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## Thangmi Wedding Ritual Texts

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### Introduction: *bore pāloke*

This chapter presents excerpts from the *bore*, the wedding ritual cycle of the Thangmi community. The Thangmi are an *ādivāsī janajātī* (indigenous nationality) group of approximately 40 000 spread across central eastern Nepal (primarily Dolakhā and Sindhupālcok districts) and northeastern India (concentrated in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal and the state of Sikkim)<sup>1</sup>. The Thangmi maintain a synthetic ritual system that draws upon elements of Hindu and Buddhist practice, but relies exclusively upon Thangmi *guru*, or shamans, as the chief officiants. *Guru* conduct ritual affairs largely in the Thangmi language.

There are eleven discrete phases of the Thangmi wedding, which together comprise the *bore pāloke*, or “wedding recitations”.<sup>2</sup> A Thangmi wedding is an involved and drawn-out process that begins with asking for the bride’s hand, which in turn can only be undertaken after consultations with the groom’s extended family. The bride can only be brought to the groom’s house after several of the rites are completed, all of which involve specific offerings made from the groom’s family to the bride’s family. This process usually takes a minimum of one to two years. Between the first rite, called the *lāngmi khutāme*, and the last rite, known as *senevā*, a series of activities occur, all of which are essential to the successful completion of the wedding ritual as a whole. Following the *lāngmi khutāme*, the

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1 With any undertaking of this size and complexity, there are many individuals who have contributed time and insight over many years. First and foremost, we thank Lalit Bahadur Thami (also known as Maila Guru), for allowing his oral text to shape this contribution. Maila Guru’s patience and generosity have been invaluable from the moment of documentation in 2005 through to the final analysis, and we remain indebted to him for his patience and good humour. Second, we thank Ram Jivan and Sangita Thami for permitting us to attend and record their wedding ritual; we are grateful for their trust. Finally, we wish to thank our hosts in Damarang, Mangal and Dalli Thami, for welcoming us into their homes and community, and our many friends and research partners in Dolakha and Sindhupalcok who have guided and advised us for two decades now, and continue to share the beauty of Thangmi culture with us. We are grateful to the Fulbright Commission, the Social Science Research Council, the US National Science Foundation, and Cornell University for funding Shneiderman’s doctoral research during which this project first took shape; the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) and Leiden University for funding Turin’s doctoral research; the Firebird Foundation, Williamson Fund, and St Catharine’s College Cambridge, for supporting the analysis and community consultation phases of this project; and support from Yale University and the University of British Columbia during the final phase of manuscript preparation. Editor Martin Gaenszle offered many important and substantive suggestions which improved the final text, and Aidan Pine provided crucial technical and layout support. Any errors, omissions and misrepresentations are the responsibility of co–authors Shneiderman and Turin.

2 *Pāloke* is a general term used to refer to ritual recitations in Thangmi. It is comparable to the Kiranti *muddum* as a form of ritual speech. For further details see Shneiderman (2015: Chapter 3).

key ritual components are: *deva sāng* (propitiation of the deities), *sagun thoṭko* (consecration of the ritual alcohol offering, discussed in section 1 of this chapter), *deupāloke* (recitation of the origin myth), *cyurkunko bhākā* (the song of the deity *cyurkun*), *sākhi* (narrative review of ritual progress), *sārmāko bhākā* (placation of the deities), *āyu* (examination of and offering to the soul of the groom), *cārdām* (agreement and consent to the match, discussed in section 2 of this chapter), *senevā* (concluding ritual sequence, discussed in section 3 of this chapter), and *kholādāplā* (return of the deities to the divine world, discussed in section 4 of this chapter).

The main actors during the wedding celebrations are the *lāngmi* (matchmakers), *khāmi* (ritual officiant), *guru* (shaman) and *syunduni* (ritual manager). The role of the *lāngmi* is to serve as envoys of the groom's family, making several visits to the girl's house to persuade her parents of the value of the match. Only once they are satisfied can the marriage be arranged and the rituals proceed. *Khāmi* is a term reserved to refer exclusively to the *guru* who is commissioned by the groom's family to serve as chief officiant at a wedding ritual – although the same individual may also be a *guru* who conducts funerary and curative rites, other titles are used to refer to him in those contexts. The *khāmi*, as chief officiant, is usually joined by several other *guru* who play supporting roles. The night before the final day of the wedding, the *guru* propitiates the household lineage deity and then calls upon various territorial deities who must all be satisfied. The *guru* then asks the deities to ensure that the groom is successful in his future work and life, and the *khāmi* explains the purpose and meaning of the various rites to the community who are gathered as guests and witnesses, including key members of both the groom's and bride's families. The role of the *syunduni* is to prepare all of the necessary ritual materials and to ensure that that the guests and participants are shown an appropriate degree of hospitality.

We cannot present all sections of the ritual sequence here due to limitations of space, but are working to publish the full set of texts in the future. Here we focus on four principal sections: 1. *sagun thoṭko*, 2. *cārdām*, 3. *senevā*, and 4. *kholādāplā*. These ritual components contain crucial narrative sequences that help inform and shape our understandings of the entire Thangmi wedding ritual complex, and hint at why certain acts must be performed as they are. They also highlight several lyrical turns of phrase that demonstrate the metaphorical flexibility of the Thangmi language. These sections are thus a rich basis for analysis in both cultural and linguistic terms: by studying them closely, we can begin to see how Thangmi wedding rituals work as a technique of cultural reproduction, as well as how the Thangmi language itself embeds key cultural orientations, understandings and values.

Rather than offering putative generalizations about the content of 'Thangmi wedding rituals', which are of course conducted in greatly divergent ways depending on the officiant and locale, here we present excerpts from one actual ritual event as recorded in Suspā-Kshamawati VDC, Dolakhā, Nepal.<sup>3</sup> We offer a transcription (in Thangmi) and

3 Following Gaenzle's discussion (2010), this is an *in situ* performance, but our interpretation of it also benefited from an *in vitro* performance by the same *guru*, as well as multiple elicited descriptions from a range of Thangmi community members, who narrated the ritual in its ideally imagined form.

translation (in Nepali and English) of the oral recitations of the *khāmi* and *guru* at the final wedding rituals of Ram Jivan and Sangita Thami, which took place on 29–30 January, 2005. Serving as *khāmi*, the chief officiant was Lalit Bahadur (locally known as Maila Guru), with additional participation from the *guru* Bal Krishna, Dhal Bahadur and Chitra Bahadur.

In consultation with Thangmi cultural activists and indigenous intellectuals, we have chosen to render both the original Thangmi and the Nepali translation in Devanāgarī, the abugida or alphasyllabary used by Nepali, Hindi and many other South Asian languages. While at first glance this may appear somewhat unusual, our decision has a number of interrelated motives. First, although Thangmi is a Tibeto-Burman language and thus genetically unrelated to Nepali, its phonological inventory can be very well represented by the character palate of the Devanāgarī script (Turin 2012: chapter 3). In other words, it is surprisingly easy to write Thangmi in the Nepali script.

Second, during the period that we have worked in partnership with the community over the past two decades to document and support the revitalization of the Thangmi language and the cultural traditions that it encodes, community members have expressed a growing desire to see their language represented in a writing system that they can read. As the script used by the national language, Nepali, and the writing system in which almost all literate activity in the region is conducted, Devanāgarī was the preferred community choice for a Thangmi orthography. Other options included Tibetan (impractical for many reasons) or the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), which although accessible to outside linguists and scholars was perceived to be yet another form of alienation from their own language for the already highly marginalized Thangmi community.<sup>4</sup> For these reasons, we believe that using the Devanāgarī script is an act of inclusion that will widen access to the material contained in this contribution, presenting it in a form that Thangmi scholars – who increasingly read all that is written about their culture – will see themselves in and be well positioned to engage with and critique.

The *bore pāloke* are primarily carried out in vernacular, everyday Thangmi. Certain Nepali loan words and phrases are widely used, and we have not attempted to ‘correct’ such usages nor are they marked in the Thangmi text. Other terms and phrasings derive from an elevated ritual register of Thangmi, which includes specialised lexical terms for many specific ritual items which have alternative names in the daily vernacular.

The materials presented here have been prepared for publication through a collaborative process of research and consultation that has involved many members of the Thangmi community. The recordings were transcribed by Bir Bahadur Thami who then worked with Hikmat Khadka and Sara Shneiderman to produce the initial Nepali and English translations. Mark Turin then worked to harmonize all three languages and ensure accuracy. We sought additional input from Maila Guru himself at several points in the translation process, as well as corroboration from other *guru* and community members in both

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4 The Thangmi were classified as one of 14 ‘highly marginalized *janajati*’ (HMJ) in a 2004 rubric promoted by the Nepal Federation of Indigenous Nationalities (NEFIN). See Shneiderman (2013) for details.

Nepal and India. In late 2009, Shneiderman and Thami presented drafts of the translation to diverse members of the community in consultation workshops in Kathmandu and Darjeeling. Approximately 150 attendees between both events offered written and oral comments on the textual presentation, in response to which we have made several substantive and stylistic changes. However, we have remained faithful to representing the text as it was recited by Maila Guru at the original event in January 2005, with repetitions and Nepali loans included even when there may have been appropriate Thangmi words that could have been substituted in some instances. What follows should therefore be understood as excerpts of the *bore pāloke* in practice as recited by a specific *guru* at a specific place and time. It is not intended to promote a standardized or “scripturalized” (Gaenszle 2011) ideal form of the *bore pāloke*, and should be read in conjunction with other recent publications that present Thangmi ritual texts (NTUS 2069 vs [2012–13]), as well as recent publications by community members that describe their sociocultural context (Thami and Thami 2069 vs [2012–13]; Gurung and Thami 2014). By presenting the recitations in the original Thangmi, with Nepali and English translations immediately following, we have aimed to provide a resource which may be of interest and use to members of the Thangmi community themselves, as well as to scholars.

The latter audience may also be interested in a discussion of comparative aspects in relation to existing research about wedding rituals in the Kiranti communities of eastern Nepal. For instance, Nick Allen’s 1987 article about Thulung weddings describes nine ritual elements, several of which appear to be cognate with elements of the Thangmi ritual as described here. Allen sets out to understand which ones have become “Hinduised” (Allen 1987), as a means of making sense of the ritual cycle’s “apparent incoherence” (1987: 25). At first glance, the Thangmi wedding ritual cycle might be seen as similarly elaborate and difficult to parse in a linear, episodic fashion. However, Allen ultimately concludes that “the Hindu-tribal dichotomy provides a model that is exceedingly crude” (1987: 33), and therefore inadequate for understanding the complexity of actual Thulung practices. Rather, the Thulung wedding ritual cycle moves in multiple directions at once, both Hinduising and indigenising ritual elements and ritual participants at the same time.

