

Glossary

In my prior publication, co-authored with Simon Cubelic and Axel Michaels (2021: 60–63 and 855–871), a thorough compilation of administrative, legal, and various other terminologies attested in the *Mulukī Ain* of 1854 and contemporaneous documents has been presented. In the interest of brevity and relevance to the current topic, I here refocus attention on selective terms most relevant to it.

abbala – The first and highest quality of four land categories (cp. *doyama*, *sima*, *cahāra*); a descriptor applied to tenants or the like associated with such land.

adālata – A district-level or frontier area law court (superior to *ṭhānās* and *amālas*); any law court in general.

aḍḍā – A law court superior to *adālatas*, *ṭhānās*, and *amālas*; the office, post, or station under a state functionary.

amāla – A village-level revenue collection office with semi-judicial functions, one playing a central role in judicial administration alongside *adālatas* and *ṭhānās*.

amālī (*amāli*) – The chief of an *amāla* office, i.e. a revenue functionary of a regional administrative unit with judicial powers.

ānā – A monetary unit equivalent to one-sixteenth of a rupee, four *ānās* equalling one *sukā* (or one *ganḍā*); also used to denote a sixteenth part of land or property.

aputālī – Escheatable property (here, property that reverts to the state if a person dies without male heirs).

āvarje – A daybook, i.e. a ledger with daily entries.

baghara – An ascetic group characterized by their tiger-skin robes, likely associated with a Śaiva sect.

bahidāra – A civil (or occasionally military) functionary with the responsibilities of an accountant, clerk, and scribe, entrusted with formulating official documents, and higher in rank than a *nausindā*.

bajira – One designation for the (prime) minister, and occasionally employed to denote a high-ranking political advisor.

- bhāradāra* (*bhāibhāradāra*) – (Lit. ‘burden bearer’) A generic term referring to a member of the royal family or a high-level state functionary.
- bhāradārī-sabhā* – (Lit. ‘assembly of nobles’) The royal assembly, also functioning as the court of judicial review in the royal palace.
- bhatāhā* – A fellow caste member who is permitted to enter the kitchen and share a meal of cooked rice.
- bicārī* – A magistrate ranked under a *ḍiṭṭhā*.
- binīpatranīksārī adḍā* – A department directly under the prime minister charged with assessing petitions submitted to the prime minister.
- cahāra/cāhāra* – Land of the fourth or lowest quality (cp. *abbala*, *doḡama*, and *sima*).
- cākacakui* – A low-caste male or female enslaved as punishment for a sexual offence. In a different context, it refers to cattle confiscated by the state for having caused harm to a person or used for bestial sexual practices. This term is occasionally translated as ‘adultery’ or ‘fine for adultery’ or similarly for other deviations from the Hindu marriage ideal.
- caudharī* – A headman or landlord vested with revenue-collection rights, especially in the Tarai, and often used as a surname by Thārus who once held this position.
- cautarīyā* – A royal in a collateral line of descent appointed as a principal officer of the state, but also often a king’s second and third sons in the early Śāha period; later a high-ranking title with no specific functions attached granted to several male descendants of the Śāha kings at the same time.
- daidastura* – A customary fee or payment; it also denotes customs, traditions, or rules.
- dāmala* (*ḍāmala*) – A substitute punishment for perpetrators from castes exempted from the death penalty. It typically involved branding the offender’s left cheek, confiscating their entire property, and either life imprisonment or exile from the country.
- daśanāmī* – The collective term for ten different classes of ascetics, namely Āśrama, Tīrtha, Vana, Araṇya, Girī, Parvata, Sāgara, Sarasvatī, Bhāratī, and Purī.
- daskhat* (*dastakhat*) – A term denoting a signature, especially that of the prime minister, and also referring to missives signed by the prime minister or other high officials.
- dharmādhikāra(rin)* – The chief judge in religious jurisdictions, whose main duties were to grant expiation and rehabilitation to polluted

individuals. The post was exclusively held by Brahmins in the royal court.

dharmanibandha – A (Brahmanical) legal digest, a separate genre in the encyclopaedic commentarial tradition of *dharmaśāstra* literature.

dharmaśālā – A charitable institution or shelter providing facilities for devotees or pilgrims, and often associated with a particular temple or pilgrimage site.

dharmaśāstra – A treatise on *dharma*, the (Brahmanical) law code.

