the boys. When those seven years were over, they returned to their village—accompanied by Axel Michaels who wanted to know what would happen. They were treated as unwelcome visitors and left to continue their journey into nowhere.
5 Song Groups, Bards and Beggars

5.1 Dhalcā and Bhajan

Dhalcā bhajan, rās bhajan and gyānmala bhajan are the Newar equivalent of Indian devotional group singing at temples and religious congregations. It is the standard musical and emotional expression of bhakti, loving surrender to God. Dhalcā bhajan uses the dhalak drum and cymbals as accompanying instruments, playing the tālas calti (4 + 4 mātrā), dehrā (4 + 4 mātrā), partāl (3 + 2 + 2) and kharjati (3 + 2 + 2). Rās bhajan and the Buddhist gyānmala bhajan use tablā and harmonium as accompanying instruments. The more recently imported genre rās bhajan uses the Indian tālas kaharvā, dādarā and dīpcandī or local variants of these tālas. It has this in common with gyānmala bhajan that was introduced during the 1940s by Buddhist monks in Swayambhū and initially banned by the ruler Juddha SJB Rana who perceived the new genre as a threat against Hinduism. Participation in bhajan singing transcends the limits of caste—nowadays also of gender. It is open to all. The map below testifies to the enormous popularity of these genres during the 1980s as the general evening occupation of Bhaktapur males. This changed abruptly with the introduction of television. Most groups stopped performing, with the exception of town rituals. (Map 33)

During processions bhajan groups turn mobile with the help of transport bicycles. In the case of rās bhajan, the accompanying instruments are placed on a cart that is pushed along the procession route in front of the palanquin carrying the god. The players walk directly behind or next to the tray where they can reach the tablā and the harmonium. This is a recent fashion. Before 1951, the use of the wheel was restricted to chariots carrying gods during town rituals. The only exceptions were luxury cars for the Rana rulers. Those vehicles and also grand pianos were status symbols that had to be carried to Kathmandu by manpower. (Figs. 203, 204)

The only kvakhĩcā-dhalcā group in Bhaktapur uses a kvakhĩcā instead of a dhalak drum, playing the same tālas as other dhalcā groups. These compositions are also played as part of the masked dance and navabājā repertoires. (Fig. 205, Map 34)

A typical dhalcā bhajan performance in the courtyard of Vākupati Nārāyaṇa included the following dhalcā bhajan songs and Newar tāls:

1. Dyahlhāygu (instrumental)
2. Sitakamalā (rāg: maru, tāl: dehrā)
3. Mālāsama (tāl: dehrā)
4. Devī Bhavāni (tāl: calti, kharjati)
5. Jaya jaya Machendranāth (tāl: dehrā)
6. He Mahādeva (rāg: vasanta)
7. Badvachaba (tāl: dehrā)
8. Janāni yā hune (tāl: calti)
9. Taleju bina nā (tāl: kharjati)
10. Āratī (tāl: calti)
11. Jaya jaya Nārāyaṇa

6 in Newari: tamal and arven
Map 33: Dhalcă and bhajan groups in relation to shrines of Nāsaḥdyah worshipped during apprenticeship, 1984 (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

Fig. 203: Rās bhajan group of Yāchẽ Gañeś with tabla (Tirtha Man Nāpit) and harmonium on wheels, sāpāru 1991
5 Song Groups, Bards and Beggars

Fig. 204: Dhalcā-bhajan group singing on New Year's morning at Yaḥṣīkhyāḥ 1985

Fig. 205: Bhairavnāṭh kvakhīcā dhalcā performing on New Year's morning at Yaḥṣīkhyāḥ 1985
During the 1990s, a few *bhajan* groups began to amplify their presentations with abominable technical equipment. It did not occur to them that neither the gods nor the neighbours needed a hearing aid. Drowning the neighbourhood with electronic noise is of no consequence in a culture where there is not even a word for ‘disturb’. Someone must have seen this in India where amplified prayer and call to prayer have been common nuisance for decades as a means of dominance. Mercifully, power cuts are a daily occurrence in Bhaktapur. (Fig. 206)

Dominance and competition are and should remain alien to religious group singing. This applies to *bhajan*, *dhalcā* and *dāphā* as well. The essential value is not perfection but participation, being part of the community. This was definitely consolidated during daily performances. The joy and peace of mind that members of a song group experience together were an invaluable factor in maintaining peace and happiness in the neighbourhood. This is even more important in a society where hierarchy can be a cruel obsession and where jealousy and hatred among siblings and neighbours can sever relations for generations. Music making keeps those destructive passions at bay—at least during the performance. Singing and drumming together gives new energy to socialization and is—was—valued for its cleansing, rejuvenating effect on Newar society. (Map 35)

7 Widdess 2013, chapter 4 offers a detailed and enlightening discussion about the relationship of *dāphā* and the social order.
Map 35: In 1983, 113 song groups of the three immensely popular genres dhalcā, bhajan and dāphā were singing daily for the gods, maintaining peace and happiness. With a few exceptions, all this has been lost. (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow).
5.2 **Dāphā and Lālākhī**

With over sixty active groups in 1983, dāphā was the most popular genre of devotional group singing at temples and shrines. Descending of the ancient South Asian prabandha gīta, dāphā songs are set to rāga and tāla. The most experienced singer starts with a short vocal solo introduction called rāg kāyegu⁸ that proceeds without fixed rhythm for approximately three minutes.

![Hand-written songbook of Yāchē navadāphā with song texts in black ink and names of rāga and tāla in red](Fig. 207)

The song begins in a set tāla with the accompaniment of one or two lālākhī drums, cymbals (tāh and jyālicā) and—at the climaxes—two or more natural trumpets pvaṅga. The pvaṅga players maintain one main pitch with continuous undulation within a narrow area around this pitch. There are two groups of singers who sit facing each other, each group having a hand-written songbook lying on the floor in front of the lead singer in the centre of each row. (Fig. 207)

⁸ lit. taking or exposing the rāg
5 Song Groups, Bards and Beggars

Burning pairs of oil wicks resting in ornate brass lampstands help to illuminate the songbooks. Only song texts are written down and the names of rāga and tāla given. The rest is orally transmitted. One group sings the refrain dhuvā of the song, the other group responds by repeating this. This exchange continues several times until they join forces in a livelier tempo, nhyāh. The final stanza may include the composer’s name, among them kings of Bhaktapur like Bhūpatīndra Malla or Raṇajit Malla—both passionate dāphā composer-singers. Dāphā sessions start with a long dyahlāygu drum piece as an invocation of Nāsaḥdyah. The session ends with āratī during which a special oil lamp with a statue of the donor is lit and briefly held in front of every musician who offers the praṇām gesture with folded hands, showing respect to Nārāyaṇa. (Map 36)

Map 36: Bhaktapur’s 63 dāphā song groups, in relation to the various shrines of the music god Nāsaḥdyah worshipped by group members during apprenticeship (map courtesy of Niels Gutschow)

Dāphā song texts are in Sanskrit, Maithili and Newari. Some groups sing the complete padas of Jayadeva’s Gitagovinda (Fig. 208). The rarely literate older farmers of the early 1980s could not be expected to understand the subtleties and the dazzling beauty of the 12th century Sanskrit poem describing the love play of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa. They were aware of the outlines of the story and recognized the names of the divine couple. The poem’s age and immense popularity sufficed to hold it sacred. For a fascinating and detailed study of dāphā in Bhaktapur I strongly recommend Richard Widdess’s brilliant publication⁹.

⁹ Widdess 2013
The barrel-shaped lālākhī drum accompanies dāphā songs, processions and several masked dances, for example Rādhākṛṣṇa pyākhā, kavācā pyākhā, khicā pyākhā, kha pyākhā and the identifying stick dance of the sāpāru festival, ghētāgiśi. Lālākhī accompaniment of dāphā songs includes numerous citations of dance patterns that singers instantly identify. The drum has black tuning paste khau permanently stuck onto both drumheads. It contains powdered iron ore. This allows for an elaborate finger technique and a variety of sound productions. Each drumhead consists of two hides—the lower one carrying the khau paste and the circular one on top. Both hides are woven into the outer leather ring with holes for the drum straps with V-lacing. Three pieces of cow hides are used and female goat hide only for the lower hide of the Nāsaḥ drumhead.

The accompaniment varies a little between different dāphā groups. The compositions transcribed in this publication are the complete lālākhī repertoire of Yāchẽ navadāphā. Ganesh Bahadur Sijakhva taught them to me in 1983 and 1984. What he taught were—with the exception of the dyahlhāygu invocations and thata—not entirely fixed compositions but models that need minor adjustments to the various dāphā songs during performance. Ideally, a lālākhī drummer learns both the songs and the drum repertoire. Before a new tāl is taught during drumming apprenticeship, a blood sacrifice must be performed at the respective Nāsaḥ shrine. (Fig. 209)

10 also called dāphākhī or just khī, which is also the generic term for ‘drum’
11 Widdess 2013 mentions that dāphā singers sometimes perceive gods dancing in their midst, perhaps looking like masked dancers. Those associations and visualizations could have been triggered by respective dance patterns woven into the drum accompaniment. The names of such patterns are mentioned in chapter 11.12.
12 Thata can be played as an alternative to dyahlhāygu at the beginning of a dāphā performance, before the singing starts. It is ideal for the drummer to warm up.
As far as I could see, most dāphā groups of Bhaktapur have a similar set of compositions for dāphā accompaniment. Only one farmer of Inācva, the late Hari Bhakta Kasichvah (Fig. 210), knew six more pieces that he allowed me to record before he passed away.

During processions with dāphā singing, the drum is carried in a sling around the neck. The ghẽtãgiśi stick dance performed during sāpāru is based on a basic pattern and its variants, played by the two drums dhā and lālākhĩ alternating. (Fig. 211)

Before teaching compositions, Ganesh Bahadur gave me an exercise, lāhā jukegu, to create the habit of precise sound production. Dyaḥlhāygu, cicāhāḥgu dyāḥlhāygu, or thata are played as an offering before the dāphā singing starts. As indicated in the songbooks after the song text and the name of the rāga, the following compositions accompany the dāphā songs, ghvasāh, astarā, ektā, cvakh, kharjati, partāl, lagasikha, and cāli. Āratī is played during the final light offering.

In the photo series below, Hari Govinda Ranjitkar demonstrates the lālākhĩ drumstrokes (Figs. 212–220). As a youth he learnt the dāphā compositions together with a group of farmer boys. When one of the Jyāpu farmers was honoured as the best drummer, Hari Govinda was

These pieces are not compatible with navabājā compositions of similar names. Similarity extends to meter, not to patterns.
convinced that—owing to his lower caste as a Chipā cloth-dyer—his obvious talent had been bypassed. Feeling piqued, he decided not to play lālākhī but to focus on the solo repertoire of the navabājā drums that he presented so admirably during navadāphā performances—unequalled by any other drummer in town. As his inherited cloth-dying craft went out of fashion, he worked as a stonemason for the German Bhaktapur Development Project. Although his hands must have suffered during manual work, his playing was that of an exceptionally talented musician.
5 Song Groups, Bards and Beggars

Fig. 212

tā, tān, nā

Fig. 213

tin

Fig. 214

di

222
5.2 Dăpha and Lălăkhī

Fig. 215

ni, li

ni, li

Fig. 216

ti

Fig. 217

drakha

223
Silent dampening for added brilliance of right hand stroke tā
5.3 Navadāphā and Navabājā

The term navabājā¹⁴ refers to a set of nine different drums played in succession with varying accompaniment of different pairs of cymbals, Gujarāti mvālĩ shawms, bāecā fipple flutes and pvaṅgā natural trumpets. The town’s four remaining navabājā groups¹⁵ are all part of larger ensembles of singers and instrumentalists, performing dāphā songs at specific temples and shrines. These combined ensembles of dāphā plus navabājā are called navadāphā:

\[
\text{dāphā} + \text{navabājā} = \text{navadāphā}
\]

An ancient Newar form of responsorial group singing (prabandha gīt), dāphā songs¹⁶ are accompanied with tāḥ and jhyāli cymbals, two natural trumpets pvaṅgā and the double-headed drum lālākhī which is not part of the set of nine navabājā drums. Approximately twenty times per year during certain auspicious lunar phases and important town rituals, the navabājā drums participate in the navadāphā performance as a special highlight sandwiched between pairs of dāphā songs. The nine drums are always played in a given succession, each drum playing a complete composition selected from a vast repertoire. The nine navabājā drums and their impressive repertoire are of central interest for this publication.

The chart below lists the nine drums starting with dhā and ending with nagarā, in the order of their appearance during performance (Tab. 1). In keeping with their dominant role, the name navabājā refers only to the drums, not to accompanying idiophones (cymbals and brass disc) and wind instruments (shawms, fipple flutes and natural trumpets). They are listed according to their prescribed combinations during performance. Only the inclusion of the brass disc kāēpā may or may not be omitted, depending on the number of musicians.

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¹⁴ Nepali: naubājā, lit. ‘nine drums’
¹⁵ survey 2007
¹⁶ see Richard Widdess 2013
Until 1980, there were six navadāphā groups among the sixty-three dāphā song groups of Bhaktapur (Map 37):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>name</th>
<th>location</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Taleju navadāphā</td>
<td>Mūcuka of Lāykū (palace)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhairavnāth navadāphā</td>
<td>Lākulāchē</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bhadrakālī navadāphā</td>
<td>Icchu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dattātreya navadāphā</td>
<td>Tacapāḥ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vākupati Nārāyaṇa navadāphā</td>
<td>Sujamādhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yāchẽ Ganeś navadāphā</td>
<td>Yāchẽ</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One more navabājā group had existed in Gvachẽ. It was disbanded in 1972. Previously it had played for the Navadurgā of Bhaktapur, during their annual gathering on the day of bihi, in Gvachẽ square where the gods drink the blood and consume the decaying brain of the khame buffalo that is sacrificed eight days earlier at the shrine of Brahmayānī.

Each Bhaktapur navadāphā group has a dāphāchẽ, a building next to the shrine of the god for whom the group performs Here musical instruments, song books and lampstands are kept, meetings are held, quarrels are fought, students are taught, and feasts are eaten. The management of navadāphā affairs involves plenty of discussion over ritual feasts. Sometimes one gets the impression that these groups serve more as a platform for neighbourhood quarrels than for making music. Occasionally such quarrels led to a group splitting into two or ceasing to play regularly. The function of the group leader (nāyāḥ) circulates annually. As every individual who passes the

17 cf. chapter 4.2  
18 Dattātreya navadāphā
singing apprenticeship or any of the instruments becomes a life member, some groups have the
tendency to grow beyond capacity. In fact, many members do not participate in the performances,
appearing only during annual feasts and the habitual drunken brawls that ensue with predictable
regularity and regrettable results. Already in the 1980s, the younger generation’s cultural ideals
were dominated by the Bollywood film industry with their escapist dream productions and by
other influences from abroad. For them, making traditional music in the local community as an
expression of cultural identity was definitely not their chief interest.

Taleju navadāphā was the first navadāphā group to be afflicted by the generation gap (Map 38).
The group managed to survive the land reforms, when each member had two to four ropanis of
guṭhī land transferred to his name just in time. Farmers cultivated the land and received fifty per
cent share of the annual yield as payment. All the group members were from the upper strata
of the caste hierarchy. During the Malla period their ancestors served as courtiers at the royal
palace and their homes were scattered in a wide circle around Bhaktapur’s palace square. In 1983,
the fifteen remaining members were all old men in their sixties\(^\text{19}\). None of them succeeded in
stimulating their younger relatives’ interest. This, the oldest among Bhaktapur’s navabājā groups
stopped performing in 1985. Among their active dāphā repertoire they had one praise song for

\(^\text{19}\) In those days, a person above forty was considered ‘old’
Jaya Prakāśa Malla of Kāntipur\textsuperscript{20}. Earlier there were several songs for other Malla kings—in 1983 already forgotten.

Bhairavnāth navadāphā faces similar problems but they do remember their songs—among them praise songs for Jayaprakāś Malla, Bhūpatīndra Malla and Ranjīt Malla. Group members are mostly farmers and a few of higher castes. Only twenty-two musicians remained in 1983 (in 1975 there were thirty-two members). In 1999, 2006 and 2014, this navadāphā trained a group of young drummers and singers. The most successful students in 2014 were two of the girls who also learnt lālākhĩ. The group has an important performance during the New Year festival on 27th Baiśākh, just before Bhairava leaves his temple bordering Taumāḍhi square to enter his chariot that has been prepared for the annual tug of war between upper and lower town. Whilst members of the Sāymi oilpresser caste decorate the chariot, Bhairavnāth navadāphā starts playing on the large stone platform (dabu) at the southern end of Taumāḍhi square. As soon as the god's arrival is heralded by a group of Jugi shawm-players emerging from the gate house next to the Bhairavnāth temple, the performance is interrupted, and the dhā̃-drummer pushes through the

\textsuperscript{20} ruler of Kathmandu 1736–1746 and 1750–1768
excited crowd to precede the god on his way to the chariot. Enthusiasts compete in touching or at least having a glimpse of the Bhailadyah's silver head. (Fig. 221)

According to legend, Kāśī Bhairava attended Bhaktapur's New Year festival incognito. When the god was recognized, he began to disappear by sinking into the earth. Just before he was gone, someone beheaded him with a sword. So Bhairava's head remained in Bhaktapur for people to worship him in the Bhairavnāth temple and during processions. When Bhairava takes his seat on the chariot, the spectacular chariot-pulling contest starts, which invariably erupts into serious brick-throwing causing a stampede. Upper town youths fight against lower town youths, always keeping an eye on non-Newar armed forces in battle gear looming in the background—lest they become the target of raining bricks.
Bhairava makes another appearance in town during his grand Bhairavnāth jātrā along the pradaksīna on two successive days of the sāpāru week. On this occasion, the god is accompanied by a smaller procession carrying a donor statue in the adoration pose of King Girvāṇ Yuddha Vikrām Śāha of Nepal (r. 1799–1816). Girvāṇ Śāha wanted to be remembered as a devotee of the most prominent god of the Kathmandu Valley and ordered the Bhairavnāth navadāphā to organise his annual Girvāṇ jātrā in such a way that it accompanied the god on his sacred route. To date, the navadāphā group keeps the original deed specifying details and conditions. It includes forty-one and three quarter ropanies and exempted the members of the group from different kinds of forced labour and different types of taxes. The group has to continue singing for Bhairavnāth every day, playing the navabājā instruments on special days and “...perform the Pañcopacārapūjā for Śrī Mahābhairava on the second day of the waning moon of the month of Bhādra, wishing the victory and prosperity of Ours”. The deed ends with a warning, “...the evil eye of the same deity shall be cast on the person and persons misappropriating the income.”—In 1822, another deed of twenty-five ropanies was allocated to the group on command of Chautariya Rana Udyota Śāha for observation of the Girvāṇ jātrā and “...to perform daily rituals and pray for Our everlasting prosperity.” (Fig. 222)

Another occasion, of serene beauty, is Sakimānā fullmoon in November, at the end of the harvesting season. In front of the Bhairavnāth temple, the navadāphā group members prepare a huge mosaic with rice, popcorn, soya beans and other grains, depicting Bhairavnāth and Betāḥdyah

21 see processional route in chapter 3.
on the chariot as well as the New Year yahṣī pole at Yaḥṣīkhyaḥ (Fig. 223). The mosaic is decorated with oil lamps and the group settles around it for their navadāphā performance. During this evening, all other song groups prepare similar mosaics depicting the local gods. People walk quietly from temple to temple to admire the pictures. Before the 1963 land reforms, Bhairavnāth navadāphā received 72 murī grain from their land and 24 pāthi mustard oil delivered by Sāymi oilpressers of Gvaḥmādhi. In 1963 they lost twenty-two ropanī land, as there were no deed documents.

Here is a list of their major annual expenses:

— Sakimā punhī (grain mosaic for Bhairavnāth): 12 pāthi wheat, 1 pāthi black soya, 4 pāthi corn, 4 pāthi popped rice, 2 dhārni ghi, 1 pāthi 4 māna mustard oil, 1/2 dhārni sugar, 1 pau black pepper, fennel seed, 150 kg firewood
— Māgh Kṛṣṇa parevā (pūjā for Bhairavnāth): 1 buffalo, 1 goat, 1 duck, 9 pāthi fried beaten rice, 16 pāthi beaten rice
— Māgh dutiya (next day, pūjā for Bhairavnāth): 1 goat
— Māgh tritiya: preparing and eating things sacrificed during previous days
— Māgh Kṛṣṇa cauthi (pūjā for Surya Vināyaka Gaṇeṣa): 1 goat
— Puṣ Kṛṣṇa prati pradāḥ (pūjā for Bhairavnāth): 1 goat
— Phālgun śukla dvādaśī (pūjā for Bhairavnāth): 1 goat
— Cait 27 (pūjā for Bhairavnāth and guṭhī feast): 1 goat
— Baiśākh 1 (pūjā for Bhairavnāth): 1 goat
— Baiśākh 2 (cleaning brass lamps and offering oil lamps, pūjā for Bhairavnāth): 1 goat

22 1 murī equalled 91 litres (now less), 1 pāthi equals 1 imperial gallon = 4.55 l, 1 dhārni equals 2.400 g, 1 māna equals 0.56 l
23 1 ropanī equals 5476 square feet or 508,72 square metres
The fate of the Bhadrakālī navadāphā appears to be exemplary of the general decline. Since the Malla period, this group had been supported by a royal land endowment. After the Land Reform Act in 1963, the contractor Biśva Khardār agreed to entertain the group members with a ritual feast nine times a year. The thirty-two group members were supposed to contribute oil for burning the lamps during performances. So far, so good. The group retained one last plot of land which yielded just enough rice to pay the Jugi shawm players and the drum-maker for repairing the nine drums. Unfortunately this land was lost in 1980 when it became part of the Small Industrial Area (SIA) set up by the German Bhaktapur Development Project. Compensation never reached the group, as they were not able to produce written documents supporting their claim. Without payment, the shawm players boycotted all further performances. The drums were left to decay. The contractor died. His son became a highschool teacher, his grandson a finance clerk in a Kathmandu tourist hotel. They lost interest in the affairs of an ancient music group in Bhaktapur. Bhadrakālī navadāphā stopped playing their nine drums around 1980. Only the dāphā group remains. After this, the complete group is reported to have played only once, on New Year’s morning 1986 (13th April) at Yahšēkhyaḥ. On this occasion, the entire population of Bhaktapur worships Bhailā, Betāḥdyah and Bhadrakālī whilst the gods recover from their brutal chariot ramming during the previous night.24

The three remaining navadāphā groups of the upper town are those of Dattātreya, Vākupati Nārāyaṇa, and Yāchẽ Ganeş. They were founded by private donors, and their members are almost exclusively farmers. Only Yāchẽ navadāphā included a barber (Nau) and a cloth-dyer (Chipā). The latter was Hari Govinda Ranjitkār, Bhaktapur’s most outstanding navabājā drummer.

Founded by a Mahantā caretaker of the Pūjāri math, Dattātreya navadāphā still performs during festivals in front of the Dattātreya temple—thanks to the Lachimasyu family’s four generations of talented drummers (now male and female), living as caretakers in the dāphāchẽ next to the Dattātreya temple. The first Rāṇā ruler, Jang Bahādur Rāṇa (1817–1877) donated twenty-eight ropanī land. In 1983, the group comprised of twenty-eight, in 1993 of thirty-six farmers. Jugis from Taumādhī came to provide shawm accompaniment against an annual remuneration of seventy-two pāthi rice grain. The Kulu drum-maker was supposed to tighten and repair the drums every month. In return, he received 1 murī of grain and participated in the annual dāphā pūjā feast of the group. Dattātreya navadāphā sings dāphā songs every day—with the exception of six early monsoon weeks when rice transplanting leaves no extra time for music. The nine drums were played every full moon, four days during the New Year festival, including the jātrās of Bhīmasena and Chumā Ganeša, during the Dattātreya jātrā (sāpāru week), Mahāṣthamī, Mahānavami and

24 This joyous fertility ritual happens immediately after the erection of the yahšē pole that signals the beginning of the New Year.
Vijayā Daśamī (mvahani), and Śivarātri. On the day after Śivarātri, a group of ascetics used to camp around a log fire smouldering in front of the Dattātreya temple where they gave yogic advice to the general public for a few days. (Fig. 224)

Until 1995, there were only male drummers in Bhaktapur. When I taught dhimay drumming to Gopal Lachimasyu and his friends, his sister Indira surprised me by having picked up the initial lessons by listening from the kitchen. When her parents agreed, she joined the boys group, surprising the town during their coming-out procession. Instantly, all her female classmates wanted to learn from her. Nowadays it is not uncommon for girls to participate in many genres of processional music. Gopal, Indira and their younger sister Julum took part in several concert tours with the ‘Masterdrummers of Nepal’, presenting Newar drumming traditions and dances to European audiences. Indira was recruited as a judge during several drumming competitions organised by the Bhaktapur Municipality and fills a significant role as a teacher of dhimay and navabājā.

The shawm players of the impure but touchable Jugi tailor-musician caste are not members of the navadāphā groups. They were paid for their musical service with a fixed amount of grain per year and a share in the feast. Sadly, the tendency was to withhold their payment or at least to keep it as low as possible. No wonder that the Jugi musicians felt exploited and tended to stay at home. Over the past two decades it became increasingly difficult to find capable shawm players...
to support all scheduled performances, especially during major festivals. Groups had to manage without shawms. Vākupati Nārāyaṇa navadāphā solved the problem by replacing the missing shawm players with their own processional ensemble of transverse flutes. (Fig. 225)

This group comprised of thirty-five farmers singing dāphā songs every day and playing their set of navabājā drums every full moon, the lunar phase sacred to Nārāyaṇa. During The New Year festival (Vaiśākh 3) the group participates in the Brahmayānī jātrā, singing dāphā songs between a double row of impressive ancient torches. Their repertoire includes an interesting praise song for Bhūpatīndra Malla, telling the following story: The king and his colleagues from Kāntipur and Lālitpur undertook a pilgrimage to Silu (Gosainkunda), to offer three beautifully carved bulls to Lord Śiva. Those from Kāntipur and Lālitpur were of wood and metal and sank into the holy lake at once. Only Bhūpatīndra’s carved stone bull kept drifting on the surface, indicating that his offering was not accepted. Bhūpatīndra was a good swimmer and jumped into the lake, pulling the bull under water. In that very moment the god spoke to him, revealing the reason for being displeased: “Bhūpatīndra, you composed so many praise songs but not a single one for me.”—Presuming that Bhūpatīndra had drowned in the cold mountain lake, the other two kings returned to Nepal, discussing full of happy anticipation how to divide the kingdom of Bhaktapur among themselves. They worshipped at Paśupatināth and went to Bhaktapur. Having reached the fifty-five window palace, they perceived Bhūpatīndra sitting comfortably at a window, smoking a hookah and inviting them upstairs to listen to his latest song for Lord Śiva.
Like Vākupati Nārāyaṇa navadāphā with their nine drums and their additional flute ensemble bāsuri khalah, quite a few dāphā groups incorporate additional instruments. This allows the groups to put on impressive processions with additional dhimaybājā, transverse flutes, harmoniums, and violins. Vākupati Nārāyaṇa’s bāsuri khalah used to accompany their charming Rādhākrṣṇa pyākhā dance performed during the annual sāpārū week of stick dances, masked dances and singing of ballads. Vākupati Nārāyaṇa navadāphā have their most spectacular performance during a Buddhist town ritual on the day of pañcadān carhe, one day before the Buddhist processional month of gūlā ends. In the morning, decorated metal busts of the five Dīpaṅkāra Buddhas are carried to their meeting place at Sujamādhi where devotees gather to offer grain, fruit and flowers, before the Buddhas proceed to visit those families who vowed to give pañcadān offerings on an annual basis. Vākupati Nārāyaṇa navadāphā starts their performance before the Dīpaṅkāra Buddhas arrive one by one and are seated on the high stone platform at the eastern end of Sujamādhi square. Tragically, the entire neighbourhood of this ensemble and the local shrine of Nāsahdyah were devastated during the 2015 earthquake.