While the scholarly debate over “Hinduisation” has developed significantly in the decades since Allen wrote (see for instance Fisher 2001), such that we as non-Indigenous scholars no longer feel compelled to identify which elements are “Hindu” and which are “tribal” in such a diagnostic manner, Thangmi community members themselves remain concerned with such questions.<sup>5</sup> For this reason, placing the Thangmi ritual as recounted here in conversation with Allen’s piece, as well as Gaenszle’s (2010) description of ceremonial wedding dialogues among the Mewahang Rai, will help generate deeper understanding of both shared non-Hindu ritual substrates, and different trajectories of adaptation to the encounter with the Hindu state. Areas of overlap between the three wedding traditions (Thangmi as described here; Thulung as described by Allen; and Mewahang as described by Gaenszle), include the dialogic exchange between the “wife-takers” and the

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5 See Shneiderman (2014) for further considerations of how these different perspectives shape understandings of ethnicity in a broader sense.

“wife-givers”, in which the former party displays exaggerated modesty and the latter feigns ignorance; and the distribution of meat among several recognized social groups that taken together are deemed to comprise the “whole” of the community.

### The ritual context

The full Thangmi wedding ritual cycle and its cultural import is described in detail elsewhere (Shneiderman 2015: Chapter 7; Gurung and Thami 2014). Here we offer just a few notes to set the recitations excerpted below in context.

Marriage rituals are at once central to the reproduction of Thangmi ethnic identity, and a highly flexible form which has shifted significantly over time. Historically many Thangmi couples did not wed until they had children, or even until their own children were grown and prepared for marriage themselves. In recent decades this practice, often called *budho bihā*, or “old-aged wedding” in Nepali, has become unpopular, and most Thangmi now wed in their late teens or early twenties.

Although always officiated by Thangmi *guru* and *khāmi*, weddings are one of the sites where the influence of dominant hill Nepali Hindu culture on Thangmi cultural practice is most evident. In the 1940s, during the last years of Rana rule in Nepal, many Thangmi families consciously attempted to remove some of the elements of their wedding ritual deemed “impure” in caste Hindu terms: most notably, the offering of a bovine leg by the bride’s family to the groom’s to indicate their acceptance of the marriage offer. Today there is a strong awareness of how marriage rituals have been altered over time, and a desire among many Thangmi community members to return to what they imagine as “authentic practices.” However, given the lack of a written tradition or other forms of textual documentation until relatively recently, it is difficult to know precisely what such a return might mean. Since the resultant cultural politics and their present day impact are described elsewhere (Shneiderman 2015: 212-214), here we simply note that the lines below referring to a goat’s carcass would most likely have instead referred to various cuts of beef prior to the 1940s. Other elements of the recitation may also have shifted significantly over time, but once again it is difficult to pinpoint such transformations in the absence of any prior detailed documentation of Thangmi ritual practice. As Allen astutely states, “The anthropologist who attempts to set his field material from a non-literate society within a diachronic framework risks being excessively speculative” (Allen 1987: 32).

Despite these changes, we can see how the recitations offered below present a template for Thangmi cultural reproduction over time by instantiating a clear sense of belonging and ethnic boundedness. References to the seven clans and their required presence demonstrate how wedding rituals serve to bring disparate branches of the Thangmi community together to reaffirm their solidarity through the union of each couple. For their part, the individual bride and groom are also “inducted” as fully adult members of the Thangmi community through the process of becoming temporally and spatially specific subjects of these recitations which themselves are repeated in more or less the same format – albeit with individualized stylistic shifts unique to each officiant – each and every time a young couple wed.



After the *lāngmi khutāme*, or confirmation of the bride's acceptance, which takes place at her house, all other ritual sections usually take place at the groom's house. After the bride's family accepts, gifts are exchanged through a ritual sequence known as *sāuti* (*ko-seli* in Nepali). Once these exchanges are completed, the wedding itself may take place at any time. The timeframe for this is highly flexible, however. Historically, as noted above, once these preliminaries were completed, in many cases the actual wedding was not held until the couple's children themselves were old enough to wed. In recent years, this has become less common, and weddings are often held within one to two years after the *lāngmi khutāme* and *sāuti* take place. Wedding dates are usually set after consulting the Nepali astrological calendar, which designates only a limited range of dates as auspicious for weddings. These must be calibrated with the agrarian cycle to choose a time when all of the key actors are available, and may also be shaped by other factors such as recent deaths in either family (which would delay the ritual for a period of one year due to a pollution taboo). Occasionally the process is speeded up further, for instance in cases where the groom is due to migrate abroad for work. There is no standard timeline, and each couple's experience varies due to individual, familial and community factors. For instance, during especially tense phases of the Maoist insurgency (1996–2006) some weddings were delayed due to emergency-era restrictions that prohibited large outdoor gatherings from taking place; however, the preliminaries could be completed as these take place behind closed doors in the couple's homes.

The first set of recitations involves propitiating lineage and territorial deities in the *deva sāng* recitations. These are long lists of deities and place names, many of them specific to the locality in which the wedding is being conducted. The *deva sāng* recitations are comparable to those that initiate any other Thangmi life cycle ritual (such as funerary rites) or household deity propitiation, and for that reason, we have selected to not include them here.

### 1. *Sagun thoṭko* (Consecration of the ritual alcohol offering)

Instead we come directly to the *sagun thoṭko* recitations. By this time in the ritual sequence, it is late at night, and all of the deities have been propitiated and are present in the indoor domestic space of the groom's house. Each holding a *bāldāne* leaf while incense is lit on a flat wicker nanglo tray that holds several flour effigies of the deities (*pucyuk*), the *guru* chant to consecrate the bowls of grain beer that have been presented to them by the groom's family. The deities are requested to activate and "move" the powers immanent in the natural and social world around them. *Sagun* (a multifaceted term of Nepali origin that is often used in wedding sequences, including among the Newar and the Mewahang Rai) is a ritual offering of grain beer (called *rem* in Thangmi ritual language, *tong* in vernacular Thangmi, *jāḍ* in Nepali), and *thoṭko* refers to its consecration. The line numbers in the examples in this article reference the line numbers of the entire original text in order to facilitate easy cross referencing with the complete forthcoming publication. The missing line numbers will indicate to readers the length of the sections that we have not included in this article due to limitations of space.

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 34 जलसुचीये मासाङ्नादु साडो, थलसुचीये मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 35 गृहमाताये, सामोशुक्र, सामोधुरी मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 36 लिकीवाला खसुवालाये मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 37 लोङ्घाणोउये मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 38 सस्राकोटी बन्धनये मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 39 साङ्नासेको थादीङ ज्याटामासीये मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 40 दुरासेको थादीङ सालधुपीये मासाङ्नादु साडो, गकुलधुपीये मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 41 अन्तरदातेको थादीङ नाना पातीये भरुङ्पातीये मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 42 तमिल खण्डाको सौरिसुक्पाये मासाङ्नादु साडो सै परमेश्वरी नान्बे ।  
 43 का देउसाबा मासाङ्नादु साडो ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 34 जलसुचीले नचलाएको चलाऊ, थलसुचीले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 35 गृहमाताले, सामुशुक्र, सामुधुरीले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 36 गहुँका खरले नचलाएको चलाऊ, खसुले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 37 ठूलो ढोकाको देवताले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 38 सारा बन्धनले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 39 लेकको भएदेखि जटामासीले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 40 बैसीको भएदेखि सालधुपीले नचलाएको चलाऊ, गोकुलधुपीले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 41 बीच ठाउँको भएदेखि नानापातीले, भैरुम्पातील नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 42 तिमिल खण्डको सौरिसुक्पाले नचलाएको चलाऊ है परमेश्वरी अब त ।  
 43 यो देवताको सभा नचलाएको चलाऊ ।

*English*

- 34 Move the unmoved with the sacred water, move the unmoved with the sacred earth.  
 35 Move the unmoved with the household's mother deity, the planet Venus, or the rooftop beam.  
 36 Move the unmoved with stalks of dry wheat or by the leaf of the brown oak.  
 37 Move the unmoved with the big door.  
 38 Move the unmoved with the bamboo strips that bind together the beams of the house.  
 39 If you are in the high pastures, move the unmoved with the *jaṭāmāsi* bush.  
 40 If you are in the low pastures, move the unmoved with the incense of the *sāl* tree or by the incense of the *gokul* plant.  
 41 If you are in the middle pastures, move the unmoved with various other plants and by the *bhairum* leaf.  
 42 Move the unmoved with the incense of *saurisukpā* from the *Timāl* region, oh *parmesvari*.  
 43 Now move the unmoved with the divine congregation.



While the purpose of this chapter is to focus the reader's attention on the narrative flow, and not to offer an interlinear analysis, we should highlight at the outset that the Thangmi ritual register is replete with loans from Nepali, Newar and even Sanskrit elements and morphemes. The *jal-thal* binary of the opening line (No. 34), with evident Sanskrit roots, can be understood in a number of ways, indicating water and land respectively, or meaning marshy land if read as a combined element. It is quite common for loan words to have a different, even more metaphorical meaning from that of their original linguistic context. The recitation continues with an additional invocation of unmoveability:

### Thangmi थाङ्मी

- 44 धनसाबा मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 45 ईतरबत्तीये मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 46 लोड्बत्ती मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 47 नान्बे का सुनाबर्मी, गोलाबर्मी मासाङ्नादु साडो परमेश्वरी ।  
 48 का बे मेके बान्दालेक चिमे बान्दालेक का नान्बे मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 49 आल्ताआबार, पात्लाआबार मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 50 झ्यामासी मासाङ्नादु साडो सै परमेश्वरी ।  
 51 दुदुकर्बा, सिङ्गेकर्बा मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 52 मासाङ्नादु साडो नान्बे ।  
 53 का नान्बे का जलेश्वर, काँसेश्वर, बिसुनी, बिसुकर्मा देवा सै परमेश्वरी ।

### Nepali नेपाली

- 44 धनसभा नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 45 ईतरबत्तीले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 46 लोड्बत्तीले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 47 अब त यो सुनाबर्मी, गोलाबर्मी नचलाएको चलाऊ परमेश्वरी ।  
 48 यो त सानो र ठूलो टोटलाले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 49 भुइँमा जम्मा गरेको र पातमा राखेको देवताले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 50 ठूलो मासीले नचलाएको चलाऊ है परमेश्वरी ।  
 51 दुदुकर्बा, सिङ्गेकर्बाले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 52 नचलाएको चलाऊ अब त ।  
 53 यो अब त यो जलेश्वर, काँसेश्वर, बिसुनी, विश्वकर्मा देवता है परमेश्वरी ।

### English

- 44 Move the unmoved with the ritual offerings.  
 45 Move the unmoved with *itar* lamps.  
 46 Move the unmoved with the large lamps.  
 47 Now *parmesvari*, move the unmoved with the *sunābarmi* or the *golābarmi*.  
 48 Move the unmoved with the small and large *ṭoṭalā* flower.  
 49 Move the unmoved with the deities gathered on the floor and on the leaves.