ḍiṭṭhā – A civil servant ranking above a *mukhiyā* but lower than a *subbā*.

doyam – Land of the second-best quality (cp. *abbala*, *sima*, and *cahāra*).

dvāryā (*dvāre*) – A gatekeeper at the royal palace who collects certain levies; a village headman; a local revenue collection official with minor policing and judicial powers.

gauḍā (*gauḍā*) – A term for fortifications or fortresses, certain districts (Doti, Salyan, Palpa, and Dhankuta), and district offices responsible for maintaining law and order, all three categories historically overseen by military officials, initially *kājīs* or *sardāras*, and later generals (*janarala*) or colonels (*karṇela*).

gauruṅ – A village agent (with functions that are not clearly delineated in available sources).

ghaḍī – A measure of time equal to 24 minutes, typically determined by the time a bowl with a hole in it is able to stay afloat in a bucket filled with water.

godāna – (Lit. ‘gift of a cow’) The ritual offering of a cow to a Brahmin or a certain amount of money given in its place. Additionally, it signifies a fine paid by an individual who has committed an offence resulting in the loss of caste or the accumulation of bodily pollution, serving as expiation to the *dharmādhikāra* or a Brahmin.

gosvārā – A term conveying the notion of belonging to a single group or being an integral part of several joint groups; chief or main, often denoting the first level of a hierarchy (e.g., *gosvārā hulāka*, *gosvārā lagata*).

gotra – One of the clan names of the ancient seers (*ṛṣis*) from whom all twice-born Hindus and others are believed to have descended, including among others Agastya, Bhāradvāja, Gautama, Jama-dagni, Kaśyapa, and Vasiṣṭha.

guthi (*gūṭhī*) – A socio-religious organization functioning as a trust overseeing the management and financing of religious and charitable

activities by means of endowed lands or other revenue sources dedicated to these purposes.

hajuriyā – A bodyguard; also used as an adjective to denote being in waiting, for instance, on the person of the king (e.g., *hajuriyā karṇela* or *hajuriyā jarnela*).

hākima – The leader of an administrative unit, government office, or court who is vested with decision-making authority and responsible for delivering verdicts.

havalḍāra – A non-commissioned military officer on the order of a sergeant.

hukuma/hukum – A royal order, usually from the king or the Rāṇā prime minister (with the kingly title *śrī 3 mahārāja*), but occasionally also issued by a high-ranking official.

ijārā – A contract under which the government grants an individual the exclusive right to collect a specific type of revenue, exploit mines, etc., with the obligation to pay a predetermined sum.

ijārādāra – The holder of an *ijāra* contract.

jabānabandī/jamānabandī – A legal document in which a complainant, defendant, or eyewitness pledges in writing to accept whatever decision the court or legal body reaches in accordance with the law.

jāgīra (jāgīra) – Land assigned to government employees in lieu of salaries.

jamḍāra (jamadāra) – A low-ranking commissioned officer in the army who could also be assigned to civil offices.

jaṅgama – A group of wandering ascetics within the Liṅgāyata or Vīraśaiva tradition.

jeṭhā-buḍhā – A village headman overseeing local affairs, including the maintenance of law and order; some served in an official capacity at the royal palace as royal messengers or investigators.

jillā – A major administrative district; a category of land rights.

jogī – An ascetic or religious mendicant, specifically a follower of the Nātha tradition; a member of the Kusle community within the caste setting of the Newars in the Kathmandu Valley.

kacaharī – A public office responsible for dealing with legal matters, serving as a court on the local level.

kāgaḍa – A document with legal effect.

kājī (kāji) – An official of ministerial rank in the civil or military administration.

kānacīrā (kā[ka]naphaṭṭā) – Ascetics with pierced ears, specifically followers of Gorakhanātha.