Considering the importance of the gods in whose praise navadāphā groups were established, it is surprising that the local Gaṇeṣ of Yāchē was endowed with such an auspicious music ensemble. Unlike Taleju, Bhairavnāth, the Navadurgā, Dattātreya, or even Vākupati Nārāyaṇa, the realm of Yāchē Gaṇeṣa extends only to the boundaries of his quarter and is of little importance to the rest of the town (Fig. 226). K. K. Nākhana, a group member of Yāchē navadāphā, told us the legend of the god’s golden image arriving during the course of an infamous robbery, testifying that the

Fig. 226: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar playing pachimā with Chandranath and two more Jugi shawm players playing Gujarātī mvālĩ during a performance of Yāchē navadāphā, February 1989
disappearance of religious artefacts from their original shrines has a long history. Previously, this Gaṇeśa statue resided in a temple in Basantapur, Kathmandu, which came to be known as Maru (‘lost’) Gaṇeśa. Miraculously, the statue emerged in Yāchẽ, where it was instantly installed in a temple built by Dil Bahādur Suba from Sukul Dvakā. His family worships Gaṇeśa as their clan god and sacrifices a goat whenever Yāchẽ Gaṇeśa visits his realm during the New Year festival. This happens every 2nd Baiśākh between 9 and 12 a.m. The group is scheduled to play every cauthi, the lunar phase significant for Gaṇeśa, whereas other navadāphā groups perform during fullmoon. (Map 39)

Before the land reforms in 1963, the group was supported with 35 ropani of land that were confiscated. Chandramān Tapol, descendant of the founder family of Yāchẽ navadāphā, did not participate in performances. Usually he came to check if a scheduled performance actually happened, distributed 18 muri rice grain\(^{25}\) per year and gave two feasts for all the members. After his death in 1986 his heir withdrew the donation, causing the navadāphā to stop performing for more than a year after a final, memorable quarrel. In this desperate situation, an unexpected patron of the Nepalese aristocracy, the late author Jagadish SJB Rana came to the rescue. He spontaneously decided to help with an annual cash donation that covered the requirements of the group. The initial year proved successful. The scheduled twenty-four annual performances happened, and group members derived encouragement from the new patron’s regular visits and enquiries into their needs. The drumming gurus Hari Govinda Ranjitkār and Gaṇes Bahādur Sijakhvāḥ administered the donation. Later I came to know that they were bullied by otherwise inactive group members—in 1983 already fifty-five individuals—who wanted the donation to be spent entirely on feasts. Intimidated by threats of physical violence, the gurus refused to accept the next instalment. After this, the neighbourhood of Yāchẽ had the feeling of a battlefield. Navadāphā performances

\(^{25}\) 1 muri = approx. 160 lbs.
happened irregularly and without enthusiasm. Hari Govinda trained some young navabājā drummers, including his talented daughter Manesa who is leading her married life in Pāṅgā. Several training sessions were held over the years for young men. Young girls also learnt to play dhā̃bājā and pvaṅgā and did so for a few public navadāphā occasions until they were married in other neighbourhoods. No adequate replacement was found for the ageing pvaṅgā players. The group seems doomed, a victim of greed and jealousy among neighbours. For the last fifteen years of his life, Hari Govinda turned his back to the navadāphā group, playing tablā (tamal) or harmonium (arven) with a bhajan group that performed in a shelter opposite to the performance site of the navadāphā group.

Hari Govinda Ranjitkar (1934–2019) was the solo drummer of Yāchẽ Gaṇeś navadāphā (Figs. 227, 228). Many consider him to be Bhaktapur’s master drummer. He learnt the art from his paternal uncle who was a fine player and also from the leading drummer of Bhairavnāth navadāphā. Hari Govinda’s humble ways and modest bearing, in combination with his achievement as a musician and stalwart of his tradition have been admired by European audiences during several concert tours. Unfortunately, due to the total disregard of this genre in present day Nepal, his fame did not even extend beyond his nearest locality. He had to adjust to problems of survival when his inherited block-printing craft ceased to be in demand. For a few years he found temporary employment as a stone-cutter in road construction work carried out by the German Bhaktapur

26 during biskāḥ and mahānavami
Development Project. From 1996 to 2019, he worked as a drumming teacher at Kathmandu University’s Department of Music, training a large number of students. In 1983 and 1984, he taught me the complete navabājā repertoire, as it is transcribed in this publication.

Seven years Hari Govinda’s junior, Gaṇeś Bahādur Sijakhvā of Yāchẽ (d. 2019) was a prominent guru of dhimay and lālākhĩ. He devoted more time than any other drummer in Bhaktapur to train a large number of dhimay players, including the author, and received huge applause for his brilliant dhimay drumming during the 1990 European tour with the ‘Masterdrummers of Nepal’. After his father’s fields and house were distributed among the three brothers, Gaṇeś Bahādur’s earthquake-damaged part of the house was too tiny to allow him and his family to sleep there27. After the 1988 earthquake, he found refuge in the dyahchē of Yāchẽ Gaṇeš and—in exchange for a Newar father dies, the house is often cut vertically into as many parts as there are sons, each of them insisting on building their separate entrance and staircase.

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for free lodging—had to perform daily pūjā offerings and protect the golden statue from armed robbers, warding off several attempts at night. When he retired from this scary occupation, he lived with his sons near the Arniko Highway. He received no community recognition for his outstanding services as teacher and drummer. (Figs. 229, 230)

A navadāphā performance is an auspicious and elaborate musical offering to the god for whom the respective ensemble of musical instruments was bestowed. In the case of Yāchē Gaṅeś navadāphā, most performances in front of the shrine happened monthly during cauthi, the lunar

Fig. 229: Ganesh Bahadur Sijakhvā playing dhimay during a navarātī visit to Indrayānī 1988 (photo: Kevin Bubriski)

Fig. 230: Ganesh Bahadur’s hands after a drumming procession
phase relating to Lord Gaṇeś. The musicians sat cross-legged on straw mats, leaving in the centre an open square for the nine drums, a round brass box for keeping cymbals and song books, and the big sacred lamp stand āratī that is used exclusively by navadāphā groups just before the performance ends. Two small lampstands with pairs of burning cotton wicks illuminated the folded song books thyāḥ sāphū that were placed in front of the lead singer of each of the two rows of singers facing each other. Other indispensable paraphernalia were an oil container filled with mustard oil to replenish the lamps when needed and a small portable lampstand with a brass figure of a Malla king with folded hands in adoring posture. At the very end of the performance it was lit and shown to every participant, giving them an opportunity to visualize and greet Nārāyaṇa with folded hands. Owing to their low status, the three or four Jugi shawm players sat in a row on a torn straw mat and with their backs inauspiciously turned towards the Gaṇeś temple. For the past twenty years, motorized traffic has pushed the group to perform in the phalcā porch next to the square. (Fig. 231)

The performance begins with three loud strokes of the thick-walled tāḥ cymbals. Musicians gesture namaskār towards the cymbals, addressing Nāsahdyah. The god manifests through the ear-splitting sound of the cymbals. After this auspicious beginning, the musicians salute each other, using the ritual expression ‘bhāgya’ to ask permission to sing or play, expressing mutual respect.

Fig. 231: Yāchē Gaaneś navadāphā: The solo drummer faces the shawm players (l. to r.: Chandranath, Marsya Dai, Chandra Bahādur) and Yāchē Gaaneś pīth (shrine in the left upper corner, with two young men occupying the entrance). A dāphā singer assists with broken sichyāḥ cymbals. 1989

28 similar sitting arrangements are observed by the other groups.
The gesture is repeated after the light offering āratī that concludes the performance. Following this mental preparation, the drummer of the two-headed dāphā drum lālākhī plays a long tāhā dyahlāhāygu invocation addressed to Nāsahdyah and the main god of the respective navadāphā. The lālākhī drum is accompanied with cymbals and natural trumpets. The invocation addresses not only the gods but also calls missing musicians from their homes nearby. The ensemble is hardly ever complete when a performance begins. The tāhā dyahlāhāygu allows musicians to finish their dinner, rinse their mouths, clear their throats and arrive at the performance site in time before it is their turn to sing. After the invocation, the musicians salute the gods again with namaskār gestures, before starting with the initial dāphā song. The invocation opens a portal to the blissful presence of the music god whose inspiring energies inspire the performance. Two dāphā songs with lālākhī and pvaṅgā accompaniment precede each set of nine navabājā drumming pieces. (Fig. 232)

The role of the solo drummer resembles that of a decathlon athlete. He has to play the nine drums in quick succession, each with different playing techniques and compositions, and remember the vast repertoire with the help of drumming syllables. These syllables imitate the sounds of the drum strokes, so each drum has a slightly different set of syllables. During a complete performance each drum plays two longer composition selected by the solo drummer, lasting for several minutes. During the third and final round each drum plays only a few typical strokes. These tailpieces are called svachā. This term is also used for a complete navabājā performance with three rounds of navabājā drumming. The nine navabājā drums are always played in the following
succession: dhā, kvatāḥ, dhācā, dhimaycā, nāykhīcā, pachimā, dhalak, kvakhīcā, and the pair of nagarā. Each of these drums is combined with characteristic instruments to achieve the desired timbre. These instruments are the optional brass disc kāẽpā, the cymbals taḥ, jhyālicā, sichyāḥ, bhuchyāḥ, the natural trumpets pvaṅgā, the straight shawms Gujarāti mvālĩ and the fipple flutes bāẽcā. With the exception of the first two navābājā drums, dhā and kvatāḥ, all other navābājā drums require accompaniment by specially hired Jugi tailor-musicians with their shawms and fipple flutes. (Fig. 233)

The two drums dhā and kvatāḥ share a similar repertoire and are played with the same accompanying instruments, bhuchyāḥ, sichyāḥ and pvaṅgā. Dhā and kvatāḥ are the only drums that play invocations during the initial round followed by other compositions. Dhā and kvatāḥ with their archaic repertoire and their significance as sacred tools, differ widely from those drums which were imported during the eighteenth century from India, namely pachimā, dhalak, and nagarā. Pachimā, dhalak, and nagarā form another group of drums with similar repertoire and accompanying instruments, in this case kāẽpā, taḥ, sichyāḥ and mvālĩ. If there are several navābājā drummers present, they may play two drums of this group with contrasting sound qualities, taking turns in dividing the same composition between them. (Fig. 234)

After the third set of short navābājā pieces the big ārati lampstand is prepared for the light offering ritual. Whilst the lamp holders of the ārati are filled with mustard oil and pairs of cotton wicks soaked with oil and lit, the musicians sing a final dāphā song. Then everybody gets up to circumambulate around the performance square with the big ārati lamp spectacularly illuminating the centre. Whilst proceeding with a slow gait they sing a bhajan song in praise of Nārāyaṇa. Towards the end of the song, the dhā and the lālākhī drums with pvaṅgā, mvālĩ and cymbals play their respective ārati pieces simultaneously before ending each with one dyālhāygu invocation.
The āratī and dyāhlāygu pieces of both drums and of shawms differ in duration and structure, creating a musical chaos that appears fit to please the gods. Musical synchronization is clearly not intended. The music makes sense because of the function of the different invocations as musical offerings to the gods—whatever the specific drumming patterns happen to be. Following this noisy finale, the musicians sit down for a moment of shared spiritual bliss and purification. The small lamp with the brass figure is lit and in turn presented to every participant who passes his right hand through the flame before gesturing namaskār first towards the flame in reverence of Nārāyaṇa, then to each group member, thus saluting the divine essence in every participant. (Fig. 235)

This underlines the meaning and the spiritual benefit of the navadāphā performance: realised communion with the divine presence that the group performance brings about. The music reveals its special qualities as a spiritual focusing tool that can open the portal.

Finally, instruments and utensils are collected and stored in the dāphāchẽ drum house and people go home to sleep. With the exception of a few performances during annual town rituals,

In this context it may be helpful to know that neither Newari nor the national language Nepali know a word for ’disturb’. Whatever happens, happens of its own right. ’Disturb’ can be a problem that visitors from Western countries may encounter during their stay in Nepal. To explain this, the English word ’disturb’ is linked with Nepali garne (= make). Foreigners are known to suffer for mysterious reasons.
there is almost no visible audience. An exception is, for example, the evening of navamī during the mvahani festival, when the entire population of Bhaktapur mills through Yāchê to look at the new Navadurgā masks displayed below the mask-maker’s workshop in a courtyard behind the performance square. Only during such occasions, a crowd surrounds the navadāphā musicians to enjoy the music. Another important town ritual for all navadāphā groups is the morning of dyah svagrā biyegu on the fourth day of the Bhaktapur New Year when the entire population proceeds with a maximum number of music groups along the pradaksinā processional route to visit all the gods that make their annual appearance in the form of golden statues arranged for general worship in front of the aniconic stone that represents the god in the open shrine throughout the year. This is a major occasion for every song group to perform next to the respective temple or shrine. On this day, Bhaktapur vibrates with joyous tremors of drumming and sacred singing.

In response to the need for an internationally presentable ensemble of Newar drummers, I founded the ‘Masterdrummers of Nepal’ in 1990. Initially, this ensemble included two senior drumming Gurujs, Hari Govinda Ranjitkar and Ganesh Bahadur Sijakhva, two senior pvaṅgā players of Yāchê navadāphā, two Jugi shawm players and four younger drummers including myself. During summer 1990, we toured Germany, France, The Netherlands and Switzerland for a month packed with concerts, presenting navabājā and dhimaybājā to European audiences.

30 Navadurgā masks are cremated at the end of the annual dance cycle.
With a little help, most of the musicians were able to adapt to the requirements of Western stage performances and a disciplined code of conduct as ‘cultural ambassadors’ of Nepal. (Fig. 236)

Following the foundation of Kathmandu University’s Department of Music at Chupin Ghāt, Bhaktapur in 1996, this department became the base for the ‘Masterdrummers of Nepal’. By then, the group had grown into a younger ensemble including several teachers and staff members of the Department of Music. In contrast with the traditional ensembles in town, the Masterdrummers had many practice sessions focusing on improving the technical standard and enlarging their repertoire. All group members had their say in criticizing and contributing to improvements. From the beginning I made it a condition that payment was accounted for openly and distributed on equal terms among all members. All this resulted in a lasting friendship and bonding as a group and helped to present model performances of navabājā, dhimaybājā and traditional dances during staged performances in Kathmandu and Bhaktapur and during a number of successful European tours to Italy, France, Germany, Austria, Switzerland and Czech Republic. Abroad, limitations of caste proved superfluous. Absence of suppression and exploitation is the key to joyful music making.
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

A combined ensemble of dāphā plus nine additional navabājā drums is called navadāphā, distinguishing it from the sixty-three dāphā groups of Bhaktapur. Bhaktapur navabājā includes a medium-sized pair of kettledrums (nagarā) played in combination with shawms and cymbals as the climax of a navabājā performance.

A historical link suggests itself with the naubat, an ensemble of shawms, natural trumpets and kettledrums that entered North India with Muslim invaders and became established there during the 14th century. Miniature paintings and historical accounts give evidence of Mughal emperors adorning their courts with such impressive ensembles. As a result of this imperial Mughal example, the playing of large naqqārā became a daily affair at many South Asian local courts, important Hindu temples and Sufi shrines, a fashion that reached the Kathmandu Valley during the 15th century (Fig. 237).

In her study of pañcāi bājā, Carol Tingey examines Rajput migration to Nepal and nagarā playing in temples and as part of military bands. According to her, the earliest evidence of kettledrums is provided by the dam nagarā of Gorkha palace installed in 1609. In the Dattātreya temple ofTacapāḥ, Bhaktapur, an ancient nagarā (diameter 46 cm) is played twice a day during nitya pūjā along with the big bell suspended in front of the temple. Anybody is welcome to play the drum as an act of worship. This is rewarded with prasād, a plate of yoghurt and beaten rice. Local people say that this nagarā was donated by the first Mahanta caretaker of the original Pūjārīmath built in 1471 by the Sannyāsin Gosain Gurubaska Giri during the reign of King Jayayakṣa Malla (r. 1428–1482). If this information can be trusted, this would be the earliest evidence of a nagarā in Nepal, antedating Tingey’s assumed ‘earliest evidence of kettledrums’ by one hundred thirty-eight years.

Visiting Benares in 1989, I found a large pair of decaying naqqarā kept in a porch in the lane bordering the Kāśi Viśvanāth temple (Fig. 238).

Above, on a balcony overlooking the temple courtyard, musicians observed their hereditary duty that started after the rule of Emperor Aurangzeb (1658–1707). They played šahnai shawms and a pair of small kettledrums khurdak during daily rituals in the Hindu temple. The shawm player, Dulare Hussain Khan astonished me by reciting the names of twelve generations of his

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1 survey period: 1983–1985
2 cf. Tingey 1994 pp. 23–37
3 built in 1471 by King Jayayakṣa Malla
4 The khurdak pair of drums combines the individual drums zil and bāyāṃ, both played with finger technique similar to tabla.
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

Fig. 237: Nagarā drumming (also on camel back) during a grand royal tuladana ritual in 1664 on the steps of Kathmandu’s Taleju temple. As part of a Mughal-style naubat ensemble on the ground floor, two pairs of nagarā face the fire ritual in the pavilion. A man wearing a striped coat plays a pair of small kettledrums tied to his belt, with two shawm players and another one with a natural trumpet standing behind him. Next to him a pair of bhusyāḥ cymbals accompany a cylindrical drum of the dhol category. Two camels carry drummers and kettle-drums. (detail of painting publ. by Anne Vergati in Marg 56/2 p. 47)

Fig. 238: Benares nagarā shells opposite the temple of Kāśi Viśvanāth in 1989
male ancestors in charge of this musical duty at the Hindu temple. The family tree extended to a Hindu named Singh who was forced to convert during Aurangzeb’s rule. Some aspects of music practice in the holy city could have inspired royal pilgrims from Nepal, keen on upgrading their residences with a majestic boom for every citizen to hear.

In 1690 King Jitāmitra Malla of Bhaktapur donated two large copper nagarā kettledrums to his tutelary deity, the goddess Taleju whose temple is located on the south side of the mūcukva courtyard in the Bhaktapur palace compound. The drums were installed on the first floor of the lāykuphalcā arcade in the room facing the grand Taleju bell tagva gā erected in 1737, reflecting
similar arrangements in the vicinity of the magnificent Taleju temples at the Malla residences in Kathmandu and Patan with their giant bells and kettledrum pavilions.

Jitāmitra Malla’s donation included farmland. The annual yield of rice from this land was utilized in part as payment to a Damāi family from Nala. These Nepali-speaking tailor-musicians had been assigned the duty to play the big kettledrums during nitya pūjā, the daily ritual for Taleju. Since the 1960s this duty had been neglected and the uncovered nagarā shells were lying upside down in the bekvacukva courtyard. (Figs. 239–243)

In 1992 the late Italian filmmaker Bernardo Bertolucci decided to use the royal kettledrums for his film ‘Little Buddha’. The scene shot in Bhaktapur’s Dattatreya Square shows Prince Siddhartha Gautama (Keanu Reeves) leaving the enclosures of his father’s palace in regal style, ready to encounter the facts of life. Outside the gate he was cheered by a crowd of six hundred extras and a band of frantic dhimay drummers—in real life my students. Through the combined effort of ten Kulu drum makers from Bhaktapur, Patan and Kathmandu, the drums were restored with new water-buffalo hides. A local woodcarver made sixteen extra large drumsticks. Eight members of the Royal Nepal Army were ordered to play not only Jitāmitra Mallā’s nagarā drums from Bhaktapur but also another six slightly smaller kettledrums flown in from South India. I arranged a pattern based on the nāykhĩ piece pūjākhĩ to be played by the nagarā ensemble during shooting. After the film crew left, the refurbished local pair of nagarā was exposed to the weather and to visiting crowds of tourists in the bekvacukva palace courtyard.

In an attempt to preserve the drums and revive their performance during the daily temple rituals, I trained two young farmers to play the nagarās, using the pūjākhĩ pattern. With the help
of foreign friends and the Nepal Heritage Society, we raised money to pay the drummers for their daily service. The Bhaktapur municipality agreed to supervise the playing and administer the payment. There was the need to find a shelter for the drums. During earlier centuries the drums had resided in a room facing the tagva gā bell. Recently, this room had been occupied by a branch office of the Department of Archeology and they were not willing to vacate it. The only temporary alternative was jaṅgī paharā, an empty room on the ground floor of the lal baiṭhak palace wing housing the National Gallery. There the drums were installed during a televised public gathering on 24th December 1992. They were played during nitya pūjā for the following three years. When the funding was exhausted, the Bhaktapur Municipality decided to put the royal kettledrums at

5 Darbār Herchha Addhā
rest in two guard niches between the yamadvāracukva and bekvacukva courtyards. Hidden behind wooden screens, they were left to decay. (Fig. 244)

For over a decade, the invaluable drums donated by King Jitāmitra Malla remained in these dank holes infested by rats, silent witnesses to local ignorance until April 2019, when I was able to convince the President of the Nepal Workers and Peasants Party, Narayan Man Bijukchen to exercise his influence. On 31st December 2019, the drums were given a public resurrection celebration in Bhaktapur's Durbar Square. The Mayor played the royal nagarās to public acclaim, before having them installed in their original room opposite the big bell with the assistance of thirty sturdy soldiers of the Nepal Army.

Another, even bigger nagarā donated by Jitāmitra Malla's grandson Raṇajīt Malla in 1727 was played until the 1950s in a niche in the Taleju mūcukva courtyard. Although none of the gates were wide enough to let the drum pass, it mysteriously managed to vanish overnight in the late 1980s—despite the courtyard being under twenty-four hour surveillance by the Royal Nepal Army. Even in those days, the price of copper was high.

Owing to their outlandish size and volume, the musical scope of the royal kettledrums with their thick buffalo hides is limited. To play fast, the drummer himself would have to be of superhuman proportions and strength. The fact that the nagarā pair donated by Jitāmitra Malla includes two drums of almost the same size (diameter: 147 cm and 146 cm) causes them to be of the same pitch. The next step in the evolution of kettledrums would be, to have two drums of different size and pitch, allowing for more varied patterns. When the drums and the drumsticks are smaller, they

Fig. 244: Inauguration of the daily drumming service with the restored royal nagarā-s in front of the palace (24/12/1992). I taught two young farmers the patterns that they played for several years during nitya pūjā. (photo courtesy of Bikas Rauniyar)
allow for faster playing. These advantages were applied in the pair of nagarā that is part of the navabājā ensemble, to create an impressive repertoire of musically satisfying compositions. The South Asian evolution of kettledrums would go much further, resulting in the pair of the Indian concert drums tablā and bāyāṃ (in Bhaktapur Newari: tamal and bām), two drums of different material and size, with complex drum heads made of goat skin, carrying a tuning paste with powdered iron ore in the centre and a refined finger technique that takes advantage of contrasting pitches and a vast variety of sound production. This opened the road towards the impressive virtuosity of contemporary tablā playing with its limitless repertoire of beautiful compositions\(^6\) and application in various musical genres.

Paṅcaī bājā, the auspicious instrumental ensemble of Nepali-speaking Damāi musicians living in the hills of central and east Nepal, includes the kettledrum damāhā that gave the caste its name.\(^7\) In the 1980s, Damāi musicians were still playing kettledrums for temple rituals at important Hindu shrines, for example at Gorkha (Kālikā Darbār and Gorakhnāth cave), Cāṅgu Nārāyaṇa, Manakāmanā, Nuvākoṭ (Bhairavī temple) and Tripureshwar (Rānī Lalitā Tripurasundāri Śivalaya). Owing to the almost nonexistent remuneration of low-caste temple musicians, most of these traditions disappeared during the 1990s. As far as I was able to document since 1982 in various parts of central Nepal, larger temple kettledrums were mostly played without rhythmic variety, continuous strokes at a medium tempo.

In front of the Nārāyaṇa temple at Cāṅgu Nārāyaṇa a large nagarā was played by a member of the Nepali speaking Damāi caste of tailor-musicians. This temple courtyard had another ensemble of Newar Jugis playing shawms together with a small kettledrum called tamva or tukumukh\(^8\). These Jugi musicians lived in a small isolated settlement just outside the western gate of the courtyard whereas the village of Cāṅgu Nārāyaṇa lies below the opposite side of the temple complex. This arrangement underlines the low status of shawm players in the Newar caste hierarchy. Members of higher castes lived at a safe distance outside the eastern gate. (Fig. 245)

The nagarā pair of kettledrums used in the large instrumental ensembles of Bhaktapur navabājā are much smaller than most temple nagaras, allowing for faster playing and a technically demanding repertoire of drumming compositions. The drumheads of the three hundred years old pair of nagarā used by Bhairavnāṭh navadāphā measure 34,5 cm and 28,5 cm in diameter, a perfect size for this purpose. Nagarā drumming is only one aspect of Bhaktapur’s navabājā that includes eight more drums. The nagarā pair is played as a spectacular highlight at the end of a navabājā performance. It is accompanied with sichyāḥ cymbals and by Jugi tailor-musicians playing Gujarāti mvālĩ shawms. (Fig. 246)

The idea of combining all available sources of musical sound to create a new auspicious musical ensemble is likely to have sprung from the mind of a king and his impulse to adorn his tutelary goddess, Taleju—possibly following the example set by Pratapa Malla in Kathmandu during that grand tuladana ritual in 1664. It appears that nine drums of different origins and functions were combined in the Bhaktapur navabājā ensemble to fulfil a new purpose. Seven of

\(^6\) cf. Wegner 2004

\(^7\) for a detailed study of this ensemble see Tingey 1994

\(^8\) diameter of drum head: 17 cm
these drums were already played in the context of other local ensembles. The unlucky number seven would not do. Nine being an auspicious number, there had to be a total of nine drums. This was—I imagine—how two more drums, dhācā and dhimaycā could have been created for the sake of the perfect number. Already, the larger drums dhā and dhimay existed in various sizes. Making smaller versions was an easy task for a skilled drum-maker. Even in the 1980s, there was no standard size and pitch for Newar drums. Several times my drum-maker, the late Dil Bahadur Kulu pointed at a half-decayed lālākhĩ drum in his workshop, suggesting that this could become a good dhā or dhimaycā after sawing off the worm-eaten parts. With his practical sense of economy he always succeeded admirably in producing drum reincarnations with the seasoned wood that I preferred—never minding the slightly odd size or the occasional wormhole⁹.