- 50 Move the unmoved with the *mārsi* variety of unhusked rice, oh *parmesvari*.  
 51 Move the unmoved with the *nibāro* leaf and the *paiyū* leaf.  
 52 Now move the unmoved.  
 53 Now [we call upon the] deities *jalesvar*, *kāsesvar*, *bisuni* and *bisvakarmā*, oh *parmesvari*.

At this point, the *guru* begins to invoke specific territorial deities:

### *Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 54 सिमाङ्गाटयिङ कुमाङ्गाट वाङ्नीदु देवा: हाईदीङ्मा, हुईदीङ्मा, साङ्गुङ्मा, न्युटाटीको देवा, सुनै गुङ्गुङ्माको देवा ।  
 55 देउराक्सा, देउटाकेको देवा, सुनैढ्याङ्गोको देवा, चिमेलार्बाको देवा सै मासाङ्नादु साडो ।  
 56 कमारु देशेयिङ कमाक्षनु देवा सै देवा ।  
 57 आहा गोरुमाको ठिमे, ओहो गोरुमाको ठिमे, वाङ्नादु देवा नाड, का मेकेलार्बाको देवा, चिमेलार्बाको देवा, ह परमेश्वरी ।  
 58 का माई देवा, का खोकको देवा, डाहाउलुमको वाको ठेनेको देवा, च्युर्कुनमाचा देवा, गोर्खामाचा देवा, याङ्गाटेको देवा, गोठाको देवा, परमेश्वरा का साडा सो ।

### *Nepali* नेपाली

- 54 समिङ्गाटबाट कुमाङ्गाट आएको देवता: हाईदीङ्मा, हुईदीङ्मा, साङ्गुङ्मा, न्युटाटीको देवता हो, सुनै गुङ्गुङ्माको देवता ।  
 55 मालाको देवता, ढ्याङ्गोको देवता, ठूलो टोटलाका देवताहरूलाई नचलाएको चलाऊ ।  
 56 कमारु देशबाट कमाक्षनु देवता है देवता ।  
 57 आहा गोरुमाको ठिमे, ओहो गोरुमाको ठिमे, आएको देवता, तिमी यो ठूलो टोटलाको देवता, सानो टोटलाको देवता, है परमेश्वरी ।  
 58 यो माई देवता, यो खोकको देवता, बाटो छेक्ने अग्लो ढुङ्गाको देवता, च्युर्कुनमाचा देवता, गोर्खामाचा देवता, याङ्गाटेको देवता, गोठको देवता, परमेश्वरी यो सबै ठाउँको देवताहरू चल ।

### *English*

- 54 Now [we call upon] the deities who came from *Simāngghāṭ* and *Kumāngghāṭ*: *hāidingmā*, *huidingmā*, *sanggunmā*, the deity *nyuṭāṭī*, and the deity *sunai gungung*.  
 55 Make active the deities of the *rāksā* rosary, the deity of the one-sided drum, the deity of the two-sided drum, and the deity of the large *ṭoṭalā* tree.  
 56 Now we call upon the deity *kamākshanu*, from the place called *Kamāru*.  
 57 Aha, you deities who have come from *Ṭhime of gorjumā*, *oho*, you deities who have come from *Ṭhime of gorjumā*, this deity of the large *ṭoṭalā*, deity of the small *ṭoṭalā*, oh *parmesvari*.  
 58 The *māi* deities of the deep places, the deity of the tall road-blocking stone, the deity *cyurkunmācā*, the deity *gorkhāmācā*, the deity of the senior-most household, the deity of the animal shelter, oh *parmesvari*, all you deities must move.

In this section, we have seen how the congregation of deities is called upon to activate, animate and enliven the environment around them, coming to inhabit various domestic spaces such as “the rooftop beam” and the “big door.” The “road-blocking stone” refers to the *bampā*, or hearthstone that is the single unique feature of Thangmi domestic design (see Shneiderman 2015: Chapter 4). Some deities bear names that will be familiar to those accustomed to the Hindu pantheon, such as *bisvakarmā* and *parmesvari*. Others are territorial deities, such as *hāidingmā*, *huidingmā*, *sanggungmā*, *gorjumā*, *cyurkunmācā*, *gorkhāmācā*. In most Thangmi rituals, such deities reside together in a synthetic space, where the notion of “Hindu”, “Buddhist” or “Thangmi” deities as separate categories holds little relevance or appeal to community members. Rather, these are all of the deities with whom Thangmi *guru* have established lines of communication, and all of them must be present to comprise the quorum necessary to conduct a wedding.

Key locations are also mentioned, notably *Simāngghāt*, another name for Simraungadh. This is a town along the contemporary Indian-Nepali Tarai border, to which Thangmi origin myths trace one line of descent. It is generally understood by community members that the territorial deities currently residing in Thangmi areas of Nepal’s hills were brought by the original Thangmi settlers Yāpati Chuku and Sunāri Āji (also known as Ya’apa and Sunari Ama) from Simraungadh.

This story is recounted in detail in the next section of the wedding ritual, the *deupāloke*. The myth of Yāpati Chuku and Sunāri Āji can be read elsewhere (Shneiderman 2015: Chapters 3 and 6; Shneiderman and Turin 2006: pp. 145–162; Turin 2012: pp. 108–115;), so we have not included these recitations here.

The next three phases of the ritual sequence are *cyurkunko bhākā*, *sākhi* and *sārmāko bhākā*. *Cyurkun* is a deity that resides in outdoor animal shelters, or *goṭh*, and the propitiation of this deity extends the consecrated space from the human world inside the house to the domain of livestock beyond those four walls. Maila Guru’s recitation at Ram Jivan and Sangita’s wedding includes this propitiation of *cyurkun*, but the particular deity invoked at this stage in the ritual process can vary depending upon the clan lineage of the groom, in whose house the ritual takes place; in another household the *guru* might call upon *sun-dravati* or *gate* at this point in the recitation instead. During the *sākhi*, a brief narrative is offered to recount how the ritual has proceeded until this point, and the deities are asked to ensure a clear passage from this point in the ritual sequence until its conclusion. The narrative description of the ritual is repeated in both the *cārdām* and *senevā*, as presented below. *Sārmāko bhākā* provides an interlude to placate the congregated deities; the focus shifts from the bride and groom to the deities themselves while the *guru* go into trance to commune directly with the presences gathered in the house. *Āyu* is a loan word from Nepali meaning “spirit” or “soul”. In this phase of the ritual, the groom’s *āyu* is examined and offered various gifts to increase the groom’s vitality and life essence. This ritual component has some parallels with Tibetan *wang* (*dbang*) rituals (Gerke 2012).

## 2. *Cārdām* (Agreement and consent to the match)

This brings us to heart of the ritual: the *cārdām*.<sup>6</sup> Here the *guru* recount the ritual sequences through which they have arrived at this moment. Through a montage of reported speech, narrative description and offerings to the deities, the *guru* bring all ritual participants into the fold. Even those who have not been present at earlier ritual phases are now included as full participants by virtue of having listened to the *cārdām*. Through the process of articulating in detail how a wedding should be conducted, these recitations work to reproduce culturally specific knowledge that strengthens prospects for the ritual reproduction of Thangmi ethnic identity in the future. The recitation also portrays several details of day-to-day Thangmi life in a manner that is at once celebratory and self-deprecating. These contain a strong dose of humour, which works to keep participants engaged during long drawn out ritual sequences, while also objectifying in discursive terms several Thangmi identity markers, such as the *bampā*, the Himalayan nettle bag, and so forth.

We should note here that the *cārdām* reproduced below takes place during the final phase of the wedding ceremony. However, a shorter version of the same narrative is recited at the bride's house before she departs for the final portion of the ritual at the groom's home – her own home to be. In this manner, the final *cārdām* recitation at the groom's house itself refers to the earlier *cārdām* that has already taken place at the bride's house.

### *Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 486 साकालेई सेवा, मायामाइती वई सेवा, गुरुपाली वई सेवा, गोतेनाङ्गेरे सेवा ।  
 487 पाङ्ते सेवा, ठु थोपनादु वई सेवा ।  
 488 निको जरीको मुचाये बुलीबुली लाङ्गी वई दैकाउनो, बुलीबुली खामी वई दैकाउनो ।  
 489 दैकाउदु कारणडाङ् बे का टिलीलीङ् तोङ् वई दैकाउनो ।  
 490 सुम्पा माणी वई दैकाउनो ।  
 491 रोथोक मेन्चा वई दैकाउनो ।  
 492 नान् मेस्मुचाको नेम्ते हेन्को मायान् यासीताले खाम लोयेङ्नो ।

### *Nepali* नेपाली

- 486 सबै जनालाई नमस्कार, मात्रे माइतीलाई पनि नमस्कार, गुरुहरूलाई पनि नमस्कार, नाङ्लोलाई पनि नमस्कार ।  
 487 पाती, मासु पुरनेहरूलाई पनि नमस्कार ।  
 488 हाम्रो बेहुलाले जान्ने नजान्ने लमी पनि जम्मा गर्यो, जान्ने नजान्ने खामी पनि जम्मा गर्यो ।  
 489 जम्मा गरेपछि घैंटोमा जाँड पनि जम्मा गर्यो ।  
 490 तीन वटा रोटी पनि जम्मा गर्यो ।  
 491 एउटा अल्लोको झोला पनि जम्मा गर्यो ।  
 492 अब बेहुलीको घरमा जानुपर्यो भनेर कुरा गरे ।

6 In the Thulung context, Allen notes the use of four 'pice' coins, termed '*cār dām*', and cites R.L. Turner's definition of the Nepali 'car dam' as 'earnest money, any money or gift offered before purchase' (Turner 1997[1931]: 172). Gaenszle (2000:56) also notes that the term is used in the context of landownership, as a new settler in the Mewahang area must give a symbolic '*cardam theki*' to the village chief, a usage corroborated by McDougal (1979: 30).