- kaparadāra* – A high-ranking official, a chamberlain, described as the chief of the royal household, the keeper of the king's wardrobe, and the one in charge of jewellery and other valuable items in the palace.
- kaptāna* – A captain, a commissioned army officer ranking below a major.
- kāriṅdā* – A clerk or low-ranking official under the authority of a *hākima*.
- karnela (karṇaila)* – A colonel.
- kaṭuvāla* – A civil functionary; a village messenger.
- khaḍḡanisāna(nā)* – An executive order from the Rāṇā prime minister bearing a *khaḍḡa nisānā* (seal with an image of a sword).
- khaḷjāñcī* – The chief royal treasurer of the Kausītoṣākhānā.
- khetā* – Irrigated (paddy) fields in the hill region suitable for the cultivation of rice and wheat; a measure of land in the hill region, equivalent to 25 *ropanīs* or 100 *murīs* (approximately 1.25 hectares).
- kumārī coka* – The central office conducting audits and overseeing accounts of revenue collectors and contractors; it was also responsible for the proper financial state of crown lands.
- kuruvā* – A unit of volume equivalent to two *mānās* or 20 *muṭhīs*; a brass vessel specifically designed for measuring two *mānās*.
- lālamohara* – A royal decree bearing a red seal.
- lephṭena (lephaṭena)* – A lieutenant, ranking below a major adjutant.
- lokabhāra (lokābhāra)* – A system under which a local community assumes responsibility for the payment of stipulated revenue through a designated representative.
- mahāniyā (mahāne)* – A local revenue functionary in the Kathmandu Valley, supposedly also responsible for taking care of open land and forest at the local level.
- mahanta* – The spiritual head of an ascetic centre (*maṭha, āśrama*, etc.) or wandering group.
- māmūlī* – Referring to what is ordinary or customary; it can also denote usual remuneration or provision, often non-monetary, and may involve customary levies related to religious functions.
- mānā* – A volumetric measure equivalent to half a seer (approximately one pound). It also denotes a (copper) vessel designed to contain ten *muṭhīs* or one *mānā* of grains (*anna*).
- marjī* – An order issued by the *mukhtiyāra*, prime minister, or other high-ranking officer.
- mārphata* – (Lit. 'through') Royal documents, such as *rukkās* or *lālamoharas*, required on their backside a signature of the pertinent

- ranking official(s), with ‘*mārphata*’ written before their full name signature, for authentication and implementation purposes.
- mauje/maujā* – A unit of land revenue administration in the Tarai; a revenue subdivision formed by a group of villages in certain hill districts and the Kathmandu Valley.
- maulavi* – An expert in Islamic law.
- mijhāra* – The headman of specific groups with low caste status, entrusted with the responsibility for collecting levies, judicial fines, escheated properties, and expiation fees from the families under his jurisdiction.
- muculkā* – A witnessed written declaration or official report (e.g., detailing the scene of a crime).
- muḍa(d)nu* – A form of punishment for an offender not subject to conventional sentencing, entailing four patches of hair (*cāra pāṭā mudḥu*) being cut off from the head and any top-knot removed. This punishment is often administered concurrently with the *dāmala* form of punishment.
- mukhtiyāra* – The title held by the king’s chief minister in the pre-Rāṇā period, the prime minister in the early Rāṇā period, and the commander-in-chief for the rest of the Rāṇā period.
- murī* – A unit of land measurement in the hill region equal to one-fourth of a *ropanī* or one-hundredth of a *khetā* (the area of a *murī* varied according to the grade of land: *abala*, *doyama*, *sima*, and *cahāra*).
- nagarcī (nagārcī)* – A person who plays the *nagarā* drum, often the lead drummer in a *nagarā bānā* musical ensemble; a respectful address for a member of the Damāñ community.
- nāike* – A leader in such roles as the headman in a Newar village or the boss of a *rakam* work team.
- paisā* – In the early Śāha period, a monetary unit equal to one-fourth of an *ānā* or four *dāmas*, and with 1 *rūpaiyā* containing 64 *paisās*; in the Rāṇā period, this changed to 100 *paisās* in a *rūpaiyā*.
- pajanī* – The annual reassignment or reconfirmation of offices and contracts, often conducted by the king.
- pañca* – Five or more elders of a local judicial body assembled for settling minor disputes.
- pañcagavya* – A mixture of five products of a cow (milk, curd, ghee, urine, and dung) employed in Brahmanical rituals and sacrifices, and often used for purification (*paṭiyā*) to address bodily pollution within the context of the *Mulukī Ain*.

- pañcāyata* – An assembly of five or more elders forming a local judicial body.
- pāthī* – A unit of capacity equal to eight *mānās* or 4.546 litres; a copper container for grains with a volume of one *pāthī*.
- patiyā* – A penalty undergone in order to keep or regain one's caste status.
- patiyāpūrjī* – An official written statement certifying a proper act of expiation.
- phakira* – (Lit. 'beggar') An ascetic, specifically of the Muslim faith, but in the *Mulukī Ain* ascetics in general, including Śaiva *jogīs* and *sannyāsīs*.
- phāraka* – A written receipt or a deed of release from some obligation.
- pradhāna* – A low-ranking state functionary tasked with serving as headman for specific communities within the Kathmandu Valley and beyond, or else as a local official responsible for revenue collection in villages.
- pragannā* – A unit of land revenue administration in the Tarai, comprising several *maujās*.
- pramāṅgī* – Permission or an order, typically in written form, coming from the king or a high-ranking government official such as the prime minister, often utilized when overriding existing legal norms.
- prāyaścitta* – Penance undertaken by a polluted person for absolution.
- pūrjī* (*purji*) – A writ, a written notice; a formal letter written by a government institution or an official to another institution or person.
- rāṭīara* – A writer or clerk, ranking higher than a *bahidāra* but lower than a *mukhiyā*.
- rājaguru* – A preceptor or guru to a member of the royal family.
- rājapaṇḍita/rājapurohita*¹ – A royal priest and counsellor, usually a hereditary post occupied by a Brahmin.
- rājavaidya* – A royal physician.
- rakama* – Revenue or a revenue item; mandatory labour owed to the government by peasants cultivating specific classes of land, like *raikara*, *kipaṭa*, or Rāja Guṭhī land; compulsory labour obligations converted to specific services provided regularly and potentially over generations to government-run establishments.
- rakamadāra* – A holder of a *rakama*; a revenue functionary.