Owing to the lack of precise historical data we can only speculate who was the originator of the first navadāphā groups. The two oldest navabājā ensembles were those that played until 1983 for Taleju in the mūcuka courtyard, and the group performing for Bhairavnāth, sitting on a dabu stone platform in front of the entrance gate (sataḥ) to the inner sanctuary of the Bhairavnāth temple bordering Taumādhi Square to the east. In 1717 Bhūpatīndra Malla (ruled 1696–1722) commissioned construction of the Bhairavnāth temple in Taumādhi, Bhaktapur. Significantly, all the plots of land bestowed on the navadāphā ensembles of Taleju and Bhairavanāth are situated

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⁹ Deforestation around the Kathmandu Valley made it increasingly difficult to find suitable wood for making local drums. Nowadays all dhimay drums are made of tin or brass.
Fig. 246: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar playing a V-laced pair of nagaśās during a navadāphā recording in Byāśi, April 1983.
next to each other and are of equal size. Performance schedules of these two groups never overlap. The reason could be that both bestowments were initiated at the same time, probably between 1717 and 1722 to the first navadāphā group that had to perform in both places and later was divided into two separate groups for practical reasons. Another—unlikely—possibility could be that Girvān Śāha founded the Bhairavnāth navadāphā when he created the Girvān jātrā in 1822 with a special land deed mentioning the playing of the nine drums. But then, the land that Bhairavnāth navadāphā lost to Mahendra Shah's administration in 1963 was of an older deed. So Girvān Śāha's contribution of 1822 must have been an additional deed to the already existing group. A singer and composer of dāphā songs, Bhūpatīndra Malla took a keen interest in the musical life of his capital. Some of his songs are still sung today by local dāphā groups. He modified the Bhairavnāth temple into a triple roofed temple at around N.S. 837–838 (1718 AD) with seven golden pinnacles. He added major dynamic aspects to the New Year festival created by Jagajjyotir Malla (1613 to 1637). The festival starts after the performance of Bhairavnāth navadāphā with the spectacular tug of war in front of the Bhairavnāth temple. All this leaves little doubt that Bhūpatīndra Malla was the source of inspiration and financing of the initial Taleju navadāphā group, probably also the Bhairavnāth navadāphā. Unfortunately it is not known who conceived of the fascinating drum compositions and who played the initial sets of navabājā.

Navabājā drums and some of their repertoire were also included in the huge processional music groups of the Sāymi oil pressers of Bhaktapur, who during the Buddhist processional month of gālā used to proceed through the town with their raucous horn and drumming signals. Similar groups existed in the two neighbouring towns, Thimi and Banepa that were part of the earlier Malla kingdom of Bhaktapur.

In 1963 King Mahendra Shaha ordered the land reform bhūmi sudhār that deprived all Newar music groups and temple trusts of their land endowments. The state of Nepal confiscated the so-called guthi land without refund. With their financial basis gone, most music and dance groups found it very hard to continue. Without money to repair musical instruments and dāphāchē drum houses, rewrite decaying song books, buy lamp oil, pay participating Jugi shawm players, organise new apprenticeships, etc., many groups were forced to give up and collapsed—usually after nerve-wrecking internal quarrels. Others had to minimize their performance schedule. Unless an alternative way of sponsoring can be found, the end of the most impressive among Bhaktapur's ensembles appears imminent.

Another kind of navabājā survives in Patan. It performs during the Buddhist processional month in July/August and includes more than nine drums, among them a single nagarā and the pair of jvaḥ nagarā (Fig. 247). Comparison with the nagarā and the jvaḥ nagarā of Patan navabājā makes it clear that the pair of nagarā used by Bhaktapur navabājā groups has an important musical advantage. Contrary to jvaḥ nagarā, the pair of kettledrums used in Bhaktapur produces

10 This is what Daibagya Raj Joshi—earlier a member of both groups—remembered
11 cf. chapter 5.3 for details of the deed
12 cf. Widdess 2013
13 also known as guṭhi saṃsthān act
14 for a detailed description of the instruments used in this ensemble, cf. Wiehler and Wiehler-Schneider 1980
different pitches. This advantage allows for much more varied compositions calling for a virtuoso playing technique that Hari Govinda Ranjitkar had clearly cultivated.

6.1 Dhā/Kvakhī

The double-conical or barrel-shaped dhā is made of wood. Shape, size and weight vary. The drum in the photo below is 46 cm long. The height in the centre of the body is 36 cm. The drum heads measure 24 cm and 25 cm. The right hand plays the lower sounding Haimā head made of cow hide with a carved dhā kathi drum stick. The higher sounding Nāsaḥ head made of mountain goat hide is played with the left hand.\textsuperscript{15} Among all dhā drums of Bhaktapur, only those played in the context of navabājā carry an impressive pair of ram's horns (Figs. 248, 249). Therefore these drums are also

\textsuperscript{15} Buddhist processional groups hold the stick in the left hand, playing the Nāsaḥ head with the right hand, as they apply a special finger technique for the drakha ornament.
Fig. 248: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar playing a big dhā decorated with ram horns, Yatāchē 1987

Fig. 249: Decorated kvakhī (dhā with ram’s horns, collection of the then Royal Nepal Academy)
called kvakhĩ, ‘horn drum’. There is a story remembered in Yāchē about the ram horns decorating the dhā of Yāchē Ganeś navadāphā. During the final years of the Rana period a Mr. Joshi of Yāchē owned a valiant mountain ram that defeated the Rana ruler’s animal in a staged ram fight. The ruler decided that he must own that victorious ram and bought it. Soon it came to his notice that the new animal refused to eat. It rejected even the juiciest leaves from the kitchen garden. Clearly, that ram was homesick. The ruler respected its suffering and returned the animal to its former owner in Yāchē where it instantly developed a healthy appetite. When it finally died, the horns that defeated the Rana’s animal were mounted on the drum. Animal horns decorate many shrines of Nāsaḥdyah who is believed to reside in drums. The only other drum in Bhaktapur carrying ram horns is the unique dyahkhĩ drum that accompanies the Navadurgā during their annual dance cycle—an instrument of singular ritual significance. Dhā and kvatāḥ are said to be the oldest Newar drums still in use. During navadāphā performances they are invariably played as the first and second drum. Dhā is played again during the concluding āratī ritual. Their ritual significance is underlined by the fact that they are the only navabājā drums that start with an invocation to Nāsaḥdyah, before playing other pieces.

Fig. 250: As a guest appearance on paṇcadān carhe, a gūlābājā group led by Gopal Prajapati from Thimi plays dhā for the Dīpañkara Buddha at Yatāchē 1999

Dhā is often used as a processional drum in an ensemble called dhābājā, where the drum is combined with bhuchyāḥ and sichyāḥ cymbals and with pvaṅgā natural trumpets, if available (Fig. 250).

16 cf. chapter 3.2
Two different Buddhist processional gūlābājā ensembles play dhā in the reverse way, holding the drumstick with the left hand. Sāymi oilpressers play animal horns capable of producing the mantra Ārya Tārā Tārā Buddha Dharma Saṅgha with the accompaniment of dhā drums.\textsuperscript{17}

A complete dhābājā ensemble including several pvaṅgā trumpets accompanies the masked dance Bhaila pyākhā of the Kumāh potters during sāpāru week.\textsuperscript{18} (Fig. 251)

Among many dances and processions involving dhābājā is the popular ghētāgiśī stick dance preceding cow effigies that are said to lead the souls of the dead safely to heaven.\textsuperscript{19}

The photo documentation of drum strokes in this and the following chapters was carried out with Hari Govinda Ranjitkar, a right-handed person. A left-handed person holds the drums and the drum stick the other way. Exact measurements of drums are not always mentioned, as there are no standard sizes in Newar drum-making. The following details of playing-technique concern the use of dhā as part of navabājā. With all Newar drums, the variety of drumming syllables is larger than the number of strokes. (Figs. 252–256)

\textsuperscript{17} cf. Wegner 2009
\textsuperscript{18} cf. chapters 4.4 and 11.16
\textsuperscript{19} cf. chapters 4.3 and 11.17
6.1 Dhā/Kvakhī

Resonant sound ghē, dhū or kā

Fig. 252

Dampened sound ga or du

Fig. 253

Fingers 3, 4, 5 stop the hide from resonating

Fig. 254
Resonant sound tā or nā

Dampened sound ti, tu or ri

Stroke combinations and fixed patterns/formulas

jhī or dhā = tā + ghē

drakha = ghēghēti (usually a rapid flourish/ornament)
kāghē = ghēghē (usually in fast repetition)
tāghemītā = tāghēdutā
garajaka = tākāghētā
6.2 Kvatāḥ

The compound drum kvatāḥ consists of two drums tied together, a small lālākhĩ and a small nāykhicā tied vertically in front of the horizontally played lālākhĩ (Fig. 257). Only three drum-heads are played in combination with natural trumpets pvaṅgā and bhuchyāḥ and sichyāḥ cymbals.

The drum has different names and repertoires, depending on context and genre. In Bhaktapur the name kvatāḥ is used only for the navabājā drum. The oldest name and use must be the paṅcatāla drum that accompanies tantric Buddhist cacā dances traditionally performed in secrecy in the āgamchē clan god house of Buddhist priests and goldsmiths. A rare occasion20 for observing cacā dance in public occurs on the morning of Buddha jayantī21 at Svayambhūnāth.22 On the same day around noon, young Śākya and Vajrācārya men of Kathmandu play paṅcatāla in combination with pairs of pāytaḥ natural trumpets and tāḥ cymbals, leading a procession of devotees bearing Buddha’s relic through the heart of the old city.

20 Leaving aside recent attempts at popularising a few cacā dances for insufferable tourist presentations
21 Jyeṣṭh fullmoon, Buddha’s birth, enlightenment and nirvāṇa fall on this day—at least in Nepal. In Tibet it is celebrated one month later.
22 cf. chapter 4.1
Probably commissioned by King Jagajjyotir Malla of Bhaktapur (1614–1637), a Newar rāgamālā consisting of fifty-four miniature paintings was produced by a local artist of the Puṃ caste of ritual painters. Painting no. 4 shows a kvatāḥ drummer and a cymbal player in the then fashionable Rajput style court dress (Fig. 258).
Another pañcatāla ensemble accompanies the masked dance gā pyākhā that is performed every twelve years in Patan—in this genre also in combination with pāytaḥ trumpets and tāḥ cymbals (Fig. 259).23

During gūlā Sāymi oil pressers living in Sākvalā, Gvahmadhi, Bāsagvapāl and Banepa use this drum under the name pastāḥ in combination with natural trumpets pvaṅgā and tāḥ cymbals to play dyahṭhāygu invocations when they pass or circumambulate a Buddhist monument with their processional gūlābājā ensemble.24 (Figs. 260–264)

23 cf. chapter 4
24 cf. chapter 3.4
Fig. 261: Bāsagvapāl Sāymi ḡulābājā with pastāḥ and pvaṅgā 1985

Fig. 262: Banepa Sāymi ḡulābājā with pastāḥ and pvaṅgā during their visit to Sākvalā 1985
Painting no. 5 of a Newar rāgamālā commissioned in the early 17th century by Jagajjotir Malla shows a bhuchyāḥ player and a pvaṅgā player with painted palms and elongated nails of their little fingers—the Kāmasūtra instructs us in the use of this fingernail as an erotic device. (courtesy of Jagadish SJB Rana)
Fig. 264: Painting no. 6 of a Newar rāgamālā commissioned in the early 17th century by Jagajjotir Malla shows a pvangā/paṭāḥ player and the imagined author of the Nāṭyaśāstra, Bhāratamuni—here spelled incorrectly as Bharatamuni—holding what must be the manuscript of his famous treatise. The legendary author is fashionably seated on a tiger skin—as befitting an accomplished and enlightened ṛṣi or sage. (courtesy of Jagadish SJB Rana)
6.2 Kvatāḥ

Hari Gavinda Ranjitkar demonstrates the playing techniques used for kvatāḥ in the navabājā context. (Figs. 265–272)
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

Fig. 268

`tā`

Fig. 269

`dhū (with left hand ghē)`

Fig. 270

`di, tī`
Stroke combinations and fixed patterns/formulas/alternatives

tuga can be played

- a) with alternating hands on the nāykhī head or
- b) with alternating fingers 2 4 2 4 producing four undampened sounds on the Nāsah head of the lālākhī

The syllable tā is used for two different strokes

- a) on the nāykhī or
- b) on the Nāsah head of the lālākhī
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

6.3 Dhācā

As the name dhācā\(^{25}\) suggests, this drum looks like a miniature dhā. Its repertoire has nothing in common with what farmers play on the big dhā drum during processions or what Kumāh potters play when they accompany their masked dance Bhaila pyākhā. There is no evidence for any other use of this drum but in navabājā. Perhaps the first dhācā was created by a drum-maker on royal command. Or it was used for some undocumented purpose at the time when the first two navadāphā groups were introduced. The drum is smaller than dhā and played with a lighter drumstick. The Nāsāh drumhead is made of female goat hide, the Haimā drumhead of mountain goat hide. Playing technique has much in common with nāykhĩcā. In fact, dhācā looks and sounds like a slightly older brother of the nāykhĩcā. Dhācā, dhimaycā, nāykhĩcā and dhalak have a tuning paste permanently stuck against the Haimā drum hide. It is made of crushed castor seeds, resin and mustard oil.\(^{26}\) (Figs. 273–278)

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\(^{25}\) lit. small dhā

\(^{26}\) cf. chapter 6.12 for documentation of drum-making
6.3 Dhācā

Fingers 3, 4, 5 stop the hide from resonating

Dampened sound *kha*

Resonant sound *ghē*
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

Resonant sounds tā, nā

Dampened sounds ti, ni, mi

**Stroke combinations and fixed patterns/formulas**

\[ dhā = tā + ghē \]
\[ drakha = ghēghēti \] (usually a rapid flourish/ornament)
\[ kāghē = ghēghē \] (usually in fast repetition)
\[ tāghemitā = tāghēnitā \]
6.4 Dhimaycā

Contrary to what the name *dhimaycā* suggests, this drum has almost nothing in common with the big *dhimay* drum played by farmers during processions. There is no evidence for any other use of this drum but in *navabājā* and—with one tiny *dyahūlı́ghu* as the only piece—in *gūlābājā* of the Sāymi oil pressers. Perhaps it was used for some undocumented purpose at the time when Bhūpatīndra Malla founded the first two *navadāphā* groups. The oilpressers seem to have incorporated several *navabājā* drums and Jugi shawm-players at a later stage as a fashionable addition to their much older processional ensemble of horns, *dha*, *pastā* and natural trumpets. The Haimā drumhead is made of cowhide, the higher sounding Nāsaḥ is made of softer calf hide. Unlike

the processional drum *dhimay*, the *dhimaycā* is played with hands and finger technique similar to *dhalak* playing (Fig. 279, Figs. 280–284). *Dhimaycā* sounds like a bass *dhalak*. The *dhimaycā* compositions *dhāmāk* and *kharjātī* are somewhat similar to the *nāykhicā* pieces under the same names. Only two patterns of the *dhimaycā* piece *cvakh* can be seen as derived from the *dhimay* compositions *mā* and nhyāḥ.

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27 lit. small *dhimay*
For example, the popular *dimay* pattern

/тся dhā/nā dhā/nā dhā/nā dhā/
/тся dhā/nā dhā/nā dhā/tāy ghū/
/धह khatā/tā khatā/tā khatā/tā khutā/
/тся khutā/nākhutātā/khutātākhu/tākhutā/

appears in the *dhimaycā cvakh* as

/тся di / ni di / ni di / ni di /
/部份 di / ni di / ni di / tā o /
/धह khati/tā khati/tā khati/tā khati/
/部份 khati/tākhatā /khatitākha / tā o /

and the *dhimay nhyāḥ* variant

тся khatā/tākaghunā/tātākhutā/tākaghunā/

appears in the *dhimaycā cvakh* as

/部份 khati/tāgadhē/tātākhati/tāgadhē/

Fig. 280

nā, tā
6.4 Dhimaycā

Fig. 281

ni, ti

Fig. 282

drakha roll with 45, 3, 2, 45, 2

Fig. 283

ghē, ga

277
Stroke combinations:

\[ dh\dot{a} = t\ddot{a} + gh\ddot{e} \]
\[ dhe, dh\ddot{e} = ti + gh\ddot{e} \]

6.5 Nāykhīcā

The name of the drum derives from nāykhī, literally ‘butcher’s drum’. The last syllable -cā denotes something small, a small nāykhī. In fact, the nāykhīcā played in navabājā ensembles is of smaller circumference than a dhācā but it is not a particularly small nāykhī. In the navabājā context the nāykhī is also called nāykhīcā. As with dhā and dhācā, the drummer’s right hand holds a drumstick to play the lower sounding Haimā head that is made of cow hide.

Chapter 4 mentions Hari Govinda’s special technique for producing a clearer tā sound played with the left hand on the Nāsaḥ head made of goat hide. An instant before playing tā, either the tip of the drumstick or fingers 3 to 5 of the right hand press against the centre of the Haimā head, preventing it from vibrating, as that would cause a rather dull tā. In this way, brilliance and clarity of tā sounds are achieved. This advanced technique is not known or at least not applied in the nāykhībājā repertoire of the Nay. On the other hand, butcher drummers use a unique technique for producing a wailing sound that they call kvī. Before playing, they rub bee’s wax called men on the Haimā head of the nāykhī. Just before producing the sound kvī, the drummer licks the tip of his right middle finger and lightly pushes the moist fingertip forward across the Haimā head that responds with a haunting wail, kvī. The nāykhīcā used in navabājā does not play even a single pattern from the butcher repertoire. There is no bee’s wax applied and no kvī wail. Compositions are similar to those played by other navabājā drums under the same name. The nāykhī is also played in the Buddhist processional context of both varieties of gūlābājā. Oilpressers do not use the kvī rub, only goldsmiths and Buddhist priests. (Figs. 285–287)
Fig. 285: Nāy butchers Kajilal Shahi (left) and Kalu Shahi playing nāykhī and sichyāḥ at the shrine of Thāthu Nāsaḥ April 1985. Note how Kajilal’s feet support the drum.

Fig. 286: Nucheraj Buddhacharya (‘Gole Guruju’) of Inācva gālābājā playing nāykhī accompanied by Jugi with clarinet (Chandranath Kapali) and trumpets (Kedar Kapali, 3rd from right and colleague) August 1986
Drumming syllables used by Śākya/Vajrācārya and navabājā drummers for remembering and transmitting their nāykhī and nāykhīcā repertoires differ from all other inventories of drumming syllables. They exploit the articulation contrast between labial and dental sound production whereas all other drums focus on the contrast between dental and velar sounds. There are other differences, too. When I studied nāykhībājā of the butchers with the exceptionally accomplished drummer Kajilal Shahi, I was astonished to see that he did not use any drumming syllables but remembered the compositions as a chain of muscular reflexes. The slightly unnerving disadvantage of this method for me was, that he could not isolate sections of a composition. He had to repeat the complete piece at full speed—again and again. When I published his repertoire\textsuperscript{28}, I applied the drumming syllables used in navabājā, to make things easier for future students.

\textsuperscript{28} cf. Wegner 1988

Fig. 287: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar playing nāykhīcā with Yāchē navadāphā during a film shooting 28/2/1985
The right hand stroke *thu* is produced by striking the Haimā head lightly in the centre with the stick and maintaining the pressure against it, producing a dampened and slightly high-pitched sound.

Three fingers of the right hand stopping the Haimā head whilst playing *pā* or *ma* with the left hand.
6.6 Pachimā

The name of this majestic double conical drum indicates that it came from the west\(^9\). It is similar to the North Indian concert drum *pakhāvaj*, a little more bulging in the middle and not at all as perfectly tuned—although this may have been accomplished with more care during earlier centuries. In the Kathmandu Valley, the *pakhāvaj* used to accompany *dhrupad* singers and Rudra *vīṇā* players at the royal courts and, until the middle of the 20th century, in some stately homes of the Rāṇā aristocracy.

As with the *pakhāvaj*, the local drum *pachimā* (Figs. 291–293) has tuning paste on both heads, each with different components, adding weight and resonance to both drum hides. The Nāsāh head has in its centre a permanent black tuning paste *khau* containing crushed iron ore. It is attached to the lower goat hide. A ring-shaped hide of mountain goat rests on top (Figs. 294–298). Both hides are woven into a leather ring with holes for the V-laced drum straps. In theory, this head could be tuned to a precise pitch but in common practice the pitch is neglected for a year, until the drum is taken to the Kulu’s workshop for an annual overhaul. Just before playing the *pachimā*, the drummer kneads a sticky *chucū* dough of wheat flower and water and sticks it in the centre of the Haimā head that is made of cow hide. This must be removed after the performance lest ants and rats nibble it off and damage the leather parts as well. In between strokes, the drummer presses loose bits and pieces of sticky dough back into position with his left hand.

During *dhrupad* performances with *pakhāvaj* both heads were tuned precisely at an octave’s distance and to the basic note of the *rāga*, depending on the singer’s disposition. Not so with *pachimā*. Before big festivals, the Kulu drum-maker is asked to tighten the loose drum straps to achieve more resonance. But the pitch is left to chance. An equally lax treatment is given to the

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\(^9\) Delhi lies exactly to the west of Kathmandu
lālākhī, the drum that accompanies dāphā songs. Some singers of dāphā songs happily croon away at their personal pitch, apparently unconcerned about the drum’s or the lead singer’s pitch. Could it be that the ideal is not technical precision but inclusion of all available forces—whatever their musical merits? I often suspected that things must have been done to a higher standard during the Malla time when Newar culture was in its bloom.
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

Fig. 294

tā, nā

Fig. 295

ti

Fig. 296

ta

284
Stroke combinations:

\[ dh\bar{a} = t\bar{a} + gh\bar{e} \]
\[ dhe = ti + gh\bar{e} \]
\[ dh\bar{h} = tin + gh\bar{e} \]

Pachimā is also played in processional flute ensembles, with shawm accompaniment in Sāymi gūlābājā and for accompanying some masked dances like Mahākālī pyākhā.
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

6.7 Dhalak

*Dhalak* is the Newari name for the local version of the X-laced Indian *ḍholak*. Unlike most contemporary North Indian *ḍholak* drums, the V-laced *dhalak* does not use cotton straps but traditional ones made of leather. The Nāsah drumhead is made of goat hide, the Haimā head of com hide. The sound quality is clear and pleasing, not at all like the aggressive and hellish noise that huge *ḍholak*-dominated percussion ensembles have produced in Bollywood film studios since the 1970s, to project archaic values of male dominance over female submission. The refined left hand playing techniques including rubbing and single fingers playing that are common in *qavvālī* accompaniment, are not applied in playing the *dhalak*. As a contrast to the majestic ring of the *pachimā*, the *dhalak* plays similar compositions but in a dry and pleasant matter-of-fact manner. This contrasting range of sound production makes the two drums ideal partners in sharing compositions by taking turns in playing different sections. (Figs. 299–301)

In Bhaktapur, the *dhalak* is also used as a processional drum by transverse flute ensembles and Buddhist Sāymi gūlābājā. It plays a prominent role as the only accompanying drum in the devotional song genre *dhalcā-bhajan*. (Figs. 302–308)
Fig. 300: Tirthaman Napit playing *dhalak* during film shooting in Yāchē 28/2/1985

Fig. 301: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar and Tirthaman Napit playing a duet for *dhalak* and *pachimā* 28/2/1985
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

Fig. 302: Buddhalal Manandhar playing *dhalak* in Gvaḥmādhi 1986 with his Sāymi gālābājā ensemble based in Vāṃśa Gopāl

Fig. 303

*tā, nā*
6.7 Dhalak

Fig. 304

Fig. 305

drakha (4-3-2-4-2)

Fig. 306

Fig. 306

ti
Stroke combinations

\[
dh\tilde{a} = t\tilde{a} + gh\tilde{e}
\]
\[
dh\tilde{e} = tin + gh\tilde{e}
\]
6.8 Kvakhīcā

Kvakhīcā is known as kvacakhi or bhagakhī in Kathmandu and Patan. It is a vase-shaped clay drum with a hole at the bottom that is opened and closed with the left hand during playing, to alter the sound. The lower layer of the drumhead is made of goat hide, the upper one of mountain goat hide. The drumhead looks like that of the tabla but the application of the khau tuning paste is very rough in comparison with professional tabla-making in India. Lack of tuning is another factor resulting in a soft sound quality lacking brilliance. When it is the kvakhīcā’s turn during navabāja performance, Jugi shawm-players exchange their loud Gujarāti mvāli for soft and lovely sounding bamboo fipple flutes called baēcā (Fig. 309). Unfortunately all the old baēcā flutes disappeared.

Fig. 309: Chandranath Kapali playing one of the two last old baēcā fipple flutes of Bhaktapur 1991
Fig. 310: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar playing kvakhičā with Yāchē navadāphā, 28/2/1985
There were two left in the collection of Kathmandu University’s Department of Music but one of them broke during the earthquake in 2015. In the 1980s, farmers in Kathmandu and Patan had large transverse flute ensembles *bāsuri khalaḥ* that included accompaniment with several *kvacākhĩ* drums. They played processional music during *gūlā* and marriage music during the dry season.

In Bhaktapur *kvakhĩcā* is played as part of *navabājā* (Fig. 310), Sāymi *gūlābājā* and in a single *kvakhĩcā dhalcā* song group based in Taumādhi where it replaces the *dhalak* drum that is usually part of *dhalcā bhajan* groups.
6 Royal Kettledrums and *Navabśājā*

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*di*

Fig. 313

*drakha (4-3-2-4-2)*

Fig. 314

*kha*

Fig. 315

---

294
Fig. 316

*tin* (after drakha)

Fig. 317

open

Fig. 318

closed
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

Fig. 319: A rare kvakhīcā made of wood (photos: Bernd Karl Rennhak)

Fig. 320: Bhagahkhī made of clay, played as part of Patan navabājā in 1986
6.9 Nagarā

Nagarā comprises of two V-laced kettledrums made of clay or copper (expensive but more lasting), differing in size and in the construction of the drum heads (Figs. 321, 322). The smaller Nāsāḥ drum has two layers of cow hide on top of each other, the upper one shaped as a one inch wide ring encircling the lower hide. Contrary to the larger drum with only one thicker cow hide, the construction of the Nāsāḥ head allows for more variety of sound production and protects the rim of the drum from damage. The addition of the ring-shaped hide appears to be a relatively recent feature. In the 1980s there were still a few older Nagarā drums with single-layered Nāsāḥ heads. The chief reason for untimely disintegration of a clay Nagarā are frequent hard strokes against the rim that are carried out at the wrong angle and with a tight wrist. The drumstick should approach the rim in a horizontal position, lightly hitting the edge of the drum as well as the entire two inches of the circular hide. The bigger Mā̃kaḥ drum has a sturdier hide, sometimes with a masalā paste stuck against the centre from inside. This is evident as some of the mustard oil used as masalā component seeps through the hide. The Mā̃kaḥ is played only in the central area, never on the rim. With sudden spectacular involvement of the drummer’s raised right arm, Nagarā playing conveysjoyous rhythmic power, a perfect climax to the navabūjā performance and a very good reason for kings to be so fond of kettledrums.