*English*

- 486 *Sevā* to everyone; *sevā* also to the bride's respected natal family; *sevā* also to the *guru*, *sevā* also to the bamboo winnowing tray.
- 487 *Sevā* as well to the flowers offered in the ritual and to all those who have received enough meat.
- 488 Our groom has brought the knowledgeable and ignorant matchmakers together, he has also brought the knowledgeable and ignorant *khāmi* together.
- 489 [The *khāmi* says:] After bringing together [the *lāngmi* and *khāmi*], he [the groom] also filled the clay pot with grain beer.
- 490 He also gathered together three pieces of bread.
- 491 He also collected one Himalayan nettle cloth bag.
- 492 Then they said that they had to go to the bride's house.

*Thangmi* थाङ्गी

- 493 जरीये बे का लाङ्गी निस्काकाई टिकी वई लाग्गाईतोले ।
- 494 “नान् निस्मुचाको नेम्ते हेन्को मायान्” डातोले डायड्दु बेर्याङ् बे दीका बाने बे रोथोक् मेन्चा ख्याक्सीयान् ।
- 495 दिका बाने बे टिलीलीड तोड् ख्याक्सीईन् ।
- 496 दिका माणी चुम्सिताले याहान् ।
- 497 निस्मुचाको नेम्ते यायेडान् ।
- 498 दैलोते याताले ख्याड्ख्याड् ईसेयेडान् ।
- 499 “लौ का सु मि केलान कस्तो मि केलान् ?” ईसीताले ।
- 500 पापासीलापाटे, मामासीलापाटे “लौ निको बे का मेस्मुचाकाई हारा लोङ्को कुनिङ् लोङ्को ?” ईसीदु कारणाड् बे लोङ् खाणोउ वई टाङ्चा हेनेङ्को ।
- 501 थेम्बा वई उखातोले नाहुनो ।
- 502 का दाईने कोन्टे वई छ्योल्चा हेनुनो ।
- 503 खाणोउ टाङ्तोले बे मजेरीको छेउते होक्योडान् ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 493 बेहुलाको बाबुले दुई जना लमीलाई टीका पनि लगाए ।
- 494 “अब बेहुलीको बाबुआमाको घरमा जानुपर्यो” भनेर एक जना साथीले अल्लोको झोला भिर्यो ।
- 495 एक जना साथीले त घैंटोमा जाँड पनि बोक्यो ।
- 496 एउटा रोटी पनि समाएर गए ।
- 497 बेहुलीको बाबुआमाको घरमा गए ।
- 498 दैलोमा गएर ख्याड्ख्याड् गरे ।
- 499 “लौ, यो को मान्छे आयो, कस्तो मान्छे आयो ?” भनेर ।
- 500 बेहुलीको बुबाआमा “लौ हाम्रो त यो बेहुलीलाई के गरौं, कसो गरौं ?” भनेर ढोका पनी उघादैँ लगे ।
- 501 सँघारलाई पनि नमस्कार गरे ।

- 502 पहिला दाहिने खुट्टा हाल्दै भित्र पसे ।  
503 ढोका उघारेर मझेरीको छेउमा बसे ।

### English

- 493 The groom's father also offered *ṭikā* to two of the matchmakers.  
494 Saying, "Now we must go to the bride's parents' house," one friend slung the Himalayan nettle bag over his shoulder.  
495 Another friend carried a clay pot of grain beer.  
496 They also carried one piece of bread.  
497 They went to the bride's parents' house.  
498 At the door, they made a lot of noise.  
499 "Oh! Who has come, what kind of people have come?" they [the bride's parents] wondered.  
500 "What shall we do with our bride, and how shall we do it?" said the bride's mother and father, as they slowly opened the door.  
501 They offered greetings to the threshold.  
502 Stepping in with their right foot first, they entered.  
503 Having opened the door, they sat down in the middle of the room.

### Thangmi थाङ्मी

- 504 का छेउते होक्ताले बे "लौ, नान् हारा लोङ्को, कुनिङ् लोङ्को?" यासीयोड्ताले । सुमाका होक्योडान् ।  
505 "हारा जेतते केल्लान् कुनिङ् जेतते केल्लान्?" यासीयोडान् ।  
506 "लौ, आमा आपापाली नि बे स्याको बेपारते, टुणीको बेपारते केलीन् गाईगाई बे गोठाको जेखा कोरोली चाहायान्" यासीन् ।  
507 "निको कोरोली बे माहोक" इसीदु कारणाङ् बे, लौ नि बे कन्या अर्थडाङ् केलीन्" यासीन् ।  
508 बुलीबुली खामी निस्का बे कुचु खेन यासीन् ।  
509 पापासीलापाटेये आईकुचा जप्जप्याईनो ।  
510 मामासीलापाटेये काराती जप्जप्याईनो ।  
511 मामासीलापाटेये थापु जप्जप्याईनो ।

### Nepali नेपाली

- 504 छेउमा बसेर "लौ, अब के गरौं, कसो गरौं?" भने । चुपचाप बसे ।  
505 "के कामले आयौ, कस्तो काममा आयौ?" भने ।  
506 "लौ, आमाबुबाहरू, हामी त गाईको व्यापारमा, बाखाको व्यापारमा आयौं, मलाई त गोठको ठूलो कोरली चाहियो" भने ।  
507 "हाम्रो कोरली त छैन" भनेपछि, "लौ हामी त कन्याको अर्थमा आयौं" भने ।  
508 दुई जना त जान्ने नजान्ने लमीले कुकुरको जस्तो अनुहार बनाए ।  
509 बेहुलीको बाबुले खुकुरी जप्जप्यायो ।  
510 बेहुलीको आमाले कचिया जप्जप्यायो ।  
511 बेहुलीको आमाले चुलो जप्जप्यायो ।



*English*

- 504 Having sat down, [the bride's parents] asked them, "Lau, now what shall we do, how shall we do it?" They [the match-makers] sat in silence.
- 505 "What have you come for, what brings you here?" they [the bride's parents] asked.
- 506 "Oh, mother and father, we've come to trade cows and goats," they said, "I need a healthy young female calf from your animal shelter."
- 507 "But we have no young female calf," they [the bride's parents] said, "Oh, our purpose is to find a virgin," they said.
- 508 The knowledgeable and ignorant matchmakers made faces like dogs.
- 509 The bride's father shook a *khukuri* at them.
- 510 The bride's mother shook a sickle at them.
- 511 The bride's mother shook the stone cooking stove at them.

*Thangmi* थाङ्गी

- 512 "लौ, हारा लोङ्को, कुनिङ् लोङ्को?" यासीयोडान् ।
- 513 "लौ, निङ्गाई नेम् जम्मा ।"
- 514 जिम्मा लागायेडनो । पापासीलापाटे लेत्सा यायोडान् ।
- 515 दिका लाङ्गीये नेम् लाहीउनो ।
- 516 दिका लाङ्गीये लिबी लिबी याहान् ।
- 517 रोथोक मेन्चा ख्याक्सीताले सुम्पा माणाई साल्तोले नाहुनो ।
- 518 दिका बाने लिबी लिबी पोचा हेनुनो ।
- 519 पोचा हेनुदु कारणङ् बे उलाम् नावासा याहान् उलाम् नावासा पोहुनो, उलाम् कोताले याहान् उलाम् कोताले पोहुनो ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 512 "लौ, के गरौं, कसो गरौं?" भने ।
- 513 "लौ, तिमीहरूलाई घर जिम्मा ।"
- 514 जिम्मा लगाए । बेहुलीको बाबु निस्केर गयो ।
- 515 एक जना लमीले घर कुरेर बस्यो ।
- 516 एक जना लमी पछिपछि गयो ।
- 517 अल्लोको झोला भिरेर तीन वटा रोटी झुन्ड्याएर राख्यो ।
- 518 एक जना साथीले पछिपछि पछ्याउँदै लग्यो ।
- 519 पछ्याउँदै लाँदा बाटोमुनि गयो, बाटोमुनि पछ्यायो, बाटोमाथि गयो, बाटोमाथि पछ्यायो ।

*English*

- 512 "Oh, what shall we do, how shall we do it?" they [the bride's parents] said.
- 513 "Fine, you are responsible for the house."
- 514 Having given them [the matchmakers] the responsibility, the bride's father left the house.
- 515 One of the matchmakers stayed at the house.

- 516 Another of the matchmakers followed him [the bride's father].  
 517 [The one who stayed in the house] hung a Himalayan nettle bag containing three pieces of bread [on the household *bampā*].  
 518 One friend had followed [the bride's father].  
 519 He followed him, up he went, and down he went, following all the way.