1 The meanings of *rājaguru* and *rājapaṇḍita* sometimes overlap, corresponding to overlaps in the functions of the two posts.

- ramatā* – An individual itinerant ascetic.
- rukkā* – An executive order or missive from the upper echelons of authority (the king and prime minister, or also the queen and crown prince).
- sadara daphadara* – The General Registry Office, responsible for assignments in lieu of pay.
- sadāvarta-gūṭhī* – A charitable foundation (*gūṭhī*) dedicated to providing food for the poor, mendicants, and pilgrims.
- sanada* – An order, decree, or certificate of appointment, usually from the prime minister or commander-in-chief, but occasionally from some other ruling authority.
- sanyāsīn (sanyāsī)* – A renouncer, often referring specifically to a member of the Daśanāmī order.
- sar(a)dāra* – A top-ranking official next in the hierarchy under a *kājī*.
- sarkāra* – A term used interchangeably to denote the government, head of government, or king, and encompassing both the ruler and the main governing body.
- savāla* – Ordinances, namely a set of directives, usually of an administrative nature, especially rules and regulations enacted based on an existing law or administrative regulations.
- sevadā* – A Jaina ascetic.
- sidhā* – A plateful of uncooked rice, lentils, vegetables, salt, turmeric powder, ghee, etc. presented to a Brahmin priest by his patron during a ritual or sacrifice; alms or regular food rations provided by the government or charitable endowments to support poor individuals, ascetics, students, or prisoners.
- sima* – Land rated third in terms of its quality (cp. *abbala*, *doyama*, and *cahāra*).
- śrī 3 mahārāja* – (Lit. ‘thrice venerable great king’) The imposing title initially bestowed upon the first Rāṇā prime minister, Jaṅga Bahādura, and inherited by all successive Rāṇā prime ministers.
- śrī 5 sarkāra* – (Lit. ‘fivefold venerable king’) The title commonly used to refer to the Śāha king, and often interchangeably to denote his government.
- subbā* – A governor or chief administrative officer of a province or district.
- subedāra* – The commander of a military company consisting of 100 soldiers, often assigned leadership responsibilities for a district. It was the second-highest commissioned officer, rank, below only a *subbā* and immediately senior to a *jamadāra*.

- syāhā* – An account book or ledger. The specifics of the account keeping process to which it refers remain unclear.
- talsiñ* – A landlord to whom is due a portion of the harvest (*bālī*), either in kind or cash, from tenants (*mohī*) working on his land.
- ṭhānā* – A police or military office with semi-judicial functions responsible for maintaining public order. Under the *Mulukī Ain*, *ṭhānās*, *adālatas*, and *amālas* were the main bodies that administered justice.
- tharī* – The head of a clan (*thara*); an elder, often serving as a nonofficial tax collection functionary, particularly in the hill districts.
- tolā* – A unit of weight used, among other purposes, as the standard measure for gold and silver, consisting of 100 or 96 *ratis*, 10 or 12 *māsās*, and constituting one eightieth of a *sera*; the actual weight varied based on location and period.
- udāsī* – (Lit. ‘one who is detached or indifferent’) An ascetic practising withing the Sikh tradition.
- ujura* – A formal complaint, either verbal or written.
- umarāva* – A commander of a military post.
- vaidya* – A physician; the name of a caste.
- vairāgī* – A Vaiṣṇava ascetic (or religious devotee), specifically referring to a member of the Rāmānandī order.
- vakila* – An envoy (with the rank of a *kājī* or *sardāra*).
- varṇa* – One of the four principal caste-classes (Brahmin, Kṣatriya, Vaiśya, and Śūdra) under the Brahmanical division of Hindu society.