Fig. 321: Pair of Nagarā kept in position by straw rings (photo: Bernd Karl Rennhak)
In Bhaktapur, the pair of nagara is used as part of navabāja ensembles, in Sāymi gālābāja and in Mahākālī pyakhā where it accompanies the battle of three daitya demons against the mother goddesses. Invariably, the demon is subdued and the goddess triumphs to the majestic sound of the pachimā drum. (Figs. 183, 188)
6.9 Nagarā

tā, nā

di

digadiga, tugunugu
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

**Fig. 326**

*ghē, dhē*

**Fig. 327**

*dhē*

**Fig. 328**

*dhē diga tā* (right hand moving from left to right to play tā)
6.9 Nagarā

Fig. 329

*dhē diga tā (diga)*

Fig. 330: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar playing *nagarā* during a film shooting at Yāchē, 28/2/1985
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

6.10 Dabadaba and Kāntā̃dabadaba

Lord Śiva is frequently depicted as the cosmic dancer Naṭarājā playing the damaru, an hourglass-shaped clapper drum made of the upper layers of two human skulls. Śiva as absolute, eternal time is Mahākāla. This is transcendental timelessness before creation begins. In this state, the god absorbs all time. Once creation starts, Śiva manifests as movement in time, playing the drum as Naṭarājā. The drum is used in tantric cults all over South Asia and also in Tibetan Buddhism. Paintings of many Ādivāsi ethnic groups of South Asia use a symbol of this drum, consisting of two triangles meeting with their points. In the Vārli Ādivāsi context in rural Mahārashtra, male shamans (bhagat) play similar drums (dāk and audh) during marriage and death rituals. In the tantric Śrī yantra, the overlapping of two triangles stands for the union of male and female energies. The House of Gorkha adapted this symbol as the so-called ‘star of Gorkha’. A detailed study of the damaru, its use and its symbolism could fill volumes.

Tamer versions of the drum used in Newar culture are made of wood (dabadaba) or clay (kāntā̃dabadaba). (Fig. 331)

![Fig. 331: Dabadaba (height: 8 cm) and kāntā̃dabadaba (right)](image)

The dabadaba was played as part of Sāymi gūlābājā of Bhaktapur, before the repertoire was lost with the death of the last player in the mid 1980s. A pair of dabadabas played simultaneously by a single person is used in Sāymi gūlābājā of Banepa and in Patan’s navabājā during gūlā. The Navadurgā of Bhaktapur play a big skull dabadaba during processions. Occasionally street hawkers and begging mendicants announce their arrival with the characteristic rattling sounds of similar drums.

The kāntā̃dabadaba is used in every Hindu household during the Mahānavamī home ritual. During the following days children play with the delicate clay drums until they are broken.

6.11 The Navabājā Repertoire

When the first navadāphā groups were founded in the early 18th century, a huge repertoire of suitable navabājā compositions had to be found, adapted or created by musicians whose identity remains unknown. They could have been members of the inner court circle, probably founding members of Taleju navadāphā, as this requires independent and discerning artistic minds that a Malla king would have valued to have at his service. These musicians would have had exposure to śāstriya saṅgīt practised at the Malla courts—a perfect position from which to organise musical material. A major part of the Bhaila pyākhā dance repertoire and other masked dances was integrated into the repertoire, also some patterns of dhābājā. Comparison of the repertoires of the existing navadāphā ensembles suggests that Yāchẽ navadāphā could be the youngest among Bhaktapur's navadāphā groups. This group's repertoire does not include three Bhaila pyākhā dhā compositions that are part of the Bhairavnāth and Dattātreya navadāphā repertoires. Despite occasional friendly chats between the leading drummers of Yāchẽ and Dattātreya and young Hari Govinda Ranjitkar listening to many performances of Bhairavnāth navadāphā, these few pieces never made it into the Yāchẽ repertoire. With more than twenty performances spread over the year, the navadāphā groups were in much better practice than dance groups that performed only for a week per year and had to put on annual training sessions before coming out. As a result, the dance compositions are played faster during navabājā performances. Another reason for the relatively slow tempo of Bhaila pyākhā could be that there is a natural tempo limit for dance movements that is easily surpassed by a good solo drummer. The drumming syllables vary between both genres but the compositions are easily identified in the other context. Borrowing patterns from other repertoires is not uncommon. However, there are certain limits to this, depending on the respective genre and caste. To allow comparison with related drum repertories, this publication includes, among others, the drum repertoires of lālākhĩ (Yāchẽ navadāphā), of Bhaila pyākhā (Kumāḥ of Sujamādhi) and of Sāymi gulābājā (Sākvalā).

During a navabājā performance, the initial composition is a dyāhlhāygu invocation for Nāsaḥdyaḥ, played by the first of the nine drums, dhā, to be followed by two short compositions called cva and gu. Another dyāhlhāygu precedes other cva and gu played by the second drum, kvatāḥ. Two different āratī compositions and dyāhlhāygu are played simultaneously by dhā and lālākhĩ during the final āratī procession around the lit āratī lamp stand.

There is a short pattern that imitates the sawing movement of a blunt blade at the throat of a sacrificial goat. It is played during the gory stage of blood sacrifice at the Nāsaḥdyah shrine and is called dugucā śyāygu, 'cutting the goat'. Before the sacrifice with dugucā śyāygu drowning out the goat's death rattle, the blade is purified with water and decorated with red and yellow powder. Apparently, it is never sharpened. Chicken sacrifices are carried out with a similar blade but without musical encouragement.

31 Bhaila pyākhā and Rādhākṛṣṇa pyākhā during saparu and Mahākāli pyākhā during Indra jātrā
32 drum accompanying dāphā songs
Dhā is not only played during navadāphā performances but also during processions to the shrine of Nāsaḥdyaḥ on the occasion of music apprenticeship rituals and during life-cycle rituals including processions. For example in saparu pyākhā the drums dhā and lālākhī take turns in accompanying the ghētāgiśi stick dance in front of a cow effigy. These and other short processional patterns are included in the transcriptions, as they were taught during my navabājā apprenticeship. Most of them are never played as part of a navabājā performance but during ritual processions. Nhyāḥ is an irresistible basic processional pattern suggesting physical movement. It is played in between cva compositions that are usually repeated once or twice. Cva 5 and 7 to 11 are also part of dhimaybājā processional patterns. Lā cva was adapted into the dhimay repertoire during the 1990s as an instantly popular addition.

As the combination of accompanying cymbals and natural trumpets and a stock of similar compositions underline, dhā and kvatāḥ were probably played in the Kathmandu Valley long before pachimā, dhalak and nagarā arrived from India. In many paintings and sculptures depicting Nāsaḥdyaḥ as Nṛtyanāth, his vehicles Nandi and Bhṛṅgi appear next to the god as smaller human figures playing dhā and kvatāḥ. The three of them dance, the god in the centre, gracefully lifting his right leg. There are many depictions of Nṛtyanāth dancing with his Šakti either as half male, half female Ardhanareśvara or in sexual union as an unmistakable image of divine creative energy.

It is exactly this inspiring energy that musicians need to tap and communicate through music like a charm. In fact, nāsaḥ can be translated as ‘charm’. During a navabājā performance, dhā and kvatāḥ play first dyahḥhyāgu, then pairs of short compositions called cva and gu. I was repeatedly told that they are conceived as pairs of male (gu) and female (cva) energies. Gu is never played during procession, only cva. The only other dyahḥhyāgu in the navabājā repertoire (for drums number three to nine) is a short piece for pachimā. This is played only during procession, at the beginning (invoking Nāsaḥdyaḥ), in front of the tvaḥ Gaṇedyaḥ (in this case Yāchē Gaṇeśa), on reaching Surya Vināyaka Gaṇeśa, and at the end of the procession (Nāsaḥdyaḥ).

Navabājā drums number three (dhācā) to nine (nagarā) are accompanied by shawms and—in the case of drum number eight (kvakhĩcā)—fipple flutes. Compositions for these drums include longer developments of changing rhythmic patterns with a brilliant climax. In the navabājā context ‘tāl’ does not stand for a rhythmic cycle but a fixed composition that may develop stepwise in different meters. The typical development starts with a basic pattern, the so-called duvā serving as the identifying refrain to the respective tāl. This basic pattern is repeated several times and can be replaced with minor buttā pattern variants, before another pattern emerges which also could be varied in a stepwise progression. Typical variants are generated by dividing the patterns into two halves, playing one section once and the other one three times. Another common procedure is the replacement of one short embellishment played on the last beat. The number of pattern repetitions is meant to coincide with the melodic development of the shawm accompaniment that also has a duvā refrain and a related melody to be played in between. There can be further increase of tempo, before a chain of lively drumming patterns leads to the climax. Another possible development

33 cf. chapter 11.16
34 in rare cases also dhā and lālākhī
35 cf. chapter 3.2, p. 65
36 cf. chapter 2., p. 27
includes repetition of the entire set of variants, before the piece reaches a final climax. There are also patterns succeeding each other with contrasting accents.

Most of the procedures described above resemble elementary variation techniques in North Indian classical tabla and pakhāvaj playing. Unknown in navabājā drumming is the important tabla compositional procedure of khālī-barī where a tabla pattern is repeated with contrasting bāyāṁ strokes highlighting the rules of the respective tāl—for example in the gāyāṅ form. As the classical tabla repertoire began to evolve in the late eighteenth century in Delhi, it is obvious that this advancement could not have influenced the navabājā repertoire of Bhaktapur. When Indian court musicians were employed by Malla and Rana courts, there must have been little or no exposure of Newar farmers and lower castes to this exclusive court entertainment.

The Jugi tailor-musicians accompany the navabājā drummer continuously from the third drum dhā̃cā to the ninth drum nagarā with shawm melodies selected in accordance with the season and festivals (Fig. 332). For example, during autumn (mvahani festival), they play five variants of rāg mālāśrī, during the spring month of Māgh variants of rāg basanta, during the month of Phālgun hvali me, during the New Year festival ghātu. Two pieces start with rāg kāygu, a short melodic introduction in free rhythm, whereas all other pieces have a simple melody in two parts. It begins just after the drummer introduces his initial pattern of the respective composition. He

37 cf. Wegner 2004
38 Simonne Bailey was able to identify altogether forty-nine shawm melodies played with navabājā.
39 thatā and tatali, played by the dhā̃cā drum
40 identical with the North Indian concept of melodic development in two steps, sthāyi (fixed refrain) and antarā
rarely tells what composition he is going to play but expects the shawm players to identify the piece after the initial drumming strokes and respond with the suitable melody. Other shawm players wait until their leader has identified the drumming pattern, before they join in. Different degrees of confidence become obvious, as some shawm players avoid playing in the more difficult upper range, allowing themselves a nonchalant puff from their cigarettes or simply stopping for breath.

There seems to be limited compulsion to play shawm as precisely as possible. This is enhanced by the fact that quite a few Jugi musicians are habitually drunk. Their accompaniment is not the unison playing of a well-defined melodic line. It is the sum total of four—ideally there were four shawm players—different versions that produce a lively continuum around a remembered melody. Astonishingly this works, if the drummer is confident about his patterns and the tempo. Then the tipsy shawm players manage to proceed without letting the music fall apart. So shawm accompaniment is not necessarily a dependable point of reference for the drummer. It represents an element of impending chaos that needs to be lived with.

Reasons for the absence of technical perfection in many performances of Newar music could be general intoxication during festivals or simply the advanced age and bad health that also led to the present state of decline of this tradition. Shawm accompaniment was definitely more precise during the early 1980s when there were still enough proficient players and regular performances. In Bhaktapur, Jugi shawm players are always, sometimes drastically shown their place at the very bottom of the socio-economic order. After the guthi land bestowments were confiscated by the state of Nepal in 1963, the music groups still needed to pay shawm-players. Payment was mostly in kind, rice and wheat, and it became less and less. Owing to the Jugis’ reluctance to play for free, performances became increasingly rare. If professional musicians are to work, they need to be respected and paid, not abused but supported. The people of Bhaktapur missed that chance.

All navabājā drums are played in cross-legged sitting position, some supported by a drum belt around the drummer’s knees. In the following descriptions of playing techniques, the fingers are numbered 1 to 5, starting with the thumb as 1. The Nāṣaḥ hide of a two-headed drum produces much clearer undampened, open tā sounds when the Haimā hide is blocked just before the stroke. Blocking is done either with the drumstick or with fingers 3, 4, 5 silently holding against the centre of the Haimā hide with their tips whilst fingers 1 and 2 hold the stick. Both techniques help to produce a clear and ringing tā sound and are applied whenever the tempo allows for this. Fingers 3 to 5 of the right hand also regulate the range of the drumstick’s movements by holding it either tight or loose, allowing more freedom to bounce back from the drum head.

Movements are restricted to the barely necessary and carried out with maximum relaxation and quiet, regular breathing. Facial expression should be focused but serene. In exceptional cases, an experienced drummer may use an extra movement to highlight special strokes. Among all navabājā drummers, only Hari Govinda did this to impressive effect whilst playing some special nagarā patterns. He had learnt this technique from his uncle. (Fig. 333)

The popular tatali piece for dhācā, dhalak and nagarā includes a section where the shawms synchronize with the drumming patterns (Fig. 334). Here, the shawms respond after the fashion of natural trumpets pvaṅgā. They use only the basic note and the upper fifth, the basic note coinciding with ghē strokes of the lower sounding drum hide and the fifth with tā strokes of the higher sounding drum hide.
6.11 The Navabājā Repertoire

Fig. 3.33: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar throwing his arm up to highlight a stroke (1983)
In this way, the drum pattern
\[ \text{/ghë tā tā ghë tā tā ghë o/} \]
synchronizes with the shawms playing\(^{41}\)
\[ \text{/ S P P S / P P S o /} \]

etc.

In the entire navabājā repertoire, this is the only piece, where shawms divert from their role of having to support the drummer with repetitive melodies. The union of melody and rhythm becomes intimate. The piece includes also patterns of Rādhākrṣṇa pyākhā and khicā pyākhā\(^{42}\).

Other navabājā compositions may include certain patterns that cite those of masked dances: Cva no. 10 for dhā is the main pattern of Bhaila pyākhā. It is played when Bhailadyaḥ dances with his entourage.

The composition dhamāk for dhimaycā, nāykhicā, dhalak, pachimā and nagarā uses the typical patterns of khyāḥ pyākhā, a dance in a rapid seven beat meter showing naughty ghosts that lurk on rooftops at night and paralyze people in their sleep (Fig. 335).

\(^{41}\) in Indian letter notation
\(^{42}\) lit. dog dance
Fig. 335: Khyāḥ pyākhā performed by potters of Taulāchē, August 1988.
Citations of dance patterns appear also in dāphā drum accompaniment\textsuperscript{43}. Musicians and listeners in Bhaktapur are instantly able to pick up the lead given by the drumming patterns and associate the respective gods and other characters from various masked dances.

As much of the navabājā repertoire is also part of drum compositions played by Bhaila pyākhā and Sāymi gūlābājā, the complete transcriptions of those repertoires are included in this publication. Bhaila pyākhā uses only two drums, dhā and lālākhā. Many among these dhā pieces are also part of what the kvakhā drum plays during the initial section of a navabājā performance, but at a faster tempo. The drumming syllables differ a little in both genres, as these are oral traditions.

In this chapter I tried to establish that the navabājā repertoire of compositions was to some extent compiled from compositions of existing dance repertoires. Their performance in the navadāphā context causes performers and listeners to associate and perhaps experience a vision of the respective characters from those masked dances. It appears that the masters who selected the compositions did apply a final touch resulting in the convincing format of this treasure of Newar drumming compositions. They must have included several original compositions in addition, for example most of those for dhācā, dhimaycā and nāykīcā and those for kvakhīcā. Obviously, they were highly skilled musicians with the necessary intellectual and creative potential. They lived two hundred years before our era when Newar culture was at its full bloom—thanks to an almost unlimited support by the Malla kings. Those rulers embraced the responsibility towards their astonishing culture, encouraging the Newar genius by participating in the unique spiritual and artistic potential of their subjects.

Many drumming patterns are shared among different Newar settlements. For example, some of the dhimay patterns of Bhaktapur are also used in Thimi or Kathmandu. The last section of Bhaktapur’s dhimay dyaḥlhāygu is also played in far away Baḍikhel (near Lele)—proof of the extreme age and ritual importance most this important invocation of Nāsahdyah. Much more comparative research into the repertoires of different Newar towns needs to be carried out to identify links between the various local styles. This may enable us to understand the flow of information among local styles and allow conclusions to their origin.

Comparison of Bhaktapur’s drumming genres reveals that some genres share nothing, not even a single pattern with other genres, pointing to the restrictions of use by a single caste and/ or use in esoteric tantric practices. This applies to the cacā pyākhā and paṅcatāla repertoire of the Buddhist Vajrācārya priests that could be among the oldest surviving drumming traditions— their exclusiveness ensured by secret performances. The other high caste Buddhist drumming tradition, Śākya and Vajrācārya gūlābājā is processional music for everybody to hear, but not a single drumming pattern of this can be found in other genres. The other end of the social ladder is represented by nāykībājā, the processional music of the Nāy butchers. Their repertoire includes the funeral procession music sībājā, believed to emanate black magic and death. Nobody else wanted to have anything to do even with the rest of the nāykībājā repertoire. Not a single pattern is shared with other genres. This is also the case with the unique music of the Navadurgā that dates from the early 16th century. The mothergoddesses are the most powerful protectors of Bhaktapur. Their music stands apart and cannot be taught to outsiders.

\textsuperscript{43} cf. chapter 11.12
The lālākhĩ accompaniment of religious dāphā songs includes patterns from popular sāpāru dances. When the singers are singing the dāphā song text, these drum patterns work like an undercurrent of meaning. Naturally, when they sound, the musicians may visualise the dance characters.

Other genres frequently contributed to each other, especially those genres practiced by the middle strata of the society, the musically very active farmers and related castes of craftsmen. Several processional patterns occurring in dhimaybājā, dhābājā, Baila pyākhā and navabājā dhā are similar, for example the following one that accompanies the ensemble dance of Bhaila pyākhā. In navabājā and dhābājā it is called cva, in dhimaybājā gu, whereas Bhaila pyākhā uses the drumming syllables as the title of the piece, dhānyedhānā. It comes in a straight metre. The syllables differ but the structure and playing technique are similar.

navabājā and dhābājā:  /ghẽ o o tā/ o o ghẽ o /tā o o o/tāghemitā/
                     /ghẽ o o tā/ o o ghẽ o /tā o o o/tāghemitā/
                     /tākha o tā/ o o kha o /tākha o tā/ o o kha o /tā o etc.

dhimaybājā:          /dhā o o syāy/ o o thẽy o /syāy o o o /khutātāka/
                    /dhā o o syāy/ o o thẽy o /syāy o o o /khutātāka/
                    /cakhũ o ba/ o o khũ o /syāy o o o /khutātāka/ etc.

Bhaila pyākhā:       /dhā o o nye/ o o dhā o /nã o o o /garajaka/  
                    /dhā o o nye/ o o dhā o /nã o o o /garajaka/  
                    /dalĩ o ce/ o o kũ o /cakũ o nye/ o o kũ o /cã etc.

There are numerous examples of drumming syllables evoking poetry—invariably of erotic connotation. When male drummers start inventing these naughty rhymes based on their drumming patterns, there is no end to it. For example, the popular tatali drumming piece played during performances of navabājā and kha pyākhā has this pattern:

/ghẽ ti tā/ kha ti tā/ ghẽ ghẽ tāghẽ/tā etc.

If replaced by meaningful words, it becomes:

/dho-ti tva/kāy-ta tva/prā-si nāpā/tva etc.
Take off the dhoti. Take off the loincloth.
Take off the sari, too.

Another example:

/kāy-ta tva/prā-si tva/jvāh jvāh majhvāh/tva etc.
Take off the loincloth. Take off the sari. Interlock!
6 Royal Kettledrums and \textit{Navabājā}

6.12 Drum-Making

During the 1980s, the only drum-makers in town were two Kulu brothers, Dil Bahādur and Śaṅkha Bahādur, living on the northern periphery of Bhaktapur, in Mulāchē. Owing to their professional occupation with cow and other animal hides, their Kulu caste comes between Nāy butchers and untouchable Pvaḥ sweepers, basket-makers and fishermen. With the recent disappearance of many music groups and decreasing demand for their traditional work as drum-makers, the next generation of Kulus with school education is trying to find additional avenues for generating income. Some specialise in the tourist business, selling small \textit{māḍal} drums, singing bowls and toy \textit{sāraṅgīs} as souvenirs. In the mid 1980s Dil Bahādur Kulu organised instructive video shows of American blue films (entrance fee: 1 Rupee). This became a temporary racket for the needy and brought him some extra income. Newar drums are tuned only to an approximate pitch. If the groups can afford it, they take the instruments to the Kulu drum-maker for tightening—usually before the big town rituals \textit{biskah} and \textit{mvahani}. (Figs. 336–338)

\textbf{Fig. 336:} Kulu women repairing a pair of \textit{tablā} (\textit{tamal} and \textit{bām}) for use in \textit{bhajan} accompaniment, 1985

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Fig. 337: Śaṅkha Bahādur Kulu repairing lālākhĩ drums in his workshop, 1989

Fig. 338: Drum-maker's tools and raw material for making a nāykhĩ drum,
front row from left to right: Haimā hide (chēgǔ) of cow with bamboo ring (pvatā), Nāsaḥ hide of female goat with bamboo ring, and flat lvahã stone for tool sharpening,
second row: lvahã stone hammer, flat bamboo slice benā, hole piercing awl (pvāḥ khane gu ācā), lapi blade, flat awl (gvahgu ācā), chālicā pliers,
third row: leather strip (tā bālā), cotton rope (kā khipaḥ), water jug (karuvā)
## Animal hides used in drum-making

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of drum</th>
<th>Nāsaḥ drumhead</th>
<th>Haimā/ Mākā drumhead</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>dyahkhī</td>
<td>nāk (female yāk, Bos grunniens)</td>
<td>nāk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>royal nagarā</td>
<td></td>
<td>male buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhimay</td>
<td>calf skin</td>
<td>female cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lālākhī</td>
<td>cow (upper layer), female goat (lower l.)</td>
<td>cow (male for upper layer, female for lower layer)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhā</td>
<td>cyāgrā (mountain goat)</td>
<td>cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kvatāḥ</td>
<td>see lālākhī and nāykhī</td>
<td>see lālākhī and nāykhī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhācā</td>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>mountain goat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhimaycā</td>
<td>calf skin</td>
<td>female cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nāykhī/nāykhīcā</td>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pachimā</td>
<td>mountain goat (upper layer)</td>
<td>cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>goat (lower layer)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dhalak</td>
<td>goat</td>
<td>cow</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kvakhīcā</td>
<td>female mountain goat (upper layer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>female goat (lower layer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nagarā</td>
<td>cow (thin)</td>
<td>cow (thicker)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamva/tukumuku</td>
<td>mountain goat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mādal/magaḥkhī</td>
<td>female goat</td>
<td>mountain goat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tablā/tamalā</td>
<td>female goat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bāyām/bām</td>
<td>mountain goat</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>dabadaba</td>
<td>goat (thin)</td>
<td>goat (thin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kāntādabadaba</td>
<td>bladder of male buffalo</td>
<td>bladder of male buffalo</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All animal hides are soaked in a chalk solution overnight before scraping off the hair with a *lapi* blade.
Some drums require tuning paste. This increases resonance and allows additional sound quality and playing techniques. These pastes are of three varieties:

1. *chucũ*, a dough made of wheat flour and water. This is applied to the Haimā of the *pachimā* drum before performance and must be scraped off immediately after performance.

2. *khau*, a mixture of powdered iron ore, little water and various sticky components. It is applied on the outer side of the drum head and rubbed against the tightened hide with the help of a smooth, round stone. Rubbing and pressure cause heat which makes the paste stick to the drum hide for years. Application needs to be done in many layers and with utmost precision to allow for the fine-tuning of a concert *tablā*, for example. The finest *tablā*-makers in India own rare skills as secret craft traditions that are highly valued by professional *tablā-vādaks*. The *khau* applied by local *Kulus* in the Kathmandu Valley is a very rough version of the perfection that some Indian specialists are capable of. Newar drums with *khau* are *tamal* and *bām* (*tablā* and *bāyāṃ*), *lālākhĩ* (*Nāsāḥ* and Haimā), *kvakhĩcā* and *pachimā* (*Nāsāḥ*).

3. *masalā*, a mixture of crushed castor seeds (*Ricinus communis*), dried tree resin and mustard oil. It is applied on the inside of the drum hide and needs to be replaced every year. The *masalā* paste lends weight and a deep resonance to the Haimā drum hides of *dhimay*, *dhimaycā*, *dhā̃cā*, *nāykhĩ*, *dhalak* and to the Māḥ of the *nagarā* pair of kettledrums.

Dil Bahādur Kulu taught me how to make a *nāykhĩ* drum. The following series of illustrations (Figs. 339–373) documents the process:

*Gvaḥ* body of the drum of black *casĩ* wood⁴⁴ (diameter at both ends: 19 cm, height: 33 cm)

⁴⁴ *Magnolia*
Cutting the wetted Nāsah hide into a circular shape (cāh lakaygu or cāh utigenkegu)

Binding the bamboo ring with a leather string (pvata cigu)

Figs. 340, 341

Fig. 342
Cleaning the Näsah hide with the blade (*chēgū pigu* or *chēgū svigu*)

Jacketing the bamboo ring (*pvata tulegu*) with the help of the *benā*
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

Fig. 346

Fitting the Nāsaḥ hide on to the drum (Nāsaḥ jukegu)

Fig. 347

Cutting the wetted Haimā hide into shape (cāḥ lakaygu/cāḥ utigenkegu)

Fig. 348

Cleaning the Haimā hide (chēgu pīgu/chēgu svigu)
6.12 Drum-Making

Fig. 349
Sharpening the *lapi* blade

Fig. 350
Cleaning the Haimā hide
(*chēgū pigu/chēgū svigu*)

Fig. 351
Checking the shape of the cleaned Haimā hide
Wetting the Haimā hide (chēgū phvayegu) before jacketing

Fig. 352

Jacketing (pvata tulegu)

Fig. 353

Components of the masalā paste: mustard oil (tū cikā), sāl resin (sāl dhāp) and castor seeds (ālaypu)

Fig. 354
6.12 Drum-Making

Castor seeds (ālaypu)

Crushing and grinding the resin with a round stone (lvahā) into a fine powder
Crushing and grinding castor seeds with a stone

Adding mustard oil ($tū$ cikā)

Three masalā components mixed into a rough paste
Mixing the components thoroughly, until the masalā becomes sticky and glutinous.

Applying the masalā paste on the Haimā hide (masalā tāyegu/masalā ilegu)
6 Royal Kettledrums and Navabājā

Fitting the Haimā hide on to the drum (Haimā jukegu), masalā inside

Securing both the drum hides with string (nikhē kākegu)
6.12 Drum-Making

Fig. 366

Tying both the drum hides

Fig. 367

Tightening the string with the big toe (*tutĩ kākah tāyegu*)

Fig. 368

Piercing twelve holes (*pvah khānegu*)
Putting the leather strap (tā bālā) through them one by one

Connecting the two drum heads with the leather strap and balancing the tension

Piercing the remaining holes and putting the strap through (pvah khaṇa tā tāyāḥ cvāgu)
Levelling the drum hides
(cāḥ māṭhā vāṅkugu)

Fig. 372

Tightening the straps
(tā salegu)

Fig. 373

Already suffering from tuberculosis, Dil Bahādur Kulu (Fig. 374) passed away five years later. At the time, TB was a chief cause of premature death in Nepal. He left two sons, Bikram and Bikas, who are skilled drum-makers.
Fig. 374: Watching the drying nāykhī in the sun (nibhāhle pāhgu).
Dil Bahadur is relaxing.
7 Cymbals

Four different pairs of cymbals are used to accompany the nine drums, tāḥ of different sizes, jhyālicā, sichyāḥ and bhuchyāḥ (Fig. 375). Some navabājā groups use in addition a thick brass disc of the gong category (approximately 25 cm in diameter), called kāypā, kāypī or in Bhaktapur also tāĩnāĩ. It is played with a heavy stick.