*Thangmi* थाङ्गी

- 520 मेलोते याहान् मेलोते वई पोहुनो ।  
 521 जामाते याहान् जामाते वई पोहुनो ।  
 522 नगरीते याहान् नगरीते वई पोहुनो ।  
 523 बोरेते याहान् बोरेते वई पोहुनो ।  
 524 साबाते याहान् साबाते वई पोहुनो ।  
 525 पोहुदु काराणाङ् बे जेखा सोङ्को जेखा आलाकडाङ् होकयोङ्ताले बे खाम लोयेङ्नो ।  
 526 आलाकको छेउते होक्ताले “लौ, खाम लोङ्को” यासीन् ।  
 527 आम्चाने उयुये चामे कोटेउदु उनिङ् चामे कोटेयेङ्नो, थाम्पा उयुये जिमी फातुदु उनिङ् खाम काटाईचा हेनेङ्नो ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 520 मेलोमा गयो, मेलोमा पछ्यायो ।  
 521 जता पनि गयो, जता पनि पछ्यायो ।  
 522 बैठकमा गयो, बैठकमा पनि पछ्यायो ।  
 523 बिहेमा गयो, बिहेमा पनि पछ्यायो ।  
 524 सभामा गयो, सभामा पनि पछ्यायो ।  
 525 पछ्याउँदाखेरि त ठूलो खोलाको ठूलो साँघुमा बसेर कुरा गरे ।  
 526 साँघुको छेउमा बसेर “लौ, कुरा गरौं” भने ।  
 527 चोया मुसाले चोया काटे जस्तै, थाम्पा मुसाले जमिन खने जस्तै कुरा गर्दै लगे ।

*English*

- 520 He [the bride's father] went to do communal work in fields, he [the matchmaker] followed him there.  
 521 Wherever he [the bride's father] went, he [the matchmaker] followed.  
 522 When he [the bride's father] went to a meeting, he [the matchmaker] followed him to the meeting.  
 523 When he [the bride's father] went to a wedding, he [the matchmaker] followed him to the wedding.  
 524 When he [the bride's father] went to a gathering, he [the matchmaker] followed him to that gathering.  
 525 Following along, they sat on a big bridge by a large river, and talked.  
 526 Sitting by that bridge, they said, “Alright, let's talk.”  
 527 Like a bamboo mouse cutting bamboo, and like a *thāmpā* mouse scratching at the earth, they [slowly] began to talk.

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 528 खियेखि वई काटाईचा हेनुनो ।  
 529 लौ, फर्कातोले वानुनो नेम्ते केलेङ्गनो ।  
 530 नेम्ते केलङ्गुदु काराणाङ्गु बे दिका बाने बे ढिकी जाँतो ज्योउतोले बे शिवधुनी लागार्डुदु रेसा ।  
 531 “लौ, नान् बे का नेम्ते होङ्गो” यासीन् ।  
 532 “का कोसेलीको भाका लोङ्गो” यासीदु बेर्याङ्गु बे “लौ, आपा आमापाली, निको मायामाइतीकाई नाको मायान् ।”  
 533 “निको मावालीकाई नाको मायान्” यासीन् ।  
 534 माइती नाहनो ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 528 माछाले पानी काटे जस्तै कुरा काट्दै लगे ।  
 529 लौ, अब घरमा फर्काएर ल्याए ।  
 530 ल्याएको कारणमा त एक जना साथीले घरको ढिकी जाँतो पोलेर शिवधुनी लगाउँदो रहेछ ।  
 531 “लौ, अब त यो घरमा बसौं” भने ।  
 532 “कोसेलीको भाका गरौं” भने, “लौ, बाबुआमाहरू, हाम्रो मायामाइतीहरूलाई राख्नुपर्छ ।”  
 533 “हाम्रो मावालीलाई राख्नुपर्छ” भने ।  
 534 माइती राखे ।

*English*

- 528 Like a fish cutting through water, they cut through the conversation.  
 529 So, he [the matchmaker] managed to convince him [the father of the bride] to return home.  
 530 Bringing him [the father] back, they found that the other friend had burned the household rice-husking foot-mortar and quern as though they were a *śivadhuni* (a sacred fire made by Hindu ascetics).  
 531 “*Lau*, now let’s have a talk at home,” they said.  
 532 “Let’s talk about the engagement gifts,” they said, “*Lau*, father and mother, now we must call together the bride’s paternal relatives.”  
 533 “We must call together the bride’s maternal relatives,” they [the bride’s parents] said.  
 534 The natal household came together.

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 535 आमुये वा ढुकाईदु उनिङ्गु ढुकाईतोले होकान् ।  
 536 नान् बल्ल वाक्यको बचान थाहान् ।  
 537 कोसेलीको भाका लोङ्गुनो ।  
 538 का निको चारदामको भाका यासीन् ।  
 539 चारदामको भाकाडाङ्गु बे चार नगरी होक्योडान् ।

- 540 सात नस्ता, सात नगरी होक्योडान् ।  
 541 बुलीबुली खामी वई होक्योडान् बुलीबुली दुर्मी वई होक्योडान् नगरी नाहनो ।  
 542 “का निङ्को नेमते हाङ् जेखा रा निदु ?”  
 543 “रापा जेखा रा निदु ? आईकुचा जेखा रा निदु ?”  
 544 “साहुगाल रा निदु ? धनगाल रा निदु ?”

### Nepali नेपाली

- 535 चीलले कुखुरा ढुके जस्तो ढुकेर बस्यो ।  
 536 अब बल्ल राम्रो बोलीको वचन भयो ।  
 537 कोसेलीको भाका गरे ।  
 538 यो चारदामको भाका पनि भने ।  
 539 चारदामको भाकामा त चार नगरी बसे ।  
 540 सात नस्ता, सात नगरी बसे ।  
 541 जान्ने नजान्ने खामी पनि बसे, जान्ने नजान्ने दुर्मी पनि बसे, बैठक राखे ।  
 542 “तिमीहरूको घरमा हाङ् ठूलो पो छ कि ?”  
 543 “ठूलो बन्चरो पो छ कि ? ठूलो खुकुरी पो छ कि ?”  
 544 “साहु पो छ कि ? धनगाल पो छ कि ?”

### English

- 535 Like an eagle lying in wait for a chicken, they lay in wait.  
 536 Now, they finally had a good conversation.  
 537 They performed the part of the ritual that involved exchanging gifts.  
 538 They also performed the part of the ritual that involved the *cārdām* [meaning that they spoke nicely with one another, and exchanged gifts.]  
 539 During the *cārdām* ritual, representatives from four villages sat together.  
 540 Seven representatives [of each clan] and seven from each village sat together.  
 541 The knowledgeable and ignorant *khāmi* also sat down, the knowledgeable and ignorant *durmi* also sat down and they held a meeting.  
 542 “In your house is there really a big *hāng*?” [king]  
 543 “Do you really have a large axe? Do you have a large *khukuri*?”  
 544 “Is there really a rich man? Are you truly wealthy?”

The metaphorical allusions contained in the previous section attest to the poetic richness of the Thangmi language. “Like a mouse cutting bamboo,” “like a fish cutting through water,” and “like an eagle lying in wait for a chicken,” are the ways that the matchmakers finally cajole the bride’s parents to sit down for what eventually becomes “a good conversation”. Present at that conversation are seven clan representatives, and “seven from each village”. These double sevens refer to the fact that the Thangmi historically maintained a system of parallel descent – meaning that there are seven female as well as seven male clans, and girls receive their clan identity from their mothers, while boys inherit from their fathers.

The Thangmi forefather and foremother, Yāpati Chuku and Sunāri Āji, had seven sons and seven daughters, who were compelled to marry each other due to the lack of any other suitable partners. Both the male and female clan names were bestowed upon them by their parents during their joint marriage ceremony (see Turin 1999, Shneiderman and Turin 2006, and Shneiderman 2015: Chapter 7 for further details). While in contemporary practice the female clans are falling into disuse for reasons that we cannot explore in depth here, Thangmi universally see their heritage of parallel descent as a crucial identity marker as it distinguishes them clearly from other *janajāti* groups (Shneiderman 2015: Chapter 7). In this recitation, the “seven from each village” refers to members of each male clan, since Thangmi origin myths state that each of the large Thangmi villages in Dolakha was settled after one of the sons shot his arrow there, while the “seven representatives” refers to the female clans. In practice, there is not always a representative of each clan at each wedding ritual, but representatives of as many different clans as possible are always sought.

### *Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 545 “माजीगाल रा निदुः?”  
 546 यासीदु कारणाङ् बे माजीगाल वई मानीतावान् ।  
 547 धनगाल वई मानीतावान् ।  
 548 साउगाल वई मानीतावान् ।  
 549 निङ्को नेम्ते निरोङ्टोके, बोसङ्टोके, बिक रा होक्दुः?  
 550 यासीदु कारणाङ् बे का निरोङ्टोके, बोसङ्टोके मानीतावान् यासीदु कारणाङ् बे, का हारा वई मानीवान् ।  
 551 “नान् का चारदामको भाका लोङ्को” यासीदु कारणाङ् बे चारदामको भाका वई लोङ्को ।  
 552 का नगरी होक्ताले “का आसास्युन्दुरी वई लोङ्को मायान्” यासीदु कारणाङ् बे आसास्युन्दुरीको भाका लोङ्तोले, बुलीबुली खामी नातोले, का बुलीबुली लाङ्मी नाहुनो । चार नस्ता वई नाहुनो ।

### *Nepali* नेपाली

- 545 “माझी काम छ किः?”  
 546 भन्ने कारणमा त माझी काम पनि देखेनौं ।  
 547 धनगाल पनि देखेनौं ।  
 548 साहुगाल पनि देखेनौं ।  
 549 तिम्रो घरमा निरोङ्को बटुको, उत्तिसको बटुको विष छ किः?  
 550 छ भन्ने कारणमा त निरोङ्को बटुको, उत्तिसको बटुको देखेनौं भन्ने कारणमा त यो केही पनि देखेनौं ।  
 551 “अब यो चारदामको भाका गरौं” भनेपछि त चारदामको भाका पनि गरे ।  
 552 यो नगरी बसेर “यो आसास्युन्दुरी पनि गर्नुपर्यो” भन्ने कारणमा त आसास्युन्दुरी भाका गरेर, जान्ने नजान्ने खामी राखेर, यो जान्ने नजान्ने लमी राखे । चार नस्ता पनि राख्यो ।

*English*

- 545 “Is there fishing to be done?”  
 546 Meaning to say, we didn’t see any fishing.  
 547 We also didn’t see any wealth.  
 548 We also didn’t see a rich man.  
 549 Are there bowls of *nirong*, bowls of alder, and poison in your house?  
 550 Meaning to say, we didn’t see *nirongtoke* and *bosingtoke*, that’s to say, we didn’t see anything.  
 551 “Now let’s recite the ritual melody of the *cārdām*,” they said, and with that they recited the melody of the *cārdām*.  
 552 With these representatives sitting here, “We must perform the *āsāsyunduri* ritual,” meaning to say, having recited the melody of *āsāsyunduri*, and having gathered the knowledgeable and ignorant *khāmi*, they summoned the knowledgeable and ignorant matchmakers; they also summoned the four *nastā* [representatives].

*Thangmi* थाङ्गी

- 553 नान् का खुईतुङ्को भाकाइ बे ।  
 554 का निको बेहुलाते का दुनिया गयाप्सीदु उनिङ् गयाप्सीसा केलेडान् ।  
 555 रुख जेखाते फासा गयाप्सीदु उनिङ् गयाप्सीसा केलेडान् ।  
 556 का वाराक्तते वास् गयाप्सीदु उनिङ् गयाप्सीसा केलेडान् ।  
 557 निको का साकालेई गयाप्सीसा केलेडान् ।  
 558 हरियो चहरडाङ् सुखिलो साबा नाहनो ।  
 559 साबा लोङ्तोले निको बात दुमान् ।  
 560 सुम फाम फालीङ्गे, सुम फाम जाके, निदाखारीको भाका वई लोडुनो ।  
 561 का निको चेनेमाटीको भाका वई लोडुनो ।  
 562 गोते पिते साकालेई मायामाइती सेवा ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 553 अब यो खुईतुङ्को भाकामा त ।  
 554 हाम्रो बेहुलामा सारा दुनिया धुइरिए जस्तै धुइरिएर आए ।  
 555 ठूलो रुखमा हावा धुइरिए जस्तै धुइरिएर आए ।  
 556 भीरमा मौरी धुइरिए जस्तै धुइरिएर आए ।  
 557 हाम्रो यो सबै जना धुइरिएर आए ।  
 558 हरियो चौरमा सुकिलो सभा राखे ।  
 559 सभा गरेर हाम्रो कुरा सकियो ।  
 560 तीन पाथी चिउरा, तीन पाथी चामल, निदाखारीको भाका पनि गर्यो ।  
 561 हाम्रो चेनेमाटीको भाका पनि गर्यो ।  
 562 नाङ्लोलाई पनि, सबै जना मायामाइतीलाई पनि नमस्कार ।



*English*

- 553 Now [they performed the] melody of the *khuitung*.  
 554 Like a crowd made up of all the people in the entire world, they crowded around our groom.  
 555 Like the wind surrounding a huge tree, they surrounded him.  
 556 They crowded around as bees would crowd around a cliff.  
 557 They all crowded around our [groom].  
 558 On green pastures, they were like a white congregation.  
 559 Having congregated, our business is finished.  
 560 With three *pāthi* of beaten rice, and three *pāthi* of husked rice, he also sang the melody of the *nidākhāri*.  
 561 He also sang our melody of the *cenemāti*.  
 562 *Sevā* to the winnowing tray and to all those of the respected natal household.

**3. *Senevā* (Ritual transformation: the bride's funerary rites and rebirth)**

After the *cārdām* is completed, another *sagun thoṭko* interlude repeats very closely the section reproduced above. We then move on to the *senevā*, the final phase of the ritual in which the transformation of marriage is actually effected via a mock funerary rite for the bride. This affirms that her previous identity as a member of her natal household has now passed, and she is reborn as a member of her husband's household. For this recitation, a *tuṭumbārāng* (wedding tent) is constructed in the front yard of the groom's house. Various items, such as the goat's meat, are stored there.

This ritual sequence is described as a "meeting", during which all those who worked hard over the course of the ritual cycle (which may take several years) are rewarded. For instance, the *khāmi* does a lot of talking during the wedding, so he is given the tongue of the goat carcass. The groom's mother gets the chest of the goat carcass for breastfeeding him when he was little. The *lāngmi* spends a long time walking in order to find the right match for the groom, so he gets the legs of the goat carcass. Also during the *senevā*, the bride and the groom are seated together for the first time, and the *khāmi* gives them advice about their future. The *seneva* picks up the narrative where the *cārdām* left off, and then describes in detail the ritual sequence as it takes place.

*Thangmi* थाङ्गी

- 618 निको नान् का पहिला चारदामको रीति च्याईन् ।  
 619 नान् का बेहुलाको नेम्ते गुरी बाटो छेकायेङ्गो ।  
 620 का सेनेवाको रीति साईले वई, मासाइले वई होक्को मायान् ।  
 621 कातेको सामा दैकाको मायान् ।  
 622 लौ, कातेको स्युन्डुनी सु छ ?  
 623 का स्युन्डुनीये गुरी कातेको सामा केल्लो ।  
 624 लेम्बेते निस्गोरे पुच्युक केल्लो ।  
 625 कातेका ठु वई केल्लो ।  
 626 लोन्डो वालडागोरे सगुन मूल सगुन गुरुकाई, टाका तोड् गुरुको स्वर खुल्ने ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 618 हाम्रो अब यो पहिला चारदामको रीति खायौं ।  
 619 अब यो बेहुलाको घरमा चाहिँ बाटो छेके ।  
 620 यो सेनेवाको रीति जाने पनि नजाने पनि बस्नुपर्यो ।  
 621 यहाँको सामान जम्मा गर्नुपर्यो ।  
 622 लौ, यहाँको जाँड छान्ने को छ ?  
 623 जाँड छान्नेले यहाँको सामान ल्याऊ ।  
 624 नाङ्लोमा दुई वटा पुच्युक ल्याऊ ।  
 625 यहाँसम्म मासु ल्याऊ ।  
 626 छाती ल्याऊ, पाँच वटा सगुन मूल सगुन गुरुलाई, मीठो जाँड गुरुको स्वर खुल्लाई ।

*English*

- 618 Now, we have completed the first part of the *cārdām* ritual.  
 619 Then, at the groom's house, they blocked the path.  
 620 Whether we know it or not, we must carry out the *senevā* ritual.  
 621 We must gather together all of the necessary things here.  
 622 *Lau*, who here will help filter this grain beer?  
 623 *Syunduni*, bring all the things up here.  
 624 Bring two *pucyuk* effigies on a winnowing tray.  
 625 Bring the meat up here.  
 626 Bring the chest [of the goat carcass], bring five types of principal offerings: the main alcohol offering is for the *guru*, the delicious grain beer helps unleash his voice.

The *syunduni* mentioned in line 623 above is the person responsible for making and pouring the grain beer. *Pucyuk* are effigies made of mixed grain (usually rice, wheat or millet).

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 627 नान् निको मावली वई नाको ।  
 628 सगुन माथि कापु शिरखुर नाको ।  
 629 लोन्डोते दिमाना जाके, सेनेवाको दिमाना जाके, मावलीको दिमाना जाके, रु ५ पैसा,  
 बुढामावलीको दिमाना जाके, रु ५ पैसा, बत्ती वई बालाइनो ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 627 अब हाम्रो मावली पनि राखौं ।  
 628 सगुनमाथि टाउको शिरखुर राखौं ।  
 629 छाती, एक माना चामल, सेनेवाको एक माना चामल, मावलीको एक माना चामल, रु ५ पैसा,  
 बुढामावलीको एक माना, चामल रु ५ पैसा, बत्ती पनि बाल ।

*English*

- 627 Now let's seat our maternal relatives [of the groom].  
 628 Let us place the head and feet [of the carcass] on top of the alcohol offering.  
 629 The chest [of the carcass], one *mānā* of husked rice, one *mānā* of husked rice for the *senevā*, one *mānā* of husked rice for the maternal relatives, money worth five rupees, one *mānā* of husked rice for the mother's menfolk, money worth five rupees; then light the lamp.

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 630 नान् आसातोङ् केल्लो ।  
 631 बेहुलाबेहुली नानो ।  
 632 दाँयाबाँया नातोले बर्कोले ढाकाईनो ।  
 633 नान् आयु लोयेङ्दु माणाई बाह पाथीको तोङ्को छोक्रा, वाल्डागोरे ठाईते किला सासोले पैयुँको स्याउला साप्नो ।  
 634 उखुको वाला हाली का टुटुम्बाराङ् बनाईनो ।  
 635 नान् सेनेवा लोङ्को मायान् ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 630 अब तेलजाँड ल्याऊ ।  
 631 बेहुलाबेहुली राख ।  
 632 दाँयाबाँया राखेर बर्कोले ढाक ।  
 633 अब आयु गरेको रोटी, बाह पाथीको जाँड छोक्रा, पाँच ठाउँमा किला गाडेर पैयुँको स्याउला गाड ।  
 634 उखुको पात हाली यो टुटुम्बाराङ् बनाऊ ।  
 635 अब सेनेवा गर्नुपर्यो ।

*English*

- 630 Now bring the oil mixed with grain beer.  
 631 Seat the bride and groom.  
 632 Seating them next to each other on the left and right, cover them with a shawl.  
 633 Now, with the bread made for the life essence ritual and twelve *pāthi* of fermented beer mash, stake posts in five places. Bury the cut branches of the wild cherry tree.  
 634 Using leaves of the sugarcane, make this *tuṭumbārāng* (wedding tent).  
 635 Now we must perform the *senevā*.<sup>7</sup>

7 At this point, Maila Guru interrupts his recitation to explain, "Now in order to perform the funerary rites for seven brothers: long ago, no matter how many children [were born], they all died, which is why we perform the funerary rites for seven brothers. It is said that long ago, our ancestors lived in Gomphā Āpok (Gompha Cave)."

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 636 यो गरेपछि बेहुला भित्र हुलाईवाद् ।  
 637 दिगोरे खड्कुँलोते दिपाथी राच्या, दिटोके जाके, लुतुमथेम्बा नातोले ।  
 638 वाल्डागोरे सगुन, वाल्डागोरे बाल्दाने, नातोले सैमुन्द्रो हुलाईवाद् ।  
 639 पहिला सैमुन्द्रो हुलाईवाद् । लिबी बेहुली हुलाईवाद् ।  
 640 वाल्डागोरे बाल्दाने, वाल्डागोरे बत्ती नातोले, सगुन नातावाले बेहुली हुलाईडा लिबी बेहुलाको  
 आमा दिपटी, बेहुली दिपटी दाहिने कोन्टे पहिला ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 636 यो गरेपछि बेहुला भित्र हुल्लौं ।  
 637 एउटा खड्कुँलोमा एक पाथी धान, एक माना चामल, गोगनको सँघार ।  
 638 पाँच वटा सगुन, पाँच वटा टोटलाको फूल राखेर सैमुन्द्रो हुल्लौं ।  
 639 पहिला सैमुन्द्रो हुल्लौं । पछि बेहुली हुल्लौं ।  
 640 पाँच वटा टोटलाको फूल, पाँच वटा बत्ती, सगुन राखेर बेहुली हुलेपछि बेहुलाको आमा एकपट्टि,  
 बेहुली एकपट्टि बसेर दाहिने खुट्टा पहिला ।

*English*

- 636 After doing this, we will herd the groom inside.  
 637 In one large cooking pot [with rings on both sides], we put one *pāthi* of unhusked rice, one *mānā* of husked rice and one piece of *gogan* wood placed on the threshold.  
 638 We herd in five kinds of offerings, five *ṭotalā* flowers and the *saimundro*.  
 639 First we herd in the *saimundro*; after which we drive in the bride.  
 640 After leading the bride in, having placed five *ṭotalā* flowers, five lamps, and alcohol offerings, with the mother of the groom on one side [of the large pot with the rings], and the bride on the other, with the right foot first.