Two different sounds are produced, the open, ringing sound tī̃ and the closed, muffled sound chu. In the drumming notation they are represented by capital letters T and C above the drumming syllables.
7 Cymbals

7.1 Tāḥ and Tāḥcā

Tāḥ are thick-walled bronze cymbals and were made by Śākya goldsmiths living in the Nāgbāḥāḥ area, Patan. The smaller tāḥ are called tāḥcā. The alloy includes precious metals. Before the last goldsmith skilled in this craft closed his workshop in 1991, I asked him if he would let me document the process of making the instruments but this was politely declined. It appears that the family secret has been lost. The tourist market is flooded with poor quality cymbals. The finest thick-walled cymbals were made by Śākya expatriates in Lhasa. (Figs. 376–378)

Fig. 376: Tāḥcā (front, 4 cm in diameter) and tāḥ with handles (photo: Bernd Karl Rennhak)
7.1 Tāh and Tāhcă

Fig. 377

tī

Fig. 378

chu
7 Cymbals

7.2 Jhyāli and Jhyālicā

Jhyālicā are flat brass cymbals, approximately 7 cm in diameter, producing a tinkling sound. They are made by tamaḥ coppersmiths. The Navadurgā of Bhaktapur use a large and heavy pair called jhyāli. That special sound is perceived as /tī̃ kal - - /tī̃ kal - - / when the Navadurgā dancers walk through Bhaktapur at night. (Figs. 379–381)

Fig. 379: Two pairs of jhyālicā and one pair of big jhyāli used by the Navadurgā (photo: Bernd Karl Rennhak)
7.2 Jhyāli and Jhyālicā

Resonant sound of jhyālicā

Muffled sound of jhyālicā
7 Cymbals

7.3 Sichyāḥ

Sichyāḥ (in Kathmandu Newari: chusyāḥ) are a pair of brass cymbals approximately 20 cm in diameter and with a wide, flat boss (Figs. 382, 383).

Fig. 382
Resonant sound of sichyāḥ

Fig. 383
Muffled sound of sichyāḥ
7.4 Bhuchyāḥ

*Bhuchyāḥ* (in Kathmandu Newari: *bhusyāḥ*) is a pair of large brass cymbals (29 cm in diameter) with a wide, round boss (Figs. 384–386). The finest *bhuchyāḥ* were produced in Kathmandu until 1985. Their incomparable sound was gorgeous and the inside of the boss painted with red enamel. Since then, cymbals of lesser quality have been imported from Bhojpur, a town in east Nepal famous for metal work. Both *bhuchyāḥ* and *sichyāḥ* don’t last long as they are easily broken during processions. Excited drunken brutes grab the cymbals and smash them together heads on with full force, without knowing the correct way of playing. These delicate cymbals should be held very

*Fig. 384*: Bishnu Bahadur Manandhar (‘Mr. Bhaktapur’) playing *bhuchyāḥ* in the correct manner during a *dhimaybājā* procession, 1991
loosely. Their flat surfaces meet in a gentle, sweeping manner with the right hand pushing and the left hand pulling. Nobody should be allowed to touch the instruments without proper training.

Prolonged cymbal playing damages the inner ear and may cause permanent tinnitus. I always used small cotton balls to protect my ears. This helped me to preserve my hearing capacity—despite participating as a drummer in countless noisy processions. I strongly recommend this to every player of Newar drums and cymbals.
Muffled sound of *bhuchyāḥ*
When Indian court musicians were employed by Malla, Šāha and Rāṇā courts, šāstriya saṅgīt remained an exclusive court entertainment until some of these musicians trained disciples from Nepal. If some members of the ruling families attained proficiency in singing or playing in the North Indian classical tradition, this was a strictly private occupation. The last Rudra vīnā player of professional standard was Ekrāj SJB Rāṇā during the 1940s and 1950s (Fig. 387).

Fig. 387: Nepal’s last Rudra vīnā player, Ekrāj Shamsher posing in state attire

1 Nepali term for North Indian classical music/Hindustani music
On the groundfloor of his Durgā Bhāvan palace at Taṅgal, Kathmandu, he had installed a lavish music room (Fig. 388) with a garden view where white peacocks strutted next to Italian fountains. There he practised and played for his friends. He owned a complete set of musical instruments made in Calcutta and his library included a Newar rāgamālā commissioned by Jagajjotir Malla of Bhaktapur (1614–1637).³

In the 1980s, a handful of Indian and Nepalese musicians—among them the Ganesh Bhandari (sitār), Nara Raj Dhakal (khayāl), Shambhu Prasad Mishra (tablā) and Shamba Dev Sharma

2 now demolished
3 see Wegner and Widdess 2004, 2005
Śāstriya Saṅgīt

(harmonium)—were in the employment of the royal palace in Kathmandu, one of them in charge of organising a monthly fullmoon concert at the Nārāyanhiṭī temple in the palace compound. These concerts were accessible to the general public and linked to the inner palace with horrible microphones and electric wires. We never knew if anybody listened at the other end. There were a few senior professional musicians—among them Krishna Narayan Shrestha (jaltarāṅg, dilruba, tablā taraṅg and harmonium), Tarabhir Singh Tuladhar (sitār), Mohan Prasad Shrestha (sarod) and Homnath Upadhyaya (tablā) who each helped to raise a new generation of musicians. Tribhuvan University’s Lalit Kala campus offered basic training in śāstriya saṅgīt. When Nepal TV opened its first studio on the top floor of Singha Durbar, Krishna Narayan Shrestha and I were called to play a televised programme. The payment was Rs. 125 each but we were told to collect the money later. We came to know that the Singha Durbar guards were under order to prevent pedestrians and private vehicles from entering the gate. The taxi fare would have been more than the money that we were supposed to collect. (Figs. 389–392)

When I played a tablā solo in an auditorium in Patan, to my surprise the Nepal TV technicians had installed their recording equipment on stage. They recorded and telecasted the concert without taking the trouble to ask for my permission. Every musician had such stories to tell of betrayal and piracy. Finally, Nepal TV decided to stop telecasting programmes with śāstriya saṅgīt. Contrary to Indian state media with their earlier educative agenda, Nepal TV caters only for popular tastes. Unlike India where the copyright rests with the performer, in Nepal it is the producer who owns the copyright. In fact, the biggest producer made himself General Secretary

Fig. 389: Krishna Narayan Shrestha playing jaltarāṅg at the Goethe Institute 22/2/1991
of the copyright society that he had founded. This climate of greed and exploitation makes it extremely hard for professional musicians to pull on in Nepal. Consequently, in comparison with North Indian professional standards this noble musical tradition deteriorated to a provincial level. Having to supply dinner music to foreign tourists kills the joy of music. Those musicians who could afford it migrated abroad.
Fig. 391: Tarabir Singh Tuladhar playing sitār at the Goethe Institute 1991

Fig. 392: Mohan Sundar Shrestha playing sarod at the Goethe Institute 1991
In the 1980s and 1990s, there was only a single Newar *tablā* player in Bhaktapur, Keshab Narayan Tamrakar (Fig. 393) who had learnt the Benares style of *tablā* from court musician Shambhu Prasad Mishra. Being the wealthy owner of a tourist shop, Keshab organised occasional public concerts in Bhaktapur with invited musicians from Patan, Kathmandu and Germany (author). These performances of *śāstriya saṅgīt* attracted only a limited circle of a few local people trained in this tradition. To other citizens it was a musical language different from their own, that they could enjoy only at a superficial level. Another Tamrakār family in Kvāchē kept a few instruments...
with broken strings as family memorabilia from a time when śāstriya saṅgīt was practised more and recognized as South Asia’s supreme musical achievement (Fig. 394). Extreme dedication to practice, learning and perfection combined with the essential talent deserve unconditional support. This is how humanity can blossom and proceed.

During my years as resident of Bhaktapur, I trained several tablā students in the style of Laliyānā gharānā. Three of them found employment at Kathmandu University’s Department of Music. As I published my complete tablā repertoire in 2004 in Delhi, transcriptions in this publication do not include tablā. When Newar farmers play tablā for bhajan accompaniment, this is usually done with drums that are out of tune and in a comparatively basic and crude manner. But they manage to inspire the singers, leading them to joyous climaxes.

4 Wegner 2004
9 Musical Change

In trying to reconstruct the musical history of the Kathmandu Valley, scholars face the problem of limited written historical data. The National Archive keeps approximately one hundred twenty music manuscripts—among them the oldest existing manuscript of Bhārata’s nātyaśāstra.¹ Among a few other South Asian music treatises, most of these manuscripts are songbooks. Other information can be extracted from the vaṃśāvalī chronicles of the kings of Nepal. They mention masked dances or musical instruments sponsored by a king or introduced under his reign. Other sources are stone inscriptions and deed documents kept by music groups, inscriptions on musical instruments and depictions of music performances in painting and carvings in stone, metal or wood. The information generated so far allows only for a broad outline of the historical development, leaving huge gaps.² This may become more precise as more scholars take interest and contribute their findings. Another source of information is a critical look at the repertoire. This allows us to identify stylistic changes and innovations that may have been caused by creative minds or by political, social, economic or technological developments. This publication identifies at least five different styles of Newar drumming repertoires of different castes that do not share any common patterns. This could suggest separate origins during different stages in history.

The study of musical change becomes even more important in our time of accelerating change. Alarm bells should sound when an entire musical tradition is on the verge of extinction. It shows that the foundations of a society are about to collapse. This is different from the continuous change of traditions that keep renewing themselves, gradually taking a new shape. That should be no reason for concern. Oral traditions were always enhanced by creative minds or suffered from memory lapses. They are living, not static. This should be kept in mind when using my notations of the Bhaktapur repertoire. These can be an effective teaching and learning aid. They should not be mistaken for an everlasting version. Whenever good ideas for improvement and addition arrive, they should be incorporated to keep the music alive. Notations can be rewritten.

Stabilising Factors

When we try to list stabilising factors that kept the Newar musical traditions going over the centuries, there was obviously the absolute monarchy that perceived change as a potential threat and

¹ the original written approximately 1800 to 2000 years ago
² cf. chapter 1.
guaranteed continuity. The Malla kings and a few members of the following Shah dynasty took personal interest and supported music groups with land deeds and—in some cases—personal participation. *Guṭhī* organisations for the maintenance of music groups have been in existence at least since the early seventh century.\(^3\) The value of these social organisations for the continuity of musical practice and maintenance of temples, musical instruments, songbooks, etc. cannot be overstated. The *guṭhī* system is largely responsible for the continuity of Newar music culture for over two centuries after the end of Malla rule in 1769. The foundation of *navadāphā* groups with their regular performance of drum compositions created a unique pool of reference for other groups that were always welcome to refresh their memory by way of communication with the leading *navabājā* drummers and singers.

Last not least, the essential Newar cultural values of participation and contribution kept the music alive. It was natural for a young farmer to learn music and dance and actively participate in the opulent town rituals. All these activities were established and channelled through the cult of Nāsāḥdyah, confirming the essential ritual function of music and dance as means of communication with the domain of the divine. *Dyaḥlhāygu* invocations are held sacred. This saved their essential patterns from change. For example, the *cicāhāhgu dyahlhāygu* of *dhimaybājā* can be found in many *dhimay* repertoires across the Kathmandu Valley—even in such a remote place as Lele-Bārikhel.\(^4\) It must have served over a millennium as a proven method for actualising divine inspiration. But when an entire *paṅcatāla* group needs to sight-read *tvāka dyahlhāygu* to perform it in public with difficulty, the end is near.\(^5\)

**Destabilising Factors**

When we look at the dramatic changes that happened in Nepal during the recent past, we perceive an acceleration of the speed of change that goes along with the disappearance of many aspects of Newar music that I was still able to document in the 1980s. This applies also to other musical traditions of Nepal, of course. This publication makes it clear that the confiscation of Newar *guṭhi* land endowments during King Mahendra Shah’s rule in 1963 has been a most destructive factor in the loss of musical heritage.

The other, equally destructive factor is the mindless suppression of lower caste musicians that is still common practice in Nepal. Only if society allows musicians to lead a decent life by teaching and performing, their conditions and status will improve. Musicians who depend on performing as a livelihood need to be paid an appropriate amount for their services just like any other profession. Their traditions will survive and add meaning, stability and beauty to peoples’ lives and contribute to the wellbeing of the nation.

\(^3\) cf. Wegner with Sharma 1994 and 1995
\(^4\) cf. chapter 11.6 and Wegner/Sharma 1994 and 1995
\(^5\) cf. chapter 4.1
What We Could Do

When I realized what an enormous cultural loss this catastrophic change meant for the Nepalese nation, my focus changed from participant observation and documentation to what is now called applied ethnomusicology. It was my aim to train as many intelligent young people in Nepal to appreciate, safeguard and work creatively with their own musical traditions. With the support of Kathmandu University and the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) it was possible in 1996 to found the Department of Music in the idyllic setting of the restored Dhaubhadel Śivālaya at the outskirts of Bhaktapur and employ as many local musicians and other academic teachers from Bhaktapur, Patan and Kathmandu as possible. Over the past decades, our staff members and graduates contributed not only to traditional music but their knowledge and training in traditional music affected their own creative output in the field of popular music.\(^6\)

In our age traditional music performances in Bhaktapur have become few and irregular and are drowned by noisy vehicles. Now it is of vital importance to rely on written notation to preserve this unique repertoire for future generations of literate musicians and make the process of learning the repertoire much easier. Notations cannot replace the motivation that is generated by groups that include three generations of musicians united in the musical worship of the gods and by a regular performance schedule.

Occasionally, educated Nepalese concerned about the loss of their musical heritage asked me, what they could do to prevent further decline. The answers:

1. In developing the vital community spirit that supports a musical culture, it is important to offer your children (boys AND girls) exposure to music and town rituals (explain the meaning!) at an early age. This is more important than school homework.

2. The support of musical traditions should be given equal importance as restoration of heritage sites. Both, tangible AND intangible cultural heritage must be preserved, ideally in projects combining both, restoration of physical facilities and their meaningful use.

3. Invest in music education. Create scholarships. Organize performances and competitions. By offering special training and job opportunities, local musicians should be educated and encouraged to apply their knowledge and skills as music teachers in general school education.

4. Include the academic discipline of ethnomusicology in every university and apply the methods of ethnomusicology in systematic documentation and support of the living musical heritage.

\(^6\) Fabian Bakef's PhD thesis ‘Ethnomusicology, Popular Music and Preservation of Traditional Music in Nepal’—to be published soon—highlights these developments
9. Musical Change

5. Prevent suppression and exploitation of musicians. If you organize a paid performance, do not allow musicians to exploit each other. Pay everybody separately and in person.

6. Support music and dance groups as a participating sponsor—regardless of their members’ political leaning.

7. Help preserving the skills of making good quality and authentic instruments and sponsor the learning of threatened instruments like *mvālī* shawms, *pvagā* and *kā* natural trumpets and drums.

8. Sponsor reconstruction and maintenance of *phalcā* shelters for music groups.

9. Create the political will to make the old towns permanently free of motorized traffic.

10. Lobby for a copyright law that ensures that performance, dissemination and reproduction rights belong to the performer, not to the producer.

11. By presenting informed and meaningful documentaries, television producers should accept the duty to educate, not merely entertain.

12. Music inspired by Nāsahdyah reveals that our true nature is cosmic creative energy, nothing less. This awareness wants to be nurtured and cultivated.
10 Appendix
Bhaktapur Maps

Map 40: Names of tvah quarters (courtesy of Niels Gutschow)
Map 41: Names of khyah squares, streets, courtyards (courtesy of Niels Gutschow)
Map 42: Names of neighbourhoods (courtesy of Niels Gutschow).
Glossary

abīr red powder
ācā awl
Ācāju ritual specialist (Karmācārya) of the Pañcthariya caste
āgamchẽ Newar Buddhist clan god house for performing cacã pyâkhã
Ajajudyaḥ lit. ‘Grandfather God’, used for Dīpaṅkara Buddha in Yātâchê
Ajimâ Bhadrakâli, consort of Bhairava
Akâś Bhairav avâtâr of Śiva
ālaypu castor seed
ānanda lahari plucked drum used by Baul bards
antarâ stage of melodic development in North Indian classical music
āratî ritual light offering
arven keyboard instrument with reeds, the Indian harmonium
Aṣṭamâṭrkâ eight mother goddesses
aṣṭami eighth day of the waxing moon
astarâ drum composition
audh Vârli drum
aîsi dark night before new moon
Âvâḥ caste of bricklayers
Avalokiteśvara Bodhisattva of compassion
aylã spirit (up to 80% alcohol)
bâécã fipple flute
bâhâ (var. bâhî) Newar Buddhist monastery
bâhye category of cacã pyâkhã (presenting gods)
bâjâ guṇhi managing organisation of a music group, usually financed by land deeds
bâm Newar drum, similar to the Indian bâyãm
bârâ dâygu nâykhâbâjã drum composition signalling ‘return from a sacrifice’
bârâhmâsa song and poetry genre about characteristics of the months/seasons
bâre khê nâykhâbâjã drum composition for Buddhist processions
bâsurî transverse flute
bâsurikhalâḥ (var. bâsuribâjã) ensemble of transverse flutes, cymbals and drums
Baul Bengali sect of itinerant bards
bekvacukva U-shaped courtyard of Bhaktapur palace
benā flat bamboo blade used by Kulu
Betāḥ Sanskrit: Vetāla, blood-drinking demon, attendant of Śiva
betāli white turban cloth
Bhadракāli mother goddess
bhagāt shaman of the Vārli people of Mahārāṣṭra, India
Bhairava God, also used for Buddha
Bhairadyah Bhairava
Bhailadyaḥ masked dance performed by potters of Bhaktapur
bhaṅjan religious song genre (Hindu: rās bhajan, Buddhist: gyānmālā bhajan)
bhakti loving surrender to god as a path of yoga
bhalb tramban valve trombone
bhālū pyākhã bear dance
bhālaurā curved shawm with metal bell
Bhārata’s Nātyaśāstra earliest Indian music treatise (approx. 2000 years old)
Bhīmsen (Sanskrit: Bhīmasena), hero of Mahābhārata epic
Bhūcā (Hindi, Nepali: bhūt) malignant ghost, attendant of Bhairava
bhuchyāḥ pair of large cymbals with round boss
bhūmi sudhār land reform act
bhusyāḥ see bhuchyāḥ
bhvē (KTM: bhvay) ritual feast
bhvisināḥ orange powder (not for human consumption!)
bīnu essence, dot representing the universe before it becomes manifest
biskāḥ New Year town ritual of Bhaktapur
Bodhisattva in Buddhism: one who seeks awakening (bodhi), assisting others to attain the same
brahmatāl drum composition
Brahmāyaṇī mother goddesses
Buṅgadyaḥ Rāto Machendranāth of Buṅgamati
buttā pattern variant

cacā caryā song
cacā pyākhã caryā dance
caitya (var. cībhāḥ, stūpa) monument representing Buddha and dharma
cakra pūjā most elaborate and expensive Buddhist ritual
cā kvatāḥ room for storing sacred clay
cali drum composition
calti (var. cvakh) name of drum composition
Candeśvarī mother goddess
Cāṅgu Nārāyaṇa temple courtyard situated on the ridge north of Bhaktapur
carthi pūjā pūjā for thanking Gaṇeśa after accomplished apprenticeship
caryā see cacā
Glossary

casĩ  Magnolia wood
cāti  goat horn with long bamboo mouthpiece
cauthi  fourteenth day of the lunar month
cavā  dhā̃ drum composition with shawm accompaniment
cählícā  pliers
cēgū  skin, hide
chemā pūjā  pūjā asking for forgiveness
chinā  drum composition for dhimay
Chipā  cloth-dyer
chu  muffled cymbal sound
chucū  dough
chvāsa  carved stones at street crossings, infested with evil spirits
cibhāḥ  (var. caitya, stūpa) monument representing Buddha and dharma

cibhāḥ pūjā  pūjā at cibhāḥ
cīr  phallus
Citrakār  caste of ritual painters and mask-makers
cvarā  mvālĩ piece played during blood sacrifice
cvaykegu  nāykhībājā drum composition for public announcements

dabadaba  hourglass-shaped clapper drum
dabā  stone platform for dance performance, etc.
dādarā  tāl used for light classical and devotional music
daitya  demon
dāk  Vārli drum
damāhā  kettledrum played by Damāi
damaru  drum played by Śiva
Damāi  caste of non-Newar tailor-musicians
dāphā  religious song genre
dāphāchē  building for keeping musical instruments and conducting music
apprenticeships
Dasavatār me  songs about the ten avatārs of Viṣṇu
Dattātreya  Hindu god combining three gods Brahma, Viṣṇu and Śiva
degah  temple
dehrā  drum composition
Devanāgarī  Sanskrit script
Devi pyākhā  cf. Mahākāli pyākhā
dhā  Newar drum
dhābājā  processional drumming of Newar farmers with dhā and cymbals
dhācā  drum used in navabājā performance
dhākathī  straight drum stick for dhā
dhalā  ritual activities connected with gūlābājā
dhalāchē  house where ritual activities connected with gūlābājā are carried out
Appendix

*dhalak*  Newar drum, similar to the Indian *dholak*
*dhalāpa*  Buddhist ritual offering of five kinds of grain during *gūlā*
*dhalcā*  (var. *dhalcā bhajan*) religious song genre
*dhamāk*  Newar *tāl* (7 counts)
*dhimay*  (var. *dhime*) Newar drum
*dhimaybājā*  processional drumming of Newar farmers
*dhimaycā*  one of the Bhaktapur navabājā drums
*dhimay pucā*  drum stick made of cane which has been rolled by steaming
*dhol*  cylindrical drum (India)
*dhrupad*  North Indian classical vocal genre
*dhvā̃*  refrain
*dhvakā*  gate, door
*dīlruba*  bowed North Indian instrument
*Dīpānkara Buddhas*  Buddhas of earlier aeons
*Dīpāvalī*  festival of oil lamps installed to attract Mahālakṣmī, goddess of prosperity
*dīpcandi*  *tāl* used for light classical and devotional music
*disko dram*  drum of marriage band
*Dolma*  Tibetan Buddhist goddess Tārā
dotār  lute used in Bengali folk music
drakha  drumming syllables used for short drum roll
dram  big drum of marriage band
dugucā śyāygu  drum composition played during goat sacrifice
dugupūjā  clan god ritual
duḥ dhankegu  marriage song sung whilst leaning a bamboo pole against the wall of the bride’s home
Duī  (var. Duīcā) caste of torch-bearers and carriers
dyah  god
dhyaḥbāri  attendants to temporary shrine used during *gūlā*
dyahbīvaykegu  ritual feast offered to Navadurgā
dyahchē  house where a statue of a god is kept
dyahkhā  drum accompanying Bhaktapur's Navadurgā *pyākhā*
dyahkuti  room with temporary shrine used during *gūlā*
dyahlhāygu  musical invocation
dyahpalā  ritual attendant
dyah svača biyegu  main processional day of *biskāh* on 4th of Baiśākh with offerings to all gods

gā  bell
gā *pyākhā*  Aṣṭamātrkā dance of Patan
Gāičā  caste of Gāine bards
Gāičā *pyākhā*  Gāine dance