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 641 नान् बेहुलाबेहुली सेनेवा गर्ने ठाईते होक्योडान् ।  
 642 नान् काते मूल मी सगुन ।  
 643 का केराको सुत्ला वई चाहार्इद्, काते बाटो छेकार्इद् माणार्इ वई चाहार्इद् ।  
 644 अब सात भाइ, सात बहिनीको किरिया सुतेयड्द् ।  
 645 का सात भाइको चा चामार्इ थाताले बोरे लोडुडुडा ।  
 646 मड्यौली, लोकन्ती दिगोरे ठिलीकते आसा, दिगोरे ठहरते बेसार, पाती, नातोले रीति लोड्डो  
 मारिद् ।  
 647 नान् खामीये रीति लोडुडु ।  
 648 खामीकार्इ टाउटाउ तोड् पिको मारिद् ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 641 अब बेहुलाबेहुली सेनेवा गर्ने ठाउँमा बस्छन् ।  
 642 अब मूल मान्छेको सगुन ।  
 643 केराको सुन्लो पनि चाहिन्छ, यहाँ बाटो छेकेको रोटी पनि चाहिन्छ ।  
 644 अब सात भाइ, सात बहिनीको किरिया मन्साउने ।  
 645 यो सात भाइ, सात बहिनी भएर बिहे गरेको भन्ने भनाइ छ ।  
 646 मड्यौली, लोकन्ती एउटा ठिलीकमा तेल, एउटा टपरामा बेसार पाती राखेर रीति गर्नुपर्छ ।  
 647 अब खामीले रीति गर्छ ।  
 648 खामीलाई ट्याउँट्याउँ बोल्ने जाँड दिनुपर्छ ।

*English*

- 641 Now the bride and groom sit in the place where the *senevā* will be performed.  
 642 Then the alcohol offerings for the main officiant.  
 643 Along with the spines of banana leaves, and the bread with which the path was blocked, are needed.  
 644 Now we exorcise the funerary spirits of the seven brothers and seven sisters.  
 645 There is a saying that seven brothers married seven sisters.  
 646 After gathering together *maḍyauli* and *lokanti*, some oil in a small wooden vessel and turmeric and leaves on a leaf plate, the ritual must commence.  
 647 Now the *khāmi* performs the ritual.  
 648 In order for him to speak without ceasing, grain beer must be given to the *khāmi*.

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 649 गोते नाङ्गोरे वई सेवा ।  
 650 पितेनाङ्गोरे सेवा ।  
 651 ठु थोप्नादु वई सेवा, यिसीदु काराणाङ् बे पाङ्ती थोप्नादु वई सेवा, ईसीदु काराणाङ् बे का बे रघुवंश राजाये नाहुदु थिति ।  
 652 पतिपति राजाये नाहुदु रीति ।  
 653 सात नस्ता, सात पगरी होक्योडान् ।  
 654 नान् बे सेनेवाको भाका लोडवान् ।  
 655 वाल्डागोरे सगुनै नाहुनो, मूल मी सगुन वई नाहुनो ।  
 656 का ठु, वाङ्गा साकालेई नाहुनो ।  
 657 का सेनेवाको भाका ।  
 658 जरीको मुचाये का मेस्मुचाको नेम्ते हेन्को मायान् यिसीताले मेस्मुचाको नेम्यिङ् बे, निस्का लाङ्मी ठोसाकाई सिन्दूर टीका वई लागायङ्नो ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 649 नाङ्गोलोलाई पनि नमस्कार ।  
 650 सभाको मान्छेलाई नमस्कार ।

- 651 मासु पुग्नेलाई पनि नमस्कार, भन्ने कारणमा सबै जनालाई नमस्कार, यो त रघुवंश राजाले राखेको थिति ।  
 652 पतिपति राजाले राखेको रीति ।  
 653 सात नस्ता, सात पगरी बसे ।  
 654 अब सेनेवाको भाका गर्यौं ।  
 655 पाँच वटा सगुन पनि राख्यो, मूल मान्छेको सगुन पनि राख्यो ।  
 656 यो मासु, च्यापु सबै चिज राख्यो ।  
 657 यो सेनेवाको भाका ।  
 658 बेहुलाले बेहुलीको घरमा जानुपर्यो भनेर बेहुलाको घरबाट दुई जना लमी पठाउनलाई सिन्दूरको टीका पनि लगायो ।

### English

- 649 *Sevā* also to the winnowing tray.  
 650 *Sevā* to the congregation that has gathered.  
 651 *Sevā* also to those who have enough meat; meaning to say, greetings to all, this is a tradition started by the kings of the *Raghu* lineage.  
 652 This is a ritual started by King *Patipati*.  
 653 Seven representatives and seven important persons came together.  
 654 Then we affirmed the agreement of the *senevā*.<sup>8</sup>  
 655 Five kinds of offerings were made, the offering to the main officiant was also made.  
 656 This meat, the chin [of the carcass] and all of the required items were in position.  
 657 This is the agreement of the *senevā*.  
 658 In order for the two matchmakers to go from the groom's house to the bride's house, the groom even offered them a *ṭikā* [made] of *sindur*.

### Thangmi थाङ्मी

- 659 का सात नगरी सात नस्ताडाङ् बुलीबुली लाङ्मी निस्का बे का मेस्मुचाको नेम्ते याताले बे सिन्दूरको टिकी वई लागार्सीयड्ताले ।  
 660 लौ, नान् बे मेस्मुचाको नेम्ते याताले ख्याङ्-ख्याङ्सीयडान् ।  
 661 “सु मी हारा मी केलान्?”  
 662 यिसीताले लाङ्मीये “लौ, नान् बिच्चा पारार्इन् राँको पिको मायान्” यिसीताले ।  
 663 दिका लाङ्मीये कन्टिक हेन्तोले लोङ्खाणोउ टाङ्चा हेनुनो ।  
 664 लोङ्खाणोउडाङ् बे दाहिने कोन्टे छोल्ला हेनुनो ।  
 665 मझेरीको छेउते होक्थोडान् ।  
 666 बाम्पाको छेउते होक्ताले बे “हारा मी केलान् कुनिङ् मी केलान्?” ईसीताले बे “लौ, हारा जेतते केलान् कुनिङ् जेतते केलान्?”  
 667 “लौ, निबे का स्या ब्यापारते केलीन् टुणी ब्यापारते केलीन्” ईसीदु काराणाङ् बे खेन्डाङ् योहुनो टिकी लागार्सीयड्दु रेसा ।

<sup>8</sup> Here the term *bhaka* is translated as ‘agreement’, which emphasizes the promissory aspect of the term as used in the *senevā* context. Elsewhere in this chapter we have translated *bhaka* as ‘melody’, which reflects Maila Guru and other key informants’ descriptions of the term.



*Nepali* नेपाली

- 659 यो सात नगरी सात नस्तामा जान्ने नजान्ने लमी दुई जना त बेहुलीको घरमा गएर त सिन्दूरको टीका पनि लगाएछन् ।
- 660 लौ, अब बेहुलीको घरमा गएर ख्याङख्याङ कराए ।
- 661 “को मान्छे, के मान्छे आयो?”
- 662 भनेर लमीले “लौ, अब बिचल्ली पर्यौं, राँको दिनुपर्यौं” भने ।
- 663 एक जना लमीले ताला लगेर ढोका खोल्दै लग्यो ।
- 664 ठूलो ढोकामा त दाहिने खुट्टा हाल्दै लगे ।
- 665 मझेरीको छेउमा बसे ।
- 666 बाम्पाको छेउमा बसेर “के मान्छे आयो, कस्तो मान्छे आयो” भन्दा त “लौ, के कामले आयौं, कस्तो कामले आयौं?”
- 667 “लौ, हामी त गाई व्यापारमा आयौं, बाख्रा व्यापारमा आयौं” भन्ने कारणमा त अनुहारमा हेर्यो टीका लगाएको रहेछ ।

*English*

- 659 The two knowledgeable and ignorant matchmakers went to the bride's house, where they received *sindur tika* from seven representatives of the clans and seven representatives of the villages.
- 660 So then, they went to the bride's house and made a loud noise: *khyāng-khyāng*.
- 661 “Who has come? What kind of person has come?”
- 662 The matchmakers replied, “We are helpless, you must give us a torch.”
- 663 Bringing a padlock, one of the matchmakers opened the door.
- 664 At the large door, they each put their right foot first.
- 665 They sat in the middle of the floor.
- 666 Sitting by the *bāmpā*, they [the bride's parents] said, “Who has come? What kind of person has come? So, on what business have you come? What brings you here?”
- 667 They [the matchmakers] said, “*Lau*, we have come to trade cows, we have come to buy goats,” meaning to say, they [the bride's parents] looked at their [the matchmakers'] faces and saw that they were wearing *tika*.