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gaṇeśa</td>
<td>Hindu god of good luck, son of Śiva and Pārvatī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaṅgā</td>
<td>the river Ganges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garuda</td>
<td>snake-eating eagle, vehicle of Viṣṇu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gāthā</td>
<td>caste of gardeners and Navadurgā dancers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gathāmugah</td>
<td>straw effigy of demon representing disease</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gathāmugah carhe</td>
<td>festival of driving gathāmugah demons out of town</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghānglī</td>
<td>stick either used by Vārli shamans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gharānā</td>
<td>distinct stylistic tradition in Indian music, promoted by family members and disciples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghāt</td>
<td>(lit. 'steps') ritual bathing place at river banks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghātu</td>
<td>genre of seasonal songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghētāgiśi</td>
<td>stick dance performed during sāpāru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghulu</td>
<td>buffalo horn used as wind instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghungrū</td>
<td>ankle bells</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ghvar</td>
<td>lower octave (for transverse flutes)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Girvāṇ jātrā</td>
<td>procession commemorating a donation by King Girvāṇ Yuddha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gītagovinda</td>
<td>Jayadeva's 12th century Sanskrit poem of unsurpassable beauty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gorakhnāth</td>
<td>deified historical ascetic, originator of the Nātha lineage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>grīṣma</td>
<td>summer season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gu</td>
<td>drum composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gubhāhju</td>
<td>Buddhist ritual specialist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guhye</td>
<td>category of cacā pyākhā (about esoteric practices)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gujarāti mvālī</td>
<td>large straight shawm with metal bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gālā</td>
<td>Buddhist processional month of giving and taking alms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gālābājā</td>
<td>Buddhist processional music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guruju</td>
<td>guru, teacher, respectful address for Śākya or Vajrācārya males</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guṭhi</td>
<td>social organisations for various communal purposes (cremations, temple maintenance, music groups, town rituals, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>guṭhi samsthān</td>
<td>Nepali government offices installed in 1963 for managing guṭhi affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gvaḥ</td>
<td>body of drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gvākhā</td>
<td>wall niche</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gvarā</td>
<td>(var. gvārā) ancient Buddhist song genre with dhā accompaniment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gyānmala bhajan</td>
<td>Buddhist devotional group singing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haimādyaḥ</td>
<td>(var. Haimā) god of music and dance (destructive aspect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Haimāpvaḥ</td>
<td>flight hole of Haimādyaḥ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hane pūjā</td>
<td>pūjā for practising with the complete ensemble</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hanumān pyākhā</td>
<td>Hanumān dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hemanta</td>
<td>autumn, harvesting season</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hvalī</td>
<td>Holi full moon festival</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Indrāyaṇī  mother goddess
iphoniyam  euphonium

jaltaraṅg  set of tuned water bowls used as musical instrument
jangalī pyākhā  thug dance
jangī paharā  open porch at the lai baiṅhak palace front
jantabājā  brass band for life cycle rituals
jātrā  town ritual with processions
jhārāḥ vānegu  forced labour
jhayālicā  (var. khvālimāli), pair of small, flat cymbals
jhayāure pyākhā  pair dance showing various ethnic groups
Jugi  caste of tailor-musicians
Jugibvāh  food offered to the wandering soul of a dead person
Jugigāh  Jugi graveyard
jvah nagarā  pair of small kettledrums (Patan navabājā)
jvalā nhāykā  ritual mirror
Jyāpu  farmer
Jyāpu-Jyāpunī pyākhā  farmer’s pair dance

kā  natural trumpet
kābājā  processional ensemble of natural kā trumpets (up to eighteen)
kachicā  drum stick
kāēpā  brass disc (idiophone)
kahāl  straight conical bore natural horn
kaharvā  tāl used for light classical and devotional music
kā khipaḥ  cotton rope
kalālicā pyākhā  ‘old woman’ dancing with basket for ritual offerings
kalas  ritual water pot
kaliyuga  present and last of the four world cycles
Kāmasutra  Sanskrit treatise about erotic refinement
kāntādbadaba  hourglass-shaped drum with handle
kāpāḥ  cotton cloth
kapāy  cotton
kapāy phenigu pyākhā  spinning dance
karuvā  water jug
Kasti-Bhagvān  Karuṇāmaya
Kaumārī  (var. Kumārī) mother goddess
kavācā pyākhā  skeleton dance
kāyāpā  (var. kāypī, tāīnāĩ) brass disc
kāyīṭā pūjā  coming of age ritual for males
kha pyākhā  dance drama about Mahābhārata
khālī-barī  pattern modification in tablā playing
khame  sacrificial buffalo for the Navadurgā of Bhaktapur
kharjati  drum composition
khau  black tuning paste for drums
khayāl  North Indian classical vocal genre
khī  generic term for ‘drum’
khicā  dog
khicā pyākhā  masked dance of two dogs
khīpvu  drum composition
khīpvu pūjā  pūjā for learning a new drum composition
khīr  sweet rice pudding
khurdak  pair of small Indian kettledrums for accompanying śahnāi shawms
khvālimalī  cf. jhyālicā
khyāḥ pyākhā  dance of two naughty spirits who are part of Bhairava’s entourage
khyāla pyākhā  joker performance
kisālī  clay cup
klāroneyaṭ  clarinet
kukicā mvālī  smallest straight shawm with metal bell
kuldevata  clan gods
Kulu  caste of drum-makers
Kumāḥ  caste of potters
Kumāra  generic title for ‘son’, also used for Kartikeya, Hindu god of war and victory, son of Śiva and Pārvatī
kusi  flea
kvakhicā  (var. kvakhī, kvacākhī, bhagaḥkhī) Newar drum
kvatāḥ  (var. pastā, pañcatāla) compound drum
kvāti  seasonal dish (nine beans soup)
kvī  drum sound produced by rubbing against the drum head

lā cva  processional drum pattern
Lākhe pyākhā  man-eating rākṣasa dance
lālākhī  (var. khī, dāphākhī) barrel drum used for dāphā and dance accompaniment
lal baiṭhak  Bhaktapur palace wing built during 19th century
lapi  sharp metal instrument to cut leather
lathi  stick used as weapon by South Asian police officers
lāykā  royal palace
likārāḥ  mvālī piece for returning home
linga  phallus
lādhvākhā  Bhaktapur’s ‘Golden Gate’ palace entrance
lusi pyākhā  pestle dance
lvaḥā  1. stone, 2. tool used by Kulu
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English</th>
<th>Hindi</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mā</td>
<td>māḥay composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mādal</td>
<td>see māḍalhī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>magāḥkhī</td>
<td>drum, similar to the Nepali mādal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahābhārata</td>
<td>Sanskrit epic</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahākālī</td>
<td>mother goddess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahākāli pyākhā</td>
<td>(var. Devī pyākhā) masked dance of Bhaktapur, performed in Kathmandu during Indra jātrā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahālakṣmī</td>
<td>mother goddess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahānavamī</td>
<td>ninth day of mvañhī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mahāṣṭhamī</td>
<td>eighth day of mvañhī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māheśvarī</td>
<td>mother goddess</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Māka</td>
<td>1. Mahākāla Bhairava, 2. lower sounding drum of a pair of nagarā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māka pyākhā</td>
<td>monkey dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mālā</td>
<td>rosary used by Hindus and Buddhists</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mallā</td>
<td>dynasty of Newar kings of Bhaktapur, Kāntipur and Lālitpur (ruled up to 1768/69)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>maṇḍala</td>
<td>sacred image of humanly organised space, usually including mantras or gods placed at the focal points</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mantra</td>
<td>sacred syllable, word or text charged with spiritual power, used as focusing tool during meditation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mari</td>
<td>wheat bread</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māṛsi</td>
<td>seasonal songs in rāg Mālaśrī</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>masalā</td>
<td>tuning paste stuck against drum head from inside</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māṭā biyu vānegu</td>
<td>(var. māṭā biyegu) procession covering all cibhāhās in one go</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>math</td>
<td>rest house for travelling ascetics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>māṭrā</td>
<td>time measurement in South Asian music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mḥvayakhā pyākhā</td>
<td>peacock dance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mūcukva</td>
<td>inner Bhaktapur palace courtyard bordering Taleju temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mudra</td>
<td>meaningful gesture (dance, fine arts)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mūlcoł</td>
<td>palace courtyard with Taleju temple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mū Nāsaḥ</td>
<td>main shrine of Nāsaḥdyaḥ</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>murī</td>
<td>unit of capacity (1980s: 1 murī = 90.92 liters)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mūrti</td>
<td>image or statue of a god</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mvañhānī</td>
<td>1. autumn town ritual celebrating the victory of the mother goddess over the demon, 2. vertical soot line applied on forehead after blood sacrifice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mvañlī</td>
<td>generic term for shawm played by Jugi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nā</td>
<td>shirt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nāgācā pyākhā</td>
<td>(var. Rādhākrṣṇa pyākhā) dance of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nagarā</td>
<td>kettledrum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nāk</td>
<td>female yāk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

nalakegu ‘fishing’ ritual (Navadurgā)
nā phvā vānegu water-begging procession
nā pyākhā fish dance
Nandi and Bhṛṅgi drummer accompanists of Nāsaḥdyah
Nāga snake god granting fertility
nagarā kettledrum
Nāgarajā snake god granting fertility
nāgva paper effigy of Nāga used as offering
ṅakha dhalā (lit. worship with animal horns) Sāymi gūlābājā
namaskār formal greeting
naqqārā big kettledrum played as part of naubat ensemble
Nāsaḥdyah god of music and dance (creative aspect)
Nāsaḥpvah flight hole of Nāsaḥdyah
Nāsaḥ säle pūjā initial pūjā of music apprenticeship
nāṭak street theatre
natuvācā pyākhā dance with taro leaves
naubat court ensemble of natural trumpets, shawms, kettledrums and cymbals
navabājā ensemble of nine drums
navadāphā dāphā song group with additional set of navabājā drums
Navadurgā (lit. nine Durgās) powerful protectors of Bhaktapur
Navadurgā pyākhā annual masked dance cycle of Bhaktapur
navagraha pūjā annual Buddhist ritual asking for peace on the nine planets
navarāṭ nine processional nights preceding Vijayādasamī
Nāy caste of butchers
nāyāḥ leader
nāykhĩ var. nāykhĩcā, lit. butcher’s drum, also played in navabājā and gūlābājā
nāykhĩbājā processional drumming of butchers
Newari, Newari The Newar people of the Kathmandu Valley and beyond are an ethnic group of Nepal that absorbed many cultural influences from South Asia. Their Newari language belongs to the Tibeto-Burmese language group.
nhyāḥ 1. processional drum pattern, 2. lively movement
nhyāḥ thāyagu cvaḥ drum composition for starting a dhimay procession after a break
nibhāḥ sunlight
nirvāṇa leaving the cycle of suffering and rebirth, ultimate awakening
nitya pūjā daily (morning and evening) worship with offering
Nṛtyanāth (var. Nāsaḥdyah), ‘Lord of the Dance’, one of the names of Śiva
nvamat straight shawm made of wood only
nyāchi kvatāḥ room for storing holy water
pachimā Newar drum, similar to the Indian pakhāvaj
pada stanza to be recited or sung
pakka pukka, real, complete
pakhāvaj North Indian concert drum
pañcabali offering of five different sacrificial animals
Pañcabuddha five Buddhas (Vairocana, Akṣobhya, Ratnasambhava, Amitābha, and Amoghasiddhi)
pañcadān (lit. five kinds of offerings) Buddhist alms-giving ritual
pañcadān carhe Buddhist festival before the end of gūlā
pañcagapya ritually purifying liquid of cow products
pañcaibajā auspicious instrumental ensemble played by Damāi tailor-musicians
pañcatāla compound drum accompanying cacā pyākhā, pāytāḥ-khalah and gā pyākhā
partāl drum composition
pastāḥ name of the kvatāḥ drum when used in Buddhist context
pastikā ritual garlands of threads
pāṭhī unit of capacity (1 pāṭhī = 4,55 litres)
pāytāḥ (var. pvaṅgā) natural trumpets played in Sāymi gūlābājā
pāytāḥ-khalah ensemble of such trumpets, pañcatāla and tāḥ
phākādāli pyākhā butterfly dance
phalcā shelter building with a row of carved pillars on the front side
pirāne pūjā pūjā concluding music apprenticeship
pith shrine with aniconic stone image for daily worship
prabarandha gīta ancient genre of responsorial group singing at temples
pradakṣina main processional route
pranām gesture of adoration and respect
prasād edible blessing
preṭa evil spirit
preṭa śradda part of death ritual for pacifying evil spirits
pūjā ritual offering
pūjākhi processional drum pattern played on the way to a pūjā place
pūjāmāli auspicious drum composition of Sāymi gūlābājā
pūjā mvāḷī large curved shawm with metal bell
pulu mat made of bamboo leaf
Pvaḥ caste of sweepers and fishermen
pvalā apā traditional burnt roof tiles
pvaṭā brim of basket or drum
pvukhu pond
pvaṅgā natural trumpet
pvāre me rice planting songs
pyākhā dance
qavvālī  
genre of Muslim devotional (Sufi) group singing
qāydā  
variation form in tabla playing

Rādhākrṣṇa pyākhā (var. Nāgacā pyākhā) dance of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa
rāg dîpak  
Indian rāga said to ignite fire
rāg kâyegu  
solo vocal introduction of a dāphā song
rāgamālā  
genre of miniature painting, depicting emotional contents of rāgas
Rājopadhyāya  
highest caste of Newar Brahman priests
rākṣasa  
demon
Rāmāyaṇī pyākhā  
Rāmāyaṇa dance depicting chief characters of the Sanskrit epic
Rānā  
dynasty of rulers of Nepal (1846–1951)
rasan  
small straight shawm with metal bell
rās bhajan  
Hindu devotional group singing
rikhā  
drum composition
ropani  
unit of land area (1 hectare = 19.65 ropani)
ṛtu  
the six seasons of South Asia
Rudra vīnā  
North Indian stick zither

sādeś  
ballad about separation owing to Tibet trade
sādhana  
spiritual discipline
saed āram  
side drum of marriage band
sakhimā punhi  
full moon festival with grain mosaics prepared in front of shrines
Śakti  
1. active female universal power, 2. name of goddess
Śākya  
caste of Buddhist gold- and silversmiths
Śākya gūlābājā  
processional music performed by Śākya and Vajrācārya during gūlā
sāl  
kind of tree (Shorea robusta)
salācā pyākhā  
horse dance
sāl dhūp  
resin of sāl tree
sālicā  
clay cup
samaybaji  
ceremonial meal
sāngīta  
Sanskrit term for ‘music’
sanyabhajan  
music played by Jugi ensemble during daily temple rituals
sāpāru  
(Nepali: gāi jātrā) ‘cow festival’ for the dead
śārad  
hot ripening season following monsoon
śāraṅgī  
fiddle played by Gāme bards
sarod  
North Indian lute
śāstriya sāngīt  
North Indian classical music, Hindustani music
Sasudyaḥ  
Sarasvati
satah  
gate house with room on top
Sāymi  
caste of oilpressers
Sāymi gūlābājā  
processional music performed by oilpressers during gūlā
sībājā  
funeral music played by nāykhībājā
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>sichyāḥ</td>
<td>pair of large cymbals with flat boss</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sīgūṭhī</td>
<td>funeral organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sīlu me</td>
<td>ballad about a fatal pilgrimage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sinā</td>
<td>orange powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sinājyā me</td>
<td><em>rice transplanting songs</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Siphvadyaḥ</td>
<td>oleander goddess carried along by Navadurgā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>šīśira</td>
<td>cold season, winter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śiva</td>
<td>one of the main Hindu gods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śivālaya</td>
<td>temple courtyard for ancestor worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śivarātri</td>
<td>festival celebrating Śiva as King of Yoga</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>slāṭ tramban</td>
<td>slide trombone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>śraddha</td>
<td>ancestor ritual</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Śrī pañcamī</td>
<td>start of spring, Sarasvatī pūjā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sthāyī</td>
<td>refrain in North Indian classical music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sukhū</td>
<td>straw mat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sukundā</td>
<td>ritual oil lamp</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>survāḥ</td>
<td>traditional trousers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>sātra</td>
<td>essential teachings in the form of a poem for recitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svachā</td>
<td>tail piece of navabājā performance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svagā</td>
<td>ritual offering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svagamālī</td>
<td>marriage song</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>svarat</td>
<td>genre of seasonal songs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Svayambhū</td>
<td>prominent mahācaitya situated on a hill south of Kathmandu</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tā bāḷā</td>
<td>leather strip</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tablā</td>
<td>North Indian concert drum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tablā taraṅg</td>
<td>set of tablās tuned to a scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tablā -vādak</td>
<td>tablā-player</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tadgōla</td>
<td>Borassus flabellifer palm tree</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tagva gā</td>
<td>big bell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tāḥ</td>
<td>(var. tāḥ) small, heavy pair of bronze cymbals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tāḥā dyahlhaygu</td>
<td>long, complete dyahlhaygu invocation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tāḥāsā</td>
<td>tall straw cow effigy carried along the pradaksīna during sāpāru</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tāṁāī</td>
<td>(var. kāypā, kāypī) brass disc</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>taku svā</td>
<td>rhododendron flower (red)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taleju</td>
<td>tutelary deity of Malla kings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamal</td>
<td>Newar drum, similar to the Indian tablā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tamva</td>
<td>(var. tukumuku, tunumuku) small kettledrum played by Jugi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tārā</td>
<td>Bodhisattva of compassion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tarāī</td>
<td>Nepal’s southern flatlands bordering India</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>tatali</td>
<td>drum composition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>thahchē</td>
<td>(for married women) her parents’ house</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Glossary

thata  
drum composition

thukājyā me  
weeding songs

thvā  
rice beer

thyāḥ saphū  
folded book (like ‘Leporello’)

īti  
ringing cymbal sound

tīp  
higher octave (for transverse flutes and shawms)

itiitālā  
goat horn with short bamboo mouthpiece

trampet  
trumpet

Tripurasundarī  
mother goddess

triratna  
three jewels of Buddhism: Buddha, dharma, saṅgha

tū cikā  
shawm reeds

tuki  
shawm reeds

tuladana  
state ritual where a ruler’s weight is equalled in gold to be distributed

tulbālā  
scarlet cloth for Nāsaḥ pūjā

tutaḥ  
Buddhist hymn

tvaḥ  
neighbourhood

tvaḥ Gaṇedyaḥ  
local shrine of Gaṇeśa

vaikuṇṭha  
abode of Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu)

Vaiṣṇavī  
mother goddess

vajra  
ritual weapon used in Vajrāyāna Buddhism and related tantric lineages

Vajrācārya  
caste of Buddhist priests and gold- and silversmiths

Vārāhī  
mother goddess

Vārli Ādivāsi  
(var. Warli) ethnic minority of Mahārāṣṭra, India

varṣa  
rainy season, monsoon

vasanta  
spring season

Vetāla  
blood-drinking demon, attendant of Bhairava

Vijayā Dasamī  
tenth day and climax of the mvaḥani festival

yaḥśi  
pole erected during Bhaktapur’s New Year festival

yamadvāracukva  
Bhaktapur palace courtyard behind Golden Gate

Yudhiṣṭhira  
oldest of the Pāṇḍava brothers of the Mahābhārata epic

yuga  
world cycle
Dictionary of Newar Music Terms

Preparing a dictionary of Newari musical terms required collaboration with three local scholars and a German linguist, Dr. Ulrike Kölver. With her Nepalese team comprising of Iswarananda Shresthacarya, Daya Ratna Sakya and Nirmal Man Tuladhar she produced her massive ‘Dictionary of Contemporary Newari’¹ and helped me to use a format based on her concept, supplying her grammatical definition of each included term. Over the years, I worked with her collaborators hunting for musical terms in the available Newari literature and in various archives and localities where thirteen dialects of Newari had to be considered.

This project had progressed to a preliminary, unedited word list, when our lavishly paid word hunter, Iswarananda Shresthacarya took the liberty of publishing it under his name in a Tribhuvan University journal without informing me, just before he passed away. However, we continued compiling and correcting the word list until the early 1990s. At my advanced age, resuming work on such a time-consuming project as the originally planned ‘Illustrated Dictionary of Newari Music Terms’ seems very optimistic. Instead, I am including in this publication the final version of our word list with my translations.

Abbreviations of localities:
BKT: Bhaktapur
KTM: Kathmandu
PT: Patan

¹ Kölver, U. 1994
cvfākhā, cf. ākhā
cvMataḥ, aj. alternate -gāye, (gāla) to alter the
succession of musical pieces
cvMayālāḥ, n. (ālākha-) home-made liquor,
offered to Nāsaḥdyaḥ as well as to musicians
cvMarvin, n. (-gah) (var. hārbin) Indian har-
monium used for bhajan accompaniment
and śāstriya saṅgīt and—more recently—in
some Newar flute and violin bands where it
replaces transverse flutes (bāṣuri)
cvMālah, n. (ālākha-) castor -pu, n. (-pu)
castor-apple, used in pulped form by
drum-makers to prepare the tuning paste
(masalā) that is applied at the inner side of
a drum head
cvMāstarā, n. (-gū) 1. lālākhĩ piece in five
beat metre, played with dāphā songs 2. tam-
vaḥ piece played by Jugi during Kumārī pro-
cessions (BKT)
cvMātutī astuti, n. (-pu) prayer (cf. tutah); song
of invocation, song at beginning and end of
bhajan performance -hāle, to praise a god
through astuti

cvMākha, n. (ākhā-) (var. akhā BKT;
ākhāḥ Pāṅgā; ākhā Bal.). 1. practice room
2. backstage -chē, n. (-khā) house with prac-
tice room where musical instruments are
kept (cf. dāphāchē)
cvMāgyā, n. (-gū) (var. ujā) order; pattern of
behaviour prescribed by a guru for his music
students
cvMācā, n. (-pu) 1. awl used by drum-makers
to cut holes for drum straps 2. crochet-hook
used by cobbblers
cvMālāp, n. (-gū) vocal solo prelude, to
precede a dāphā song (cf. thalāḥkvalāḥ,
cf. rāga kāyegu) 2. speaking, conversation
-tvaḥte, 1. to sing the ālāp prelude 2. to
praise oneself

O...

I

Ināy, n. pr. (nāsa-) 1. Lord Ganeśa god
of success, accomplishment, and drumming
2. peaceful aspect of the god of music and
dance, Nāsaḥdyaḥ -dyāh, n. (deva-) id.

Imān ṛāga, n. (-pu) mvālĩ piece played
by Jugi while going for a pūjā

Imtimestami, n. (-kū “piece”) root of a medic-
inal plant used as a remedy for sore throats
of singers (cf. bvajhva)
Dictionary of Newar Music Terms

उ उ
उचात ucatā, n. (°tana-, -pu) stiletto used by drum-makers and cobblers (fam. lapi)
उज उजा, n. (-gu) (var. āgyā) order; pattern of behaviour prescribed by a guru for his music students

ए ए
एक्ता� ekāṭa, n. (-gū) lālākhi piece, played with dāphā songs (BKT)

क क
क ka, onp. drumming syllable
काद kād, n. bronze -kaḥ, n. (-pu) bell of shawm -cu, n. (°cuna-) powdered bronze, used to decorate tuning paste on drum heads -thā, n. (-pāḥ) bronze disc struck with wooden hammer, used in dāphā, dhalcā, KTM dhimaybāja -pā and -pī BKT cf. tāĩnāį
का kā, 1. onp. drumming syllable (dhimay, lālākhi) 2. n. (°khana-, -gū) wooden rattle (syn. kartāl)
कचा kacā, n. (-gū) branch, sect -nāyaḥ, n. (°yala-) leader of a music group
कचि kaci, aj. 1. uncooked 2. unripe -macāme, n. (-pu) plaintive song, sung when children were exiled from the Kathmandu Valley during smallpox epidemics
कजी kajī, n. anim. (°jila-) 1. leader of dāphā group 2. sponsor, donor 3. manager, convener 4. organizer of a big pūjā
कताघुली katāguli cf. katāgulu
कताघुलू katāgulu, n. anim. (var. katāguli) 1. member of dāphā group, acting as messenger and manager's assistant 2. submember of a guthi
कतामारी katāmarī, n. anim. rag doll -pyākhā, n. (°khana-, -pu/-gū) puppet play, marionet show (cf. dayālachā pyākhā)
काठी kathi, n. (-pu) stick (cf. dhimay-, dhā-) -cā, n. (-pu) 1. drum stick 2. sl. penis -pyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) stick dance
कन kana, n. (-pu) short natural trumpet played by tailor-musicians during dvīmāju-jātrā (BKT)
कनाठ kanaṭha, n. (-pu) 1. Western trumpet adopted by Damāi tailor-musicians 2. straight natural trumpet with large bell (nep. karnāl)
कपपाय kapāy, n. (-kū) 1. cotton 2. cotton binding used to seal the gap between staple and body of a shawm -phengupyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) spinning dance
कर्ताल kartāl, n. (-gu) wooden rattle used for keeping the time in a bhajan performance (fam. kā)
करुणामय Karunāmay, n. anim. 1. Compassion aspect of the Buddha 2. Matsyendranāth (white or red) -me, n. (-pu) (var. karunāmayyā me) song in praise of Karunāmay
कलाघी kalahpyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) (var. kalālipyākhā BKT) dance with two baskets suspended from a stick (for offerings)
कवाप्य kavāpyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) (var. kavācāpyākhā) skeleton dance (cf. bhailapyākhā, devīpyākhā BKT)
kept in the practising room, where students symbolizing Nāsaḥdyaḥ and Haimādyaḥ are reminder of vow made to learn something.

cup filled with rice, betelnut and coin as a -bow—-

of major ritual events—2.
dance-drama of PT, played after reeds

horn used in death processions and other

drum (together with a small vertical cylindrical
drum (small

left hand


to sing in low pitch—in its base, which can be muted with the player's left hand

skilled art

in Nag

in Nag

in PT. It is sung to induce a
dance, gālābājā, navābājā

and

leader of music group

in connection with dhalcākhāke in Nagā and nakīkhāke in PT. It is sung to induce a state of shaking in the participants.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>kvalasi</td>
<td>n. (-pu) type of cacā song sung during khaḥ pyākhā when a melancholic and tearful mood is asked for</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kvalā</td>
<td>n. (-pu) a rāga played during PT gūlābājā</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kvahapā</td>
<td>n. 1. (-pā) overbaked brick 2. (-kū) (“piece”) fragment of overbaked brick used by drum makers to roughen drum hide before applying tuning paste</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kvẽku</td>
<td>n. (-pu) mandrel used in the construction of shawm reeds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kvẽku</td>
<td>n. (-pu) a drumming piece (PT gūlābājā)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khalāh</td>
<td>1 n. (°laka-,-gū) group (cf. dāphā-; pyākhā-; bājā-) 2 n. anim. (°laka-) member of musical group (syn. dujaḥ)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khalāhi</td>
<td>1 aj. empty 2. (-gū) off-beat; without clap (cf. tāli = with clap)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>khyālaḥ</td>
<td>n. (-gū) humorous drama or short play</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Dictionary of Newar Music Terms
Appendix

Vofn+afh+ khyālbājã, n. (-gah) small double-headed drum (syn. ghîdâmalî) (fam. magaĥkhî)

Vofln khyâlî, n. (-gū) joke, jest -kû, n. (-kuna-, -gû) 1. ironic joke 2. ironic joke as a section of drama performance -nhili, n. (-gû) joke, jest -me, n. (-pu) joke song -van-e, vp (nep. dohare gî) to sing a duet (boys and girls alternating in two groups)

Vofln khyâlî, n. (-gû) joke, jest -kû, n. (°kuna-, -gû) 1. ironic joke 2. ironic joke as a section of drama performance -nhili, n. (-gû) joke, jest -me, n. (-pu) joke song -van-e, vp (nep. dohare gî) to sing a duet (boys and girls alternating in two groups)

Vofln khyâlî, n. anim. (-khyâka-) goblin; ghost -pyâkhã, n. (°khana-, -gû) goblin dance -bâjã, n. (jana-, -gaḥ) (var. khâyâlbâjã) drums which are not used in dâphâ but for dance accompaniment (e.g. magaĥkhî)

VofM khyââ, n. anim. (-khyâka-) goblin; ghost -pyâkhã, n. (°khana-,	-gû) goblin dance -bâjã, n. (jana-,	-gaḥ) (var. khâyâlbâjã) drums which are not used in dâphâ but for dance accompaniment (e.g. magaĥkhî)

Vj khvâ, bfp (weep) -khanâ, n. (-gû) weeping -khanâme, n. (-pu) sad song -lu, n. (-gû) id. -lu pcâ-ye, vp. (câla) to cause an actor to burst into tears spontaneously (by reciting a certain cacâ song during khaḥpyâkhã) -saḥ, n. (-ka) mood of sorrow -va-ye, vp. (vala) to burst into tears spontaneously (on stage) -su, n. (-gû) weeping, lamenting -suva-ye, vp. (vala) to weep by inspiration from singing

Vjla khvâbî, n. tear -khanâme, n. (-pu) sad song -lu, n. (-gû) id. -lu pcâ-ye, vp. (câla) to cause an actor to burst into tears spontaneously (by reciting a certain cacâ song during khaḥpyâkhã) -saḥ, n. (-ka) mood of sorrow -va-ye, vp. (vala) to burst into tears spontaneously (on stage) -su, n. (-gû) weeping, lamenting -suva-ye, vp. (vala) to weep by inspiration from singing

Vjlndfln khvâlimâli, n. (-pā) pair of small cymbals (cf. khãjali, jhyâli, bau, baucâ) -thâ-ye, vp. (thâta) 1. to play cymbals 2. (sl) lesbian sexual activity

VjM;M khvẫymalâ, n. (-pā) pair of khvâlimâli (Pâṅgâ)

VjFT' khvâtu, aj. thick -saḥ, n. (sala-,	-r) breathy voice with deep register

Vjfl'odnf khvẫymalâ, n. (-pā) pair of khvâlimâli (Pâṅgâ)

VjFT' khvâtu, aj. thick -saḥ, n. (sala-,	-r) breathy voice with deep register

VjFT' khvẫymalâ, n. (-pā) pair of khvâlimâli (Pâṅgâ)

Gau n. (°gali-, -gû) (var. gu BKT) 1. short dhimay pieces, played as a contrast to the basic processional pattern nhyâḥ 2. particular type of dhâ composition (BKT navabâjâ) -kâ-ye, vp. (kala, kayâ) to signal to the other players a change to another gau -va-ye, vp. (vala) (for gau) to be performed well

Ganapatî gârâ ganapati gvrâ, n. (-pu) a drumming piece (KTM gîlābâyâ)

Ganapatî gârâ ganapati gvrâ, n. (-pu) a drumming piece (KTM gîlābâyâ)

Gâneśa timâ, n. (-gû) id.

Gâtâ gattâ, n. (-gâh) (var. gatâ) tuning peg (drum) -phvâ-ye, vp. (phyâta) to tune drum by moving gattâ up or down

Gâthi gathi, n. (-d) knot, joint (of drum leather strap)

Gâthu gathu, n. anim. (var. gâthâ BKT) caste of gardeners and Navadurgâ dancers; gardener

Gâthu gathu, n. anim. (var. gâthâ BKT) caste of gardeners and Navadurgâ dancers; gardener

Gau n. (°gali-, -gû) (var. gu BKT) 1. short dhimay pieces, played as a contrast to the basic processional pattern nhyâḥ 2. particular type of dhâ composition (BKT navabâjâ) -kâ-ye, vp. (kala, kayâ) to signal to the other players a change to another gau -va-ye, vp. (vala) (for gau) to be performed well

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Dictionary of Newar Music Terms

गाप्याखा, gāpyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) general term for mask dance (lit family dance) of twelve gods (cf. gathu pyākhā; Sveta Kālī pyākhā)

गाइ, gāi, n. anim. (°yāna-) (var. gāyā, gāyē) caste of Nepali-speaking bards who accompany themselves on four-stringed fiddle sāraṅgī -cā, id. -pyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) satirical dance impersonating such bards (BKT) -me, n. (-pu) song of the gāi

गाइ, gāĩ, n. (°yāna-) (var. gāyā̃, gāyẽ) caste of Nepali-speaking bards who accompany themselves on four-stringed fiddle sāraṅgī -cā, id. -pyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) satirical dance impersonating such bards (BKT) -me, n. (-pu) song of the gāĩ

गाची, gāchĩ, n. (-pā) (var. gāchẽ) painted screen with image of Nāsaḥdyaḥ, shown before dance drama starts (PT)

गाठा, gāṭha, n. anim. cf. gathu

गु, gu, n. (-gū) cf. gau

गुराति, gujarāti, n. (-pu) a type of straight shawm imported from Gujarat by members of Jvagi caste

गुही, guthī, n. (-gū) social organization for ritual functions -pūjā, n. (-ka) annual pūjā of guthī, including a feast for all members

गुपिनु, gupuni, n. cf. gūpuni

गुभाजु, gubhāju, n. anim. (var. gubhāḥju) 1. Buddhist priest (bajrācārya) 2. pyāṭāḥ player (caste) 3. cacā singer

गुरु, guru, n. h. 1. religious priest 2. instructor; music teacher -mā, n. h. (mama-) guru's wife

गुणिपु, gunipuni, n. cf. gũpuni

गुरनु, gnun, n. b. nine -puni, n. (var. gunupuni, guni- punī BKT) full moon of gũlā which marks beginning of nine days festival (sāpāru)

गुटी, guṭhī, n. (-gū) social organization for ritual functions -pūjā, n. (-ka) annual pūjā of gũtī, including a feast for all members

गुझाड, gužhāda, n. (°lasa-, -gū) tune of ghātu

घ, g, nr. b. nine -puni, n. (var. gunupuni, gunipuni BKT) full moon of gũlā which marks beginning of nine days festival (sāpāru)

घा, graha, n. (-gū) 1. planet 2. mode 3. rhythm

घले, gval-e, vt. 1. to enlarge a hole (drum making) 2. sl. to seduce a woman

घ, g, na. (-gaḥ) body of drum -ācā, n. (-pu) awl used by drum maker

घारा, gvara, n. (-gū) (var. gvarā BKT) drumming piece of gǔlābājā

घा GHA

घागाला, ghāgalā, n. (-gaḥ) (var. ghasula) ankle bell -māḥ, n. (°māla-, -māḥ) set of small bells worn around dancer's ankles or waist

घय पुये, ghay puye, (pula) 1. to re-establish a rhythm (after it has gone astray) 2. to re-establish the pitch (after it has been lost)

घाव, ghavāḥ, n. anim. (°vāla-) 1. owner of a water mill 2. driver -me, n. (-pu) unskilled song

घसुला, ghasula, n. (-gaḥ) cf. ghāgalā

घाटु, ghāṭu, n. (-pu) pathetic tune -me, n. (-pu) plaintive song sung at pāhācaray during the month of cillā -lay, n. (°lasa-, -gū) tune of ghāṭu

घ, ghī, onp. sound produced by left hand on a double headed drum -tāgisi, n. (-gū, -ka) stick dance performed by children during sāpāru (BKT) -tāmali, n. 1. (-gaḥ) small double-headed drum (syn. khyālābājā) (fam. magaḥkhī 2. anim. child dancer 3. (-pu) unskilled mode) -tāmaliyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) dance with ghītāmali drum -tāmali- lay, n. (°lasa-, -gū) song sung with ghītāmali drum
ghulu, n. (-pu) buffalo horn played during gūlā by oilpressers of BKT, Thimi and Banepa (cf. ghvar neku)

ghū, onp. drumming syllable (dhimay)

gha, onp. id.

ghva, n. (-pu) drumming piece of KTM gūlābājā; fourth section of gvārā

ghvāsah, n. (°sala-) low pitched sound; low notes

ghvar, n. (-pu) lower octave of shawm or flute - neku, n. (-pu) buffalo horn played during glā (cf. gulu)

gūlābājã; fourth section of gvārā

ghvasāḥ, n. (-kū ‘piece’) 1. split bamboo to close top end of a notch flute 2. (-gū) a lālākhĩ drumming piece (BKT)

ghvāĩnāĩ, n. (-pu) large type of transverse flute (cf. tīp)

ghvāĩnāĩ, n. (-pu) long bamboo pole decorated with yak tail and tassels, used as mace, carried in step with the rhythm of KTM dhimay groups (syn. tāṁāi, tāṁāig-hvāĩnāĩ, dhuṣjyāmujyā)

ṅakha, n. (-pu) horn (BKT general) (cf. neku)

ṅālā kāygu, vp. (kala, kàyā) a Navadurgā ritual where Seto Bhairav tries to catch boys for sacrifice (BKT)

ṅāpyākhã, n. (°khana-,-gū) 1. fish dance (BKT) 2. a lālākhĩ pattern

cakārā, n. (-gū) a drumming piece used in gūlābājā (KTM, PT) -sa, n. (-pu) a rāga used in dāphā

cāghāye, (ghāta) to join a metal ring to drum straps for easy adjustment of tension

cakārā, n. (-gū) standardized introduction to a paicatāl drumming piece. The drummer chants cakārā using the syllables ca-ca

cakkā, n. (-cakka/-gū) 1. circle 2. cf. pvatā

caca, n. (-ka) 1. signal to be shouted by lead drummer to indicate entry to other players BKT 2. syllables of cakārā

cacā, n. (-pu) (skt. caryā) Buddhist Tantric songs. The skt. texts are sung to different rāgas and tālas with the three sections rāga kāygu, dhuṣjyāmujyā, dhuvā kāygu , and caraṇa. The only accompanying instrument is a pair of thick-walled cymbals (tāḥ). Cacā are sung in secrecy and are said to help singers attain magical powers. -hāle, to sing a cacā song -hike, to perform a secret rite in which several drinks are provided in skull cups during cacā singing -pyākhã, n. (°khana,-gū) Tantric Buddhist dance performed by Bajrācārya in the secrecy of their clan god house (āgaṃchẽ) in order to attain magical powers

catãjvãcā, n. anim. antagonist of the monster in lākhay dance (Jala) cf. jhyālĩ

caraṇa, n. (-pu) section of a cacā

carhipūjā n. (-ka) final pūjā of drumming apprenticeship at Ināre Ganedyāḥ (BKT)
Dictionary of Newar Music Terms

चल्न calā 1. n. (°lana-,-gū) (var. cilā) 1. refrain of a song 2. stanza of a poem
चल्न calā 2. n. (-gū) section of cavā

चलि cali, n. (-gū) (var. cāli) 1. lālākhī tāla (dāphā) 2. a tamvāh drumming piece played during Kumāri processions by Jugi (BKT)

चलि calā, n. (-gū) 1. tāla (navabājā, nāykhĩbājā, gūlābājā)

चल्न cavā, n. (-gū) dhā drumming piece of BKT navabājā and Sāymi gūlābājā

चह caha, n. (-ka) signal to be shouted by lead drummer to indicate entry to other players (cf. caca, ha)

चा cā, onp. dhā drumming syllable (Śākya gūlābājā)

चापा cāpā, n. (-pā) interlaced pad of small bells worn around dancer's ankles

चालि cāti, n. (-pu) (var. cati) ram horn with bamboo mouth-piece, played by Sāymi during gūlābājā (BKT) (cf. neku)

चावा cābā, n. (fam. chūbā) 1. prelude 2. main theme of a drumming composition (navabājā)

चालि cāli, cf. cali

चाँमुल cāhmulu n. (-pu) (fam. chēsu-ācā) big awl used by drum-makers

चिंमि cimāmi, n. anim. composer

चिंडि cīndi, n. (-pu) leather strap of a drum

चिंचास cīcāsah, aj. soft (for voice) (BKT) cf. cīsah

चिंचास cīcāsah, aj. soft (for voice) (KTM) cf. cīcāsah

चिंडि cimāmi, n. anim. composer

चिंचास cīcāsah, aj. soft (for voice) (KTM) cf. cīcāsah

चिन्न cīnācāgaḥ, n. (°gala-,-gah) Buddhist shrine; small stūpa -pūjā, n. (-gū) procession with gūlābājā playing invocations at all the shrines of a locality

चोर cīr, n. (-kā 'piece') 1. cloth; flag-stand (KTM, PT) 2. wooden phallus displayed during holi (BKT) -thanē, to erect a flag pole on the first day of holi while singing hvalime (BKT, KTM, PT) -vāye, (vāta) to take down and throw away flags on the last day of holi, while singing dhāmar with dhālak drum accompaniment (by Śrestha of thābahī) -svāye, (svata) to erect flag pole on the first day of holi, while singing hvalime

चुक cukāh, n. (°kala-,-pu) (var. cukūh) split bamboo for closing top end of a notch flute (fam. ghvasā)

चुक cukūh, cf. cukāh

चुंमाका cumpākacā, n. anim. antagonist of the monster in lākhay dance (Banepa) cf. jhyālī

चुल culu, 1. aj. slippery 2. n. quick step -palāh, n. (°lakha-,-lakhar) slipping while dancing

च्वानचाङ gānācāgar, n. (°gala-) standard fee of eight anas and one pice given to the guru during a pūjā

च्वानचाङ gānācāgar, n. (°gala-) standard fee of eight anas and one pice given to the guru during a pūjā

च्वानचाङ gānācāgar, n. (°gala-) standard fee of eight anas and one pice given to the guru during a pūjā
cvā, n. (-gū) (var. cvaḥ) 1. gūlābājā tāla (KTM) 2. type of navabājā piece (BKT)
cvabhāḥ, n. pr. village on a hillock in the southwestern part of Kathmandu Valley
dyāḥ, n. Karuṇamāya (deity of cvabhāḥ)
dyāḥ (yā) me, n. (-pu) song for Karuṇamāya of cvabhāḥ
cvaye, (cvala) 1. to write 2. to go fast (in singing or drumming)
cvaykegu, 1. to proclaim 2. n. (-gū) a drumming piece of nāykhĩbājā (fam. nāykhĩ-

CHA

chadhāḥpyākhã, n. (°khana-,-pu) performance showing one section of a drama,
one-act-play
chalã, n. (°lana-,-pu) (var. chalĩ) blade for cutting leather (fam. lāpi), used by
drum-makers
chasah, n. united voices -juye, (jala) to sing in unison -ye, (yāta) id.
chāy, n. offering -chī, n. charity; donation for guthi feast or feast of music group -bva,
n. (-bva) pūjā plate offered to Nāsaḥdyaḥ or other gods
chinha, n. (-gū) type of dhimay composition
chu, onp. dampened cymbal sound
chubā, cf. chumā
chumane, to indicate, to signal (a musical change)
chumā n. (%mana-,-gū) (var. cābā) 1. prelude for a song. 2. initial section of a
drumming piece (BKT navabājā)
chusyāḥ, n. (°syāla-,-pā) (var. kāy, zichyāḥ) pair of flat cymbals
chēgu, n. (guli-,-pāh) 1. skin 2. drum hide -piye, (pila) to skin (an animal)
chemā, n. (-gū) apology -pūjā, n. (-gū) ritual of appeasing Nāsaḥdyaḥ (if one has
displeased the god)
chēsu-ācā, n. (-pu) big awl used by
drum-makers
chyāĩ onp. ringing sound of cymbals (fam. jhyāĩ) -pāpā, n. (chv.) large cymbals
with highly raised boss and wide rim (cf. bhuchyāḥ)
chvaharā, n. (-gū) tamvah piece played
by Jugi during Kumāri processions (BKT)
jagałyākāhā, n. (°khana-,-gū) savage dance
jati, n. (-gū) a drumming piece of BKT
dāphā, gūlābājā
jayãbāchali, n. (-pu) particular cacā
song (jāmanaḥ gubhāju sang this song in
order to make his belt float on the Brahmaputra river, serving him as a raft during his return from Lhāsā)

जलापयाखा jalapyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) ritual masked dance of Harisiddhi

जला jahlā aj. first -kah, n. anim. (°kāla-) best drummer of a dāphā student group -gāy, n. anim. best singer of a dāphā student group -gāyē, id.

जात्रा jātrā, n. (-gū) festival with a procession; chariot festival

जोगता jōgata, n. (-gū) preliminary (°lāta-) prelude in singing

लजी, onp. drumming syllable (lālākhĩ)

जुगी jūgī, n. anim. (var. jvagi) (cf. tvājã)

ा. 1. ascetic 2. caste of tailors and shawm players, descendants of śaivite yogis called kāpālika, a subgroup of the paśupata sect which merged in time with the kānphaṭa followers of Gorakhnāth -bājã, n. (jana-, -gaḥ) 1. small kettle drum (fam. tamvah, tamah, tuntuncā, tunumuku, tunumukhu, turmuku, tyāmkvaḥ) 2. auspicious mvālĩ piece

जुहार juhār, n. 1. (-gū) bridge of a string instrument 2. tuning a string -cāyke, to smoothen the bridge to improve the sound quality

ज्याप jyāp, n. anim. farmer -pyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) 1. (-pu) seasonal drama (fam. gūpunipyākhā) 2. (-gū) (var. jyāpūjāpunipyākhā) farmers’ dance -me, n. (-pu) love song

ज्वाग jvāgī, cf. jugi

जयाक्ये jvanākāye, (kāla, kaya) 1. to repeat a tune during teaching sessions 2. to memorize

ज्वाव jvāv, n. (jvala-, -jvāh) pair, couple -khĩ, n. (°khina-, -ga) pair of small kettledrums, used in PT navabājã (var. dvaḥrā nagarā)

ज्वार jvārī, n. (var. jvāhri) vibration -mhite, to play several drone strings in repetitive patterns (fam. jhālābiye)

### JHA

जहा jhā, n. identifying notes of a rāga -vane, 1. to demonstrate the essence of a rāga 2. to reach a climax during a musical performance 3. to dig deep until reaching fertile soil

जहक्री jhākri, n. anim. shaman healer -bājã, n. (jana-, -gaḥ) double-headed frame drum with handle, played with S-shaped stick, also used in PT navabājã

जहर्क jhārkva, n. (-gū) festival celebrated after completing paddy transplanting

जहला jhālā, n. (-gū) final section of a rāga played on string instruments (several drone strings are played in repetitive patterns) -biye, to play several drone strings in repetitive pattern (cf. jvārimhite)

### JHĪ

जही jhi, onp. drumming syllable (dhā, dhimay)

जह jhē, onp. id.

जहाई jhāī, onp. (var. chyāī, jhyāī) 1. ringing sound of cymbals 2. (chv. jātrā festival; going for a walk -vane, 1. to observe a jātrā festival 2. to join a jātrā procession

जहली jhālī, n. (-pā) (var. jhyālīcā, khvālimāli, baucā) pair of small thin-walled cymbals

जहली jhālī, n. anim. (°lina-) antagonist of the monster in lākhay dance (cf. for geographical variants: cimpākcā, cināypākcā Pāgā; cumpākcā BKT; and Banepa; cyāmpākcā Bode; timpākcā Theco, Vā, Sunākvathi; catājvācā Jala)
The text contains a list of technical terms related to phonetics, phonology, and acoustics. It provides definitions for various sounds and rhythms, along with their respective terms in English and Sanskrit. The text is in a natural reading format, with each term explained individually. The page appears to be from a technical or academic text, possibly related to phonetics or musicology.
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tuki, n. (-gū) shawm reeds made of dried palm (Borassus flabellifer) leaf

tutāḥ, n. (°tala-,-pu) Buddhist hymn, prayer (skt. stotra) - bvanē to chant (a tutāḥ)

tunumuku, cf. tamvah
tunumukā, cf. tamvah

tukikā, n. anim. antagonist of the monster in lākhay dance (BKT) cf. jhyālĩ

tunumukhu, cf. tamvah
tunumukā, cf. tamvah

tūle, to stretch skin over rim of drum-head (drum making)

trampet, n. (°tala-,-pu) trumpet, cf. tarbin

trikulasime, n. (-pu) song for encouraging a child to dance in rhythm: tāytiti vah sā ghālĩ ghālĩ bi. If you toddler (I) will give you a pad of bells.

trīgā, onp. timbre of a string instrument

tyāmakvaḥ, cf. tamvah

trimā̃, n. (-gū) tāla used in gũlābājã (PT)

trimā, n. (°jana-) tailer-musician of jugi caste who receives oblations for the deceased and works as temple keeper (cf. jugi, jvagi)

tvālhāygu, n. (-lhāta) drumming interlude (KTM gũlābājã)

THA

thakatā, n. (-gū) tāla used in gũlābājā

thatā, n. (-gū) a drumming composition (lālākhā, dhācā, dhimay BKT)

thalā, n. (var. thalāḥ) 1. high pitched sound 2. high note - kvalā, n. (var. -kvalāh) change between pitches - kvalā yāye, (yāta) 1. to sing both high and low notes; to go up and down the scale 2. to warm up

thalākhvalāh, n. (-gū) (cf. ālāpa) vocal solo prelude preceding a dāpāh song

thāti kuti, n. (for shawm) the notes of a scale

thāy, n. (thāsa-,-pā) single brass disc used as a percussion instrument in KTM dhimay groups (fam. kāypi)

thaye, (thāta) to play a musical instrument

thāsā, n. 1. (-kū ‘piece’) split bamboo to close top end of a flute (fam. ghvasā) 2. (-gū) notation, musical notes (fam. saḥcĩ)

thetar, n. (-gū) theatre, play, drama

thvā, n. (-phuti ‘drop’) rice beer (Bhakta-purians know five varieties for specific uses) required by musicians as fuel during strenuous processions

thvāyā, n. echo, vibration (cf. thvahsah)

thvā, aj. resounded, echoed - saḥ, n. echo

thvāyē, (vala) to echo

thvāl, onp. distorted sound of broken cymbal or tuning paste (of drum)

DA

da, onp. drumming syllable (nāykhī)

dathulā, n. (-gū) dominant note
dabadaba, n. (-gū) (var. kāṭā-) hour-glass drum; symbol of Lord Śiva (cf. damaru)

dabu, n. (-gah) (var. dabhu) kettledrum played with one hand

dabū, n. (°buli-,-gū) stage; platform

-pyākhā, n. (°khana-,-gū) 1. complete drama 2. extinct dance drama called khaḥpyākhā which takes 28 days to perform, showing the Bīrāt Rājā and other episodes from the Mahābhārata (BKT)
Appendix

दमरु damaru, n. (-gā) hour-glass drum; symbol of Lord Śiva (cf. dabadaba)

दमिध damā, n. anim. Nepali speaking tāl- or musicians playing auspicious music (pañcāi bājā) at shrines and for social functions; the caste name originates from the kettle-drum damāhā

दम्पह damphu, n. (-gah) small single-headed frame drum, played by Tāmāng

दमवाखī damvaḥkhĩ, n. (°khina,-gū) double-headed drum with temporary tuning paste on both heads (PT navabājā); for auspicious performances three damvaḥkhĩ are decorated with robes, ornaments, and masks of Bhairava, Mahākālī and Māhālakṣmi (var. davavakhī)

दायलक्ष्मीपङ्क dayālakṣmīpyākhã, n. (°khana,-gū) puppet dance

दावातu davādu, n. entering the stage (of dancer)

दावाप i davāpi, n. leaving the stage (of dancer)

दावाखī davavakhī, cf. damvaḥkhĩ

दासमान्ता गधा dasamānta gūlābājã, n. (-gū) drumming piece of nāykhĩ

dah, n. (°hala,-gah) single-headed frame drum; metal frame with tuning screws and a metal tongue pressed against head by left hand to alter pitch (cf. dahah)

dah, n. (°hala,-gah) single-headed frame drum; frame either round or octagonal (phāgu me hāleta dahah thanāh hāle sikka hey bālāh = to sing a song of Holi accompanied by the dahah is pleasing) (cf. dah)

दापाद दापाद dāpād, n. (-gū) prabandha type of devotional group-singing with tāh and lālākhī -khalah, n. (°laka) group of dāpād musicians -chē, n. (-khā) (cf. akhāchē) house for keeping dāpād instruments and training students -pūjā, n. (-gū) annual pūjā of dāpād group -pyākhā, n. (°khana,-gū) traditional dance with lālākhī accompaniment -me, n. (-pu) dāpād song -lay, n. (°lasa,-gū) dāpād tune

दिबाध dibā, (°bāna,-gū) final phrase
dīmegu dīmegu, n. (-gū) closing pattern for several nāykhī pieces

दिपक dipaka, n. (-pu) a rāga played by Jugi shawm players exclusively during death rituals for Taleju priest and (earlier) Malla kings (BKT); accompanies lighting of funeral pyre

दुहँ duhā, n. (jala-) member of music group or guthī
dupyākhā, n. (°khana,-gū) 1. most popular sequence of a drama, often naughty and hilarious, having no direct connection with the plot 2. psychological drama (mod.)

दुपुजा durgā, n. (°lasa,-gū) a traditional dance (cf. Navadurgā pyākhā)

दुवियाङ्ग devipyākhā, n. (°khana,-gū) dance drama of BKT, showing the triumph of the goddesses Mahākālī, Mahālakṣmi, Kumārī, and their allies over the demons

दैत्य daiya, n. anim. demon -kvaṭhalegubājā, n. (°jana-) percussion group accompanying killing of demon during dyaḥpyākhā -pyākhā, n. (°khana,-gū) demon dance (fam. lākhaypyākhā)

दयाह dah, n. anim. (deva-) god (cf. gane-; nāsah-; haimā-) -khī, n. (°khina,-gū) large double-headed drum with temporary tuning paste on both heads, decorated with ram horns, accompanying Navadurgā dances of BKT and Theco and other auspicious dances -cāhule, (hula) (var. -cākahule, -cākahile BKT) to circumambulate a shrine (of Nāsahdyah) while playing a particular drumming piece (BKT gālābājā) -pyākhā, n. (°khana,-gū) traditional dance (cf. Navadurgā pyākhā) -lāhāygu, n. (-kah) drumming composition serving as an invocation of Nāsahdyah and other gods

द्राघ़ dyā, n. (dyāna,-gah) kind of kettle drum

द्राघ़ dra, onp. drumming syllable (for rapid succession of strokes)
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dvapāḥ, n. (°pāṭa-,-gū) uncultivated field patch infested with snakes or evil spirits

-vāygubājã, n. (°jana-,-gū) particular nāykhī piece for warding off evil spirits

dvahā, n. (-gū) category of songs

dvahjā, n. anim. (°jana-) 1. second-rate member of music group or guthī 2. volunteer (dāphā bhvajay dvahjāta madaykā hey magāḥ = inevitably volunteers are needed for the dāphā feast)

dvahrā aj. having double reeds (of harmonium) -nagarā, n. (-gā/-jvaḥ) pair of small kettledrums, used in PT navabājā (gūlābājā) (var. jvaḥkhĩ)

dvābhā, n. (°bala-,-gāḥ) small-mouthed beer storage pot, occasionally used as a drum (fam. bhvāgā)

dvālu, aj. tedious, boring (of talk, music) -ka, av. (to drum, sing or talk) tediously, in a boring manner -secvane, (of music or talk) to become tedious or boring

dvikvāna, n. (-ku) (for dancer) position on stage (cf. tipādu)

dvibhuja, n. (-pu) second cacā song of the bhācācā set, sung whilst collecting used leaf plates at the end of a ritual feast. The leaf plates are then taken and discarded in the kalahgāḥ or cipagāḥ, in order to ward off evil spirits

DHA

dhā, onp. drumming syllable
dhanāsiri, n. (-pu) a rāga

dhamāk, n. (-gū) a tāla of BKT, used in khyāḥpyākhã and navabājā
dhamār n. (-pu) classical group- singing -lay, n. (°laka-,-gū) song in dhamār style
dhalak, n. (-gāḥ) (var. dhuluka; dhvalak) double-headed drum, (two different types: 1. like North Indian dhōlak 2. cylindrical body, leather straps without rings)
dhalcā, n. (-gāḥ) (var. dhacābhañjan) devotional group singing with dhalak and arvin (BKT)
dhā, onp. drumming syllable
dhā, cf. dhāḥ -cā, n. (-gāḥ) (var. tatālikhi BKT) smaller variety of dhāḥ, used in BKT navabājā -bājā, n. (-gāḥ) ensemble of dhā, bhuchyāḥ, sichyāḥ

dhīm, dhimay, n. (-gāḥ) (var. dhime, dhemā Lele, dhemay) large double-headed procession drum played by Jyāpu and Kumāḥ; if made of wood, its body often has an irregular shape like the trunk of a tree -kathi, n. (°pu) (var. -kachicā BKT) 1. drum stick 2. sl. penis -cā, n. (-gāḥ) (var. tatalikhī BKT) smaller variety of dhāḥ, used in BKT navabājā -bājā, n. (-gāḥ) ensemble of dhā, bhuchyāḥ, sichyāḥ

bhūcacā, n. onp. pastā drumming piece (BKT Sāymi gūlābājā)
dhāḥ, n. (°dālā-,-gāḥ) (var. dhā BKT) double-headed drum; sometimes decorated with horns of fighting ram, (BKT navabājā) (cf. kāṭkāḥ). The lower-pitched head is played with a stick (dhākathī). Buddhist gūlābājā groups hold the stick in the left hand, others in the right hand -kathi, n. (°pu) (var. -kachicā BKT) 1. drum stick 2. sl. penis -cā, n. (-gāḥ) (var. tatalikhī BKT) smaller variety of dhāḥ, used in BKT navabājā -bājā, n. (-gāḥ) ensemble of dhā, bhuchyāḥ, sichyāḥ

bdhām, hām, hām, n. (°dhām) spiral cane stick used to play dhimay -pārā, n. (-gū) 1. final pījā of dhimay apprenticeship 2. sl. first pregnancy of young woman after husband ‘plays dhimay’ with
her pyākhã, n. (*khana-,-gū) dhimay dance
-bājā, n. (*jana-,-gah) ensemble of dhimay, bluchyāḥ, sichyāḥ BKT

धूप्याखान dhūpyākhã, n. (*khana-,-gū) tiger dance
धूज्यामुँज्ञा dhujyāmujyā, n. (*pu) long bamboo pole decorated with yāk’ s tail and tas-
sels, used as mace, carried in step with the rhythm of KTM dhimay group (syn. tāĩnāĩ, ghvāĩnāĩ) hike, to move this bamboo in time with the rhythm of dhimay

धुमाणारि dhunāgāri, n. (*pu) cacā song sung while disposing of the remains of ritual feast

न NA

नऊ nau, n. (*nali-,-phuti “drop”) straw ashes
(for preparing tuning paste for drums) (cf. su–)

नकी nakī, n. anim. (*kina–) heroine -khāke, to induce shaking in the body of nakī by recit-
ing the kvalaya and harasila cacā songs

नख nakhi, n. (*pā) sitār plectron

नगरा nagarā, n. (-gah) 1. kettle-drum played with two sticks in PT navabājā and at shrines
2. pair of two kettle-drums of different sizes, played in BKT navabājā 3. gigantic ket-
tle-drums (either single or pair), played by damāĩ at royal palaces and major shrines

नत naṭa, n. (*pu) a rāga (PT)

नतुस natuvā, n. anim. 1. clown, buffoon
2. male dancer -cāpyākhã, n. (*khana-,-gū) young girls’ dance performed by boys cross-
dressing as beautiful girls (cf. ghūṭāmali)

नमामि namāmi, n. (*pu) third (and last) song of bhūcācā, sung to ward off evil spirits while discarding remnants of a ritual feast

नव nava, num. nine (auspicious number)
-dāphā, n. (*gū) dāphā group with additional set of nine navabājā drums which are accompanied by Jugi shawm players (BKT).

The first two navadāphā ensembles were established by King Bhumatindra Malla.

-नुलक dhuluka, cf. dhalak

नुव dhuvā, n. (-gū) 1. first section of cacā song
2. refrain of a song

नस: dhusah, n. (*sala-,-gū) rhythmic step -biey, (bila) to signal to music group with a dance step

धेमा dhemā, n. (*pu) tāla of nāgacāpyākhā BKT)

ध्याचूपांष dhyācupyākhā, n. (*khana–) 1. (-gū) sarcastic play 2. (*pu) short comedy (syn. chvākhana pyākhā) -me, n. (*pu) comic song

ध्वलक dhvalak, cf. dhalak
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नायहा: nāyah, n. anim. (°yala-) 1. leader 2. main character of drama or novel (cf. hāmā) -khī, n. (-gā) see nāykī
नायहा:याये nāyah yāye, (yāta) to lull a child to sleep
नासल nāsalā, (instr. of nāsah charm, etc.) -liye, (lita) 1. to be charmed 2. to be inspired (by Nāsahdyah) -tvahte, to perform without inspiration
नासह nāsah, n. (sala-) 1. charm; delight; inspiration 2. god of music and dance (cf. Nāsahdyah) 3. high-pitched drum head (of double-headed drum) -cuka, n. (-gū) courtyard with Nāsahdyah shrine -taye, to charm; to inspire -tāpāye, (pāta) to have no inspiration (lit to be far away) -daye, (data, dayā) to have inspiration -dyah, n. (°deva-) god of music and dance (nowadays often identified with Nṛtyanātha) -pūjā, n. (-gū) worship of Nāsahdyah, especially during music apprenticeship (cf. hāne pūjā; pirāne pūjā) -pvāh, n. (°pvāla-, -pvāḥ) hole in wall (often triangular), serving as flight passage for Nāsahdyah -litaye, (var. lītaye) to return Nāsahdyah to his shrine after completing music apprenticeship (cf. pirāne pūjā) -sāle, to take Nāsahdyah from the shrine to a wall niche in the practice room (initial pūjā of music apprenticeship)

नतिनथ nṛthya, n. pr. section of KTM known as Naradevi -maru-ajimāpyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) particular type of ritual dance (KTM) -marupākhā, id. -pyākhā, id.

नेकु nekū, n. (°kuli-, -pu) 1. buffalo horn used in gālābājā (var. ghvarneku) (cf. ghauli) 2. buffalo horn with bamboo mouthpiece and silver decoration, used in PT navabājā (cf. cāti) -puike, to blow neku to announce to the gods a family member's death. This is done only during gālā at Svayaṃbhū

नाइयआई nyāicyāī, cf. ghvaínāi

नवतु nvatu, n. (-gū) mouthpiece of a trumpet

न्यात nvarat, n. (-pu) type of shawm, earlier played by Jugi during marriages (nowadays replaced by kanātha)

नलवन nālavan, n. (°sāla-, -sah) nasal sound

निहत nihāsa, n. (sala-, -saḥ) joyous voice

निकल nihili, n. smile -khyāli, n. (-gū) 1. joke, jest (syn. khyāli-) 2. merriment, enjoyment -pyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) comic scene within a play -me, n. (-pu) joyous song; jocular song

निहलय nihulay, n. (°lasa-, -pu) modern song; recent genre of light urban popular love songs incorporating some aspects of Western music

निसह nhesah, n. (°sāla-, -gū) rehearsal

नियाह nhyāh, n. (-gū) basic processional drumming pattern (for dhimay)
प रा

पुकळथि paukathi, n. (-pu) spiral cane stick for dhimay (cf. dhimaypau)
पूता pāyātā, n. ("tāla-, -pu") cf. paṇcatāl -khalah, n. ("laka-, -gū") group of pāyātā players -khī, n. ("khina-, -gah") cf. kvatāh
पिखमा pachimā, n. ("-gah") large double-headed drum (like North Indian pakhāvaj), used in navabājā, flute ensembles and dance
पञ्चताल paṇcatāl, n. ("tāla-, -gah") (var. kvatāh, kvatāhkhī, pastāh, pāyātāhkhī) cf. kvatāh
पञ्चताल paṇcatāl, n. ("tāla-, -pu") (var. pāyātāh, kāhāh, kā) long natural trumpet with supporting stick, played ensemble during important ritual events
पञ्चबाजापा paṇcabājā, n. ("-gah") cf. kvatāh
पञ्चबाजापा paṇcamā, n. ("-gū") a tāla (PT gūlabājā)
पञ्चबाजारुता partāl, n. ("-pu") a tāla used in dāphā, navabājā, gūlabājā
परिमष pariman, cf. palimā
पलिमा palinā, n. ("māna-, -gū") (var. pariman, palinā BKT; palamā, palēmā PT) a tāla (navabājā, gūlabājā)
पस्ताह pastāh, n. ("tāla-, -gah") cf. kvatāh
पा pā, onp. drumming syllable (nāykhī)
पासाचार्ये pāsācārayme, n. ("-pu") (var. pāhācārayme) pathetic song sung during pāhācāray (fam. ghātu)
पाचार्ये pāh gayebale thāye, (thāta)
1. to climb the hill of Svāyaṃbhū during gūlā whilst playing gūlabājā 2. a particular nāykhī piece of KTM gūlabājā
पिथाने pithane, (var. pikāye) 1. to stage or perform (a play, drama, dance) 2. to release (a publication)
पिराने piraṇepūjā, n. ("-gū") 1. final pūjā of music apprenticeship (BKT). Nāsahādyaḥ is returned to his shrine where the students play in public for the first time 2. sl. (for a woman) to give birth for the first time (BKT)
पिवाचा pivācā, n. ("-gah") bowed chordophone with one to three strings (no longer in use)
पुचामे pucahme, n. ("-pu") group song; chorus (syn. mākāhme)
पुधाहपयाहा pūdāhpyāhā, n. ("khana-, -pu") complete drama
पुला pulā, aj. old, ancient -me, n. ("-pu") old song -lay, n. ("lasa-, -gū") old tune
पुवाज्ये puvājayāme, n. ("-pu") song sung by farmer girls while sowing rice
पुजा pūjā, n. ("-gū") (var. pujā) worship -khī, n. ("khina-, -gū") a nāykhī piece, played by butchers going for a pūjā (BKT) -mālī, n. ("-gū") nāykhī and mvalī piece, played by oilpressers and tailors during a dalāpa, while the Vajrācārya priest invokes the gods -mvalī, n. ("-pu") (var. byekvamvalī) large curved shawm with nine finger-holes, played by Jugi at shrines during sanyabājā
पायां pyākā, n. ("khana-"") 1. ("gū") dance 2. ("gū") dance drama; ballet with many characters 3. ("pu") play; drama -khalah, n. ("laka-, -gū") dance group -pāh, n. ("pāla-, -gū") rhythmic step in a dance -pākhāye, (kāla, kayā) to step in rhythm -pithane, to stage a drama or a play for the first time -pīdanе id. (cf. pīrānepūjā) -mi, n. anim. writer of dramas -mīsā, n. anim. 1. female dancer 2. actress in a play or drama -me, n. ("-gū") dance drama (lit song play) -mvala, n. anim. ("mvala") 1. actor 2. actress -hule, to dance
प्रक्षण prakvaṇa, n. ("-ku") (for dancer) position on stage (cf. tipādu)
प्रताल pratāl, cf. partāl
पवगा pvağa, n. ("-pu") natural copper trumpet, supported by a stick, played in dāphā, navabājā, gūlabājā
पवता pvatā, n. ("-gū") bamboo ring framing the drum hide (of dhimay, nāykhī, etc)
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KjMKofv+

pvaḥpyākhã, n. (°khana-,-gū) fisherman's dance

Kjf/
mvn=
pvā̃y, n. onp. 1. sound of a trumpet (fam. -cā) 2. (-pu) flute, pipe 3. (-gū) mouthorgan (fam. -pyāycā) -yāye, (yāta) 1. to blow a trumpet or wind instrument 2. to marry (to the sound of Jugi band)

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KjMKofv+
pvaṛējyā n. (-gū) paddy transplanting

-me, n. (-pu) sad song sung during the paddy transplanting season -lay, n. (°lasa-,-gū) id.

FA

pha, n. (°phasa-) air, wind -gā, n. (°gana-,-gah) wind chimes (lit wind bell)

-pvāh, n. (°pvāla-,-pvah) 1. mouthpiece of a wind instrument 2. finger hole of a wind instrument

phale-ācā, n. (-pu) (var. phālā ācā) awl used by drum maker

phākandālipyākhã, n. (°khana-,-gū) 1. group dance telling the story of a woman abandoning her baby 2. butterfly dance (BKT)

phākā, n. anim. (var. -cā, phāknāli) moth -pyākhã, n. (°khana-,-gū) slow dance

phāgu, n. (loc. khunu) red powder festival (syn. hvali) -punī, n. (loc. khunu) full moon of the month of cillā -me, n. (-pu) joyous song sung while throwing red powder during hvali (syn. hvalime) -lay, n. (°lasa-,-gū) tune of phāgu

BA

bau, n. (-pā) (var. jhyāli, jyālicā, baucā, babhu) small, thin-walled cymbals

bāy, n. (basā,-pu) (var. bāycā, kvaku bāycā) short notch flute made of bamboo played by Jugi along with kvakhī and bau (BKT navabājā and garbājā of oilpressers)

balādi, n. (-pu) a rāga sung in dāphā (BKT)

basanta, n. 1. spring season 2. (-pu) song sung during spring 3. (-pu) a rāga (several varieties) -me, n. (-pu) id. -lay, n. (°lasa-,-gū) tune of basanta

basundharāme, n. (-pu) hymn, harvest song

bihdyaḥsvahyāne, (for a group of musicians) to lead a procession through all the Buddhist courtyards (bāhā) of a locality during gūlā

bākhāme, n. (-pu) ballad (cf. sādeme, silume)
Appendix

बारह bārha, n. (-pu) a mvālī piece played by Jugi at the Taleju temple (BKT) -māse, aj. (var. barahmāsī BKT) occurring all the year round; omni-seasonal -māseme, n. (-pu) song which may be sung all year round -lay, n. (°lasa-, -gū) tune which may be sung all the year round

बावने bāvane cf. bahidyaḥ svahvane
बासुरी bāsuri, n. (-pu) (var. bāsuri BKT) transverse flute played ensemble by farmers

बाहापुजा bāhāpūjā, n. (-gū) 1. (family) ritual of worship at monasteries on āṣṭamī or full-moon day 2. procession with gũlābājā playing invocations at all the bāhā of a locality

बा़सुरबāsarā, n. (-pu) type of curved shawm played by Jugi during gũlābājā processions (out of use)

भालुयाख bālupākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) bear’s dance

भुख्मा bhuchyāḥ, cf. bhusyāḥ
भुज bhujā, n. (°jana-) 1. group of instrumentalists of the butcher or tailor caste leading a funeral procession 2. n. anim. butcher (in relation to funeral rites)

भ भा BHA

भजन bhajan, n. (-gū) devotional group singing with tablā and arvin -me, n. (-pu) hymn of this category -chē, n. (-khā) house of bhajan group
भास bhamarā, n. (-pu) type of curved shawm played by Jugi during gūlābājā processions (out of use)

भालुयाख bālpākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) bear’s dance

भुख्मा bhuchyāḥ, cf. bhusyāḥ
भुज bhujā, n. (°jana-) 1. group of instrumentalists of the butcher or tailor caste leading a funeral procession 2. n. anim. butcher (in relation to funeral rites)

भूख्मा bhuchyāḥ, n. (°syāla-, -pā) (var. bhuchyāḥ BKT) large thin-walled cymbals with round boss

भुजचा bhūcacā, n. (-pu) set of three cacā songs, viz.: garajajina, dvibhūja, namāmi. The set is sung at the end of ritual feasts in order to ward off evil spirits when left-overs are being discarded

भूख्मा bhuchyā, (chuta) to sing a hymn at the beginning of a feast

भें bhē, onp. 1. drumming syllable (dhimay BKT) 2. sl. fuck
भैल bhaila, n. anim. (var. bhailaḥ) Bhairava -pyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) set of mask dances
performed during sāpāru by the potters of BKT, showing Bhairava with his attendants Betāḥ, Bhucā, Khicā, Kavācā, Khyāḥ and several Tantric goddesses including Kumārī, Bārāhi, Mahākāli and Mahālaks̄ni. भवगा bhvagā, n. 1. small mouthed pot for storing beer  2. such a pot used as a drum

### MA

मकाहे mākāhme, n. (-pu) group song (syn. pucāhme) भवागा bhvagā, n. 1. small mouthed pot for storing beer  2. such a pot used as a drum

मूमे mume, n. (-pu) last hymn of bhajan (lit. main song) (syn. ārati) मेमे me, n. (-pu) 1. song  2. reed of harmonium (cf. rid)

व्याक्रिया mhaykhāpyākhā, n. (°khana-,-gū) peacock dance
Appendix

YA

ययुपीचा yacupīcā, cf. yecupī
यळा yāla, n. eleventh month of Newar calendar
-mē, n. (-pu) song sung before mvañhī
यकः yākah, (°kala-) 1. n. solo 2. aj. alone -mē, n. (-pu) (for song) solo -bājā, n. (°jana-, -gū) (for instrument) solo

Yekaṛā, n. (-gū) 1. single-reed harmonium (sound of) 2. single-stringed instrument (sound of) 3. aj. one-sided (person)
येकपी yecupī, n. (°pila-, -cāḥ “circle” etc.) (var. yacupīcā) lip disc of a shawm
येयाहप्याखाः yēyāḥpyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) seasonal dramas staged at cross roads during yēyāḥ punhi (Indra jātrā)

RA

राग rāga, n. (-gū) 1. (var. rāg) melody model in śāstriya saṅgīt 2. free-rhythmic introduction to tātāli (BKT navabājā) 3. free-rhythmic vocal introduction to a dāphā song, usually enriched by a few lālākhĩ strokes -kāye, (kāla,kayā) 1. (for main dāphā singer) to sing an introduction 2. (for lālākhĩ drummer) to apply a few accompanying strokes -thva-kegu, n. (-gū) lālākhĩ strokes to accompany the vocal introduction to a dāphā song
राधाकृष्णयाखाः rādhaṅkṛṣṇapīyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) dance of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa, performed by four Jyāpu boys dressed up as two pairs of Rādhā and Kṛṣṇa during sāpāru in BKT
रामदार rāmadari, n. (-pu) a rāga
रासभाजन rāsbhajan, n. (-pu) devotional group-singing with tablā and harmonium
रासमे rāsme, n. (-pu) particular song or hymn
रिखा rikhā, n. (-gū) a tāla (BKT navabājā)
रितु ritu, n. season of a year -mē, n. (-pu) seasonal song -lay, n. (°lasa-, -gū) seasonal tune or mode
रिद rīd, n. (-pu) harmonium reed (fam. me)
रुपक rupakah, n. (-gū) short drama

LA

लच्छ lācva, n. (-gu) (var. lācva BKT) dhā drone-ming piece for processions (BKT dhābājā)
लता lātā, n. (-gū) gūḷābājā tāla (BKT)
लगसिख lagsikha, n. (-gū) a tāla of dāphā (BKT)
लपि lapi, n. (-pi) stiletto used by drum makers (cf. ucatã)
लय lay, n. (°lasa-, -gū) 1. tempo (in music) 2. tune
लयताप्याखाः laytāpyākhā, n. (°khana-, -gū) 1. joyous dance 2. comic play
लयतामे laytāme, n. (-pu) joyous song
लवlavāḥ, n. (-gū) second part of gvrā
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नाये lāye, (lāta) to take up (a tune, mode, song, etc); to memorize
लालख्ह्र lālākhĩ, n. (ॆkhina,-,gāḥ) (var. khĩ) double-headed drum with black tuning paste (khau) on both heads; used for accompaniment of dāphā songs and dances
लाहाजुकेगु lāhājukegu, n. (ॆgū) lālākhĩ drumming exercise BKT
लिली, onp. drumming syllable (ललख्ह्र)
लिकारा likārāḥ, n. (ॆgū) a tamvaḥ piece played by tailors returning from a pūjā
लिस lisaḥ, n. (ॆsala-,-gū) 1. answer, reply 2. type of drumming (like an echo)
लु lū, n. (ॆgū) (var. lū) scenery , view 2. scene of a drama
लुजु lucu, n. quick step in dance -palāḥ, n. (ॆlākha-,-r) skipping
लुसिप्याखã lusipyākhã, n. (ॆkhana,-,gū) stick dance using pestles (BKT sāpāru)
लु लु lū, cf. lu

ल्यासेल्याम्प्याखां lyāselyāmhpāyākhā, n. (ॆkhana,-,gū) lover’s duet dance
ल्यासेल्याम्हामे lyāselyāmhame, n. (ॆpu) love song
ल्यक ल्यक lvak, n. anim. people (var. lvahka)
-प्याखाः -pyākhā, n. (ॆkhana,-,gū) folk dance -बाखाः -bākhã, n. (ॆkhana,-,pu) folk tale -लाहाजु -lay, n. (ॆlasa,-,gū) folk tune
ल्यकबक्षाये lyakabvakathāye, (for music students or drunk players) to create a musical chaos by playing irregularly or missing the correct tempo BKT
ल्यकबक्षाने lyakabvakavāne, id.
ल्यम lvana, n. (ॆpu) (for dancer) passage to enter stage
ल्यह lväha, n. (ॆhāta,-,gah) stone (used by drum-makers as tuning-hammer)
ल्याक lhaśka, n. anim. (var. -mha) 1. composer (of song, poem) 2. speaker 3. prayer
ल्युे lhuye, to dance (BKT) pyākhā -, id.

व VA

विजय vijaya, n. (ॆpu) a rāga (PT)
विभास vibhāsa, n. (ॆpu) id.

विल्वम vilvama, n. (ॆpu) (for dancer) passage to leave stage
विश्राम viśrāma, n. (ॆka) (for drama etc.) interval

श ŠA

श्री क्रुङ्य ल्यारा śrī krṣṇa gvarāḥ, n. (ॆgū) auspicious drumming piece of BKT gūlābājā
श्री भगवान ल्यारा śrī bhagavān gvārā, n. (ॆgū) drumming piece of PT gūlābājā

स SA

सागिनि ल्यारा sāgini gvārā, n. (ॆgū) drumming piece of PT gūlābājā
सादेमे sādeme, n. (ॆpu) ballad describing the plight of a newly married Newar woman whose husband went to Tibet as a trader, leaving her defenceless against the cunning schemes of his so-called friend
साय ल्याय सायी sāy, n. anim. Tibetan -pyākhā, n. (ॆkhana,-,gū) Tibetan dance -सायी pyākhā, n. (ॆkhana,-,gū) Tibetan lovers’ duet dance
sâtisāḥ, n. (-pu) kind of tree used for drums and shawms
sanyabājā, n. (°jana-,-gū) ritual music played by Jugi twice a day at shrines
sahubāj, n. (°jana-)(var. -bva) marriage feast in which couple eats from the same dish
-puye, (pula) (for Jugi) to play an auspicious tune for such an occasion
sam, n. (-gū) beginning of a tāla cycle (in sāstriya sangīt)
saminīpyākhā, n. (°khana-,-gū)
Tibetan dance (cf. sāy-)
sarveśvar gvrā, n. (-gū) drumming piece of PT gālābājā
sala, n. anim. (var. salācā BKT) horse
-pyākhā n. (°khana-,-gu) horse dance
sasudyāḥ, n. (°deva-) Sarasvāti, goddess of learning, music, and weaving
sah, n. (sala,-sah) sound, voice -cī, n. (°cina-,-gū) musical notation (syn. thāsā)
sāj, n. brass staple of a shawm
sātapore, sātapore, (pula) (for Jugi) to play an auspicious shawm piece
sātamā, n. (-gū) a tāla (PT gālābājā)
sāpāru, n. (-gū) the gāi-jātrā festival
-pyākhā, n. (°khana-,-gu) stick dance performed during sāpārā (BKT)
sāmājyā, n. (-gū) rice harvest -me, n. (-pu) song sung during rice harvest -lay, n. (°lasa-,-gū) id.
sārāga, n. (-pu) a rāga
sārāgi, n. (-gah) four-stringed fiddle of the gāyā bards
sālusaḥ, n. (°sala,-sah) soft voice
sichyāḥ, n. (°chyāla-,-pā) (var. kāy, chusyāḥ) flat, thin-walled cymbals
sijāḥ, n. (-pu) graceful ending of a dāphā song after the drums have stopped (syn. kinārā)
sitalāme, n. (-pu) (var. sitalamājume)
song of suffering, first sung when children suffering from smallpox were exiled from the Kathmandu Valley
sitār, n. (-gah) North Indian long-necked lute
sahaykegu dyahlhāygu, n. (-gū) last section of dyahlhāygu, played by BKT dhimay groups while passing a god during a procession
sinājyā, n. (-gū) paddy transplanting
-me, n. (-pu) paddy transplanting song -lay, n. (°lasa-,-gū) id.
silume, n. (-pu) sentimental ballad sung during āgruni, describing a young couple's ill-fated journey to Silu
sībājā, n. (°jana-,-gū) nāykhī drumming piece for funeral processions; its drumming patterns changing whilst passing sacred stones at street crossings (when played out of context, the music is said to cause death and desease)
su, n. straw -cāḥ, n. (°cala-,-cāḥ) (var. pecā BKT) straw ring on which kettledrums are placed for support -nau, n. (°nali-,-phuti, "drop") straw ashes (for making khau for drums)
sur, n. (-gū) (var. sūr) tone (cf. svara)
vagamālĩ, n. (-gū) auspicious tamvāh piece played by Jugi during marriage, when bride and groom place tikā on each other's forehead (BKT)
vacā, 1. aj. (playing) three times 2. n. (-gū) navabājā pieces played in three sets, in alternation with pairs of dāphā songs (BKT)
svan, n. (var. svanā KTM) 1. ritual placing of sacred objects 2. consecrated area in which ritual objects are placed -thāvanebale, n. (-gū) pastāḥ piece played by oilpressers on arrival at dalāčhe (BKT) -pujā, n. (-gū) a pājā during which symbolically decorated earthenware pots are ritually arranged, accompanied by cacā songs
svaynagume, n. (-pu) (var. svaynaguyāme) sentimental ballad about a tragic love triangle

svar, n. (-gu) sound (cf. sur)

svetakālīpyākhā n. (°khana-, -gū) ritual mask dance of KTM

ha, n. (-ka) signal to be shouted or sung to by leading drummer to indicate entry to other players (cf. caca, caha)

haimā, n. 1. terrifying and destructive aspect of Nāṣahdyah, receiving blood sacrifice during a musical apprenticeship (only at BKT) 2. low-pitched drum head of a double-headed drum BKT -dyah, id. 1. BKT -pvaḥ, (°pvāla-, -pvaḥ) hole in wall as a pas sageway for Haimādyah

hanepūjā, n. (-gū) worship of Nāṣahdyah during music apprenticeship, introducing the complete set of musical instruments in the teaching sessions (var. hanepūjā KTM)

hāmā, n. anim. leader of a music group (cf. nāyāh)

hārbin, n. (-gaḥ) (var. arvin BKT) Indian harmonium used for bhajan accom paniment and śāstriya saṅgīt

hule, to dance (fam. pyākhā- KTM)

hvalime, n. (-pu) song sung during hvali festival (cf. phāgume)

hvalilay, n. (°lasa-, -gū) id.
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Documentary Films and Audio Examples

The following three documentary films by Gert-Matthias Wegner show Newar music, dances, and rituals of Bhaktapur during the 1980s, the documentaries can be accessed via heidICON:

1. *Navabājā von Bhaktapur* (Navabājā of Bhaktapur), 1985, 35’, UMATIC Lowband
   Online resource: [https://doi.org/10.11588/heidicon/23736359](https://doi.org/10.11588/heidicon/23736359)

   Online resource: [https://doi.org/10.11588/heidicon/23736361](https://doi.org/10.11588/heidicon/23736361)

   Online resource: [https://doi.org/10.11588/heidicon/23736362](https://doi.org/10.11588/heidicon/23736362)

The original video films were produced in collaboration with Worldview Foundation Nepal (WIF), funded by German Research Council (DFG) and shot on location in Bhaktapur. The English subtitles were inserted with the technical assistance of Ranav Adhikari.

In 2001 I recorded and produced the CD ‘Bhaktapur Dhimaybājā and Navabājā’ with the ‘Master-drummers of Nepal’. Production costs were sponsored by ‘EcoHimal’.

Online resource: [https://doi.org/10.11588/heidicon/23736345](https://doi.org/10.11588/heidicon/23736345)

1. *dyahlhāygu, cva,* **gu** for *dhā́* (soloist: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar) 2’34”
2. *dyahlhāygu* **cva,** **gu** for *kvatā́h* (soloist: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar) 1’53”
3. *tatali* for *dhā́cā* (soloist: Bishnu Bahadur Manandhar) 6’25”
4. *calti* for *dhimaycā* (soloist: Krishna Gopal Lachhimasyu) 4’10”
5. *cvakh* for *nāykĩcā* (soloist: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar) 4’09”
6. *dhamā́k* for *pachimā́* (soloist: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar) 4’04”
7. *dehrā́* for *dhalak* (soloist: Buddhhalal Manandhar) 4’31”
8. *cvakh* for *kvakĩcā* (soloist: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar) 4’22”
9. *partāl* for *nagarā* (soloist: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar) 4’45”
10. *calti* for *nagarā* and *pachimā́* (soloists: Hari Govinda Ranjitkar and Buddhhalal Manandhar) 8’39”
11. *mā́* for *dhimaybājā* (lead drummer: Gert-Matthias Wegner) 12’08”
12. *dyahlhāygu* for *dhimaybājā* (lead drummer: Raju Hyaumikha) 1’20”
This groundbreaking publication offers a unique resource of information about one of the most glorious and diverse musical cultures of the Himalayas. The numerous drum traditions of Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu Valley are a vibrant aspect of traditional Newar culture that saw its heyday between the thirteenth and eighteenth centuries. The three Malla kingdoms of Bhaktapur, Lalitpur and Kathmandu competed in art, architecture, music, dance and opulent town rituals celebrating the presence of the gods. Music served as a portal between the human world and the realm of the gods. This study documents the role and repertoires of the different percussion genres in a transcribed and commented form for practical use and as a teaching aid. It also includes a dictionary of Newari terms related to music. As it focuses on the musical life of Bhaktapur during the decade starting from 1983, it could serve as a point of reference for comparison with the present situation. This publication is an outstanding contribution to the preservation of Newar culture.