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 668 “नि बे कन्य अर्थते केलीन्” यासीन् ।
- 669 “नाङ्को कन्या पिको मायान्” ईसीदु काराणाङ् बे “लौ, निको बाला पिसा माजा” ईसीदु काराणाङ् बे पापासीलापाटेये आईकुचा उचालाईनो ।
- 670 मामासिलापाटेये काराती जप्जप्याईनो ।
- 671 पापासीलापाटेये थापु जप्जप्याईनो ।
- 672 मामासीलापाटेये अगुलठो जप्जप्याईनो ।
- 673 पापासीलापाटे, मामासीलापाटे लेत्ताले यायेडान् ।
- 674 दिका बाने नेम् लाहीउनो ।
- 675 दिका बान याहान् ।

- 676 दिका बाने बे होक्ताले सुम्पा माणाई सालुनो ।  
 677 सालुदु कारणाङ् बे दिका बाने बे लिबी लिबी याहान् ।  
 678 उलाम् कोताले याहान् उलाम् कोताले पोहुनो, उलाम् नाबासा याहान् उलाम् नाबासा पोहुनो ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 668 “हामी त कन्या अर्थमा आयौं” भन्यो ।  
 669 “तिम्रो कन्या दिनुपर्यो” भने भन्ने कारणमा त “लौ हाम्रो बाला दिनु हुँदैन” भन्ने कारणमा त बाबुले खुकुरी उचाल्यो ।  
 670 आमाले कचिया जपजप्यायो ।  
 671 बाबुले चुलो जपजप्यायो ।  
 672 आमाले अगुल्टो जपजप्यायो ।  
 673 बाबुआमा निस्केर गए ।  
 674 एक जना साथीले घर कुर्यो ।  
 675 एक जना साथी गयो ।  
 676 एक जना साथी त बसेर तीन वटा रोटी झुण्ड्यायो ।  
 677 झुण्ड्याउने कारणमा त एक जना साथी पनि पछिपछि गयो ।  
 678 बाटोमाथि गयो, बाटोमाथि पछ्यायो, बाटोमुनि गयो, बाटोमुनि पछ्यायो ।

*English*

- 668 “We have come for a virgin,” they said.  
 669 “You must give us your virgin,” they said, meaning to say, [her parents] said, “Lau, we should not give our child,” saying that, the father raised a *khukuri*.  
 670 The mother shook her sickle.  
 671 The father shook the stone cooking stove.  
 672 The mother shook a piece of smoldering wood from the fire.  
 673 The father and mother left the house.  
 674 One of the friends stayed back at the house.  
 675 The other friend went [with the parents].  
 676 The friend who stayed behind hung up three flat breads.  
 677 While he was hanging them up, the other friend went following behind [the parents].  
 678 He followed behind them, up he went, and down he went, following all the way.

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 679 मेलोते याहान् मेलोते पोहुनो ।  
 680 जामाते याहान् जामाते पोहुनो ।  
 681 बोरेते याहान् बोरेते पोहुनो ।  
 682 नगरीते याहान् नगरीते पोहुनो ।  
 683 ईसीदु कारणाङ् बे सोङ्को आलाकते होक्ताले फर्काईचा वानुनो ।  
 684 थाम्पा उयुये उनिङ् खाम् काटाईचा हेनुनो ।

- 685 आम्चानेये उनिङ् चामेक कोटेदु उनिङ् खाम् काटाईचा हेनेङ्नो ।  
686 ईसीदु कारणाङ् बे खिये खि काटाईचा हेनुनो ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 679 मेलोमा गयो, मेलोमा पछ्यायो ।  
680 जता पनि गयो, जता पनि पछ्यायो ।  
681 बिहेमा गयो, बिहेमा पछ्यायो ।  
682 नगरीमा गयो, नगरीमा पछ्यायो ।  
683 भन्ने कारणमा त खोलाको साँघुमा बसेर फर्काएर ल्यायो ।  
684 थाम्पा मुसाले जस्तो कुरा काट्दै लग्यो ।  
685 चोया मुसाले चोया काटे जस्तो कुरा काट्दै लगे ।  
686 भन्ने कारणमा त माछाले पानी काटे जस्तो कुरा काट्दै लग्यो ।

*English*

- 679 He even followed them to their communal work in the fields.  
680 Wherever [they] went, he followed behind.  
681 [They] went to a wedding, he followed behind.  
682 [They] went to the representatives, he followed behind.  
683 Meaning to say, they rested on a bridge over a river, and he brought them back home.  
684 Like a *thāmpā* mouse, he cut through the conversation.  
685 Like a bamboo mouse cutting bamboo, they cut through the conversation.  
686 Meaning to say, like a fish cutting through water, he cut through the conversation.

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 687 नेम्ते येयेडान् ।  
688 नेम्ते दिका लाङ्गीये बे ढिकी जाँतो ज्योउतोले नाहुतोले ।  
689 “हारा लोङ्को, कुनिङ् लोङ्को?” नेम्ते होक्योडान् ।  
690 “लौ, आपापाली” आर्कीको उनिङ् निस्खेन लोयेङ्नो ।  
691 “लौ, कोसेलीको भाका लोङ्को मायान्” यासीयोडान् ।  
692 “चारदामको भाका बे नाङ्को नेम्ते बे” चारदामको भाका लोयेङ्नो ।  
693 “नाङ्को नेम्ते हाङ् जेखा रा निदु? रापा जेखा रा निदु? आईकुचा जेखा रा निदु? निरोङ्टोके, बोसीङ्टोके रा निदु?”

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 687 घरमा गए ।  
688 घरमा एउटा लमीले ढिकीजाँतो पोलेर राखेछ ।  
689 “के गरौं, कसरी गरौं?” घरमा बसे ।  
690 “लौ, बाबुहरू” मिर्गको जस्तो दुई अनुहार बनाए ।

- 691 “लौ, कोसेलीको भाका गर्नुपर्यो” भने ।  
 692 “चारदामको भाका त तिम्रो घरमा गर्नुपर्यो” चारदामको भाका पनि गरे ।  
 693 “तिम्रो हाड ठूलो पो छ कि? बन्चरो ठूलो पो छ कि? खुकुरी ठूलो पो छ कि? निरोङ्को बटुको, उत्तसिको बटुको छ कि?”

### English

- 687 They went home.  
 688 At home, one of the matchmakers set fire to the rice-husking foot-mortar and quern.  
 689 “Lau, what shall we do? How shall we do it?” They sat down to have a talk.  
 690 “Alright, guys,” [the bride’s parents said]; the two [matchmakers] made faces like a deer.  
 691 “We must perform the melody of the *koseli*,” they said.  
 692 “[We must perform] the melody of the *cārdām* at your house,” so they performed the melody of the *cārdām*.  
 693 “Is there a big *hāng* in your house? Is the axe large? Is the *khukuri* large? Are there bowls made of *nirong* and alder [in your house]?” [asked the bride’s parents.]

### Thangmi थाङ्मी

- 694 “निये रापा जेखा वई मानी, राजागाल वई मानी, साहुगाल वई मानी” यासीन् ।  
 695 यासीदु कारणाड् बे लौ नान् चारदामको भाका वई लोडुनो ।  
 696 चारदामको भाकायीड् बे खुईतुड् चेनेमाटीको भाका वई लोडुनो ।  
 697 “लौ, नाङ्गे नेम्ते बे वास ग्याप्सीदु उनिड् ग्याप्सीसा केलेडान् ।”  
 698 हरियो चहुरते सुकिलो साबा लोडुनो ।  
 699 खुईतुड् चेनेमाटीको भाकाडाड् बे ब्याकारी वई नाहुनो ।  
 700 नान् सुम्फाम जाके, सुम्फाम फालीङ्गे, नाहुनो ।  
 701 छ्याभाराती का वई याड्देखी पिल्काचा हेनुनो ।  
 702 का चामाईकाई किरिया सुतीतोले का डामारीकाई पिहुनो ।  
 703 का सेनेवाको भाका लोडुनो ।  
 704 सेनेवाको भाकाडाड् बे बुलीबुली लाङ्मी नायेङ्नो ।

### Nepali नेपाली

- 694 “हामीले बन्चरो ठूलो पनि देखेनौं, राजा साहु पनि देखेनौं” भन्यो ।  
 695 भन्ने कारणमा त लौ अब चारदामको भाका पनि गरे ।  
 696 चारदामको भाकाबाट त खुईतुड् चेनेमाटीको भाका पनि गरे ।  
 697 “लौ, तिम्रो घरमा त मौरी धुइरिए जस्तै धुइरेर आए ।”  
 698 हरियो चौरमा सुकिलो सभा गरे ।  
 699 खुईतुड्, चेनेमाटीको भाकामा त पगरी पनि राख्यो ।  
 700 अब तीन पाथी चामल, तीन पाथी चिउरा पनि राख्यो ।  
 701 आजदेखि नून पनि फुकाएर लग्यो ।

- 702 यो छोरीलाई किरिया मन्साएर ज्वाइँलाई दियो ।  
 703 यो सेनेवाको भाका गर्यो ।  
 704 सेनेवाको भाकामा त जात्रे नजात्रे लमी राखे ।

*English*

- 694 “We didn’t see a large axe; we also didn’t see a rich and powerful person [in the house],” he said.  
 695 Meaning to say, now they also performed the melody of the *cārdām*.  
 696 After the melody of the *cārdām*, they also performed the melody of the *khuitung* and *cenemāti*.  
 697 “*Lau*, they came and surrounded your house like bees,” [they said].  
 698 On green pastures, they talked happily.  
 699 [He] also offered a turban while performing the melodies of the *khuitung* and *cenemāti*.  
 700 Then [he] also offered three *pāthi* of husked rice and three *pāthi* of beaten rice.  
 701 From today, we have also untied [the bond of] salt.  
 702 Having exorcised this daughter, she has been given to our son-in-law.  
 703 This melody of the *senevā* was performed.  
 704 [They] brought together the knowledgeable and ignorant matchmakers for the agreement of the *senevā*.

The preceding stanza is where the ritual transformation of marriage actually takes place. Marriage is considered a symbolic death for the bride, whose spirit is ritually banished from her natal household with these lines. The “bond of salt” refers to the taboo in place during the funerary ritual sequence, or *mumpra*, during which the mourners may not eat salt. Here, by “untying” the bond of salt, the *khāmi* metaphorically pronounces the bride’s symbolic funerary rite complete. She is no longer a living member of her parents’ household as her spirit has been “exorcised” in its natal form, to be reanimated only after it has been transferred in this way to the groom’s household. There is no such essential transformation for the groom. This demonstrates that despite the system of parallel descent, the Thangmi must not be misunderstood as a “matrilineal” or “matriarchal” society. Rather, like most other Himalayan ethnic groups, they practice virilocal residence, where a new wife must formally be exorcised from her natal home and take up a new life in her husband’s home, although formally her clan affiliation remains the one she has inherited from her mother.

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 705 बुलीबुली खामी नायेङ्गनो ।  
 706 बुलीबुली बर्मी नायेङ्गनो ।  
 707 बुलीबुली गोणैचा वई नायेङ्गनो ।  
 708 बुलीबुली मूल मी वई नायेङ्गनो ।

- 709 “याड्देखि नाडे बे हारा लोडुनान् कुन्याड् लोडुनान्?”  
 710 “नान् का मड्यौलीपालीये सेवा लोड्को मायान् ।”  
 711 आसास्युन्दुरीको भाका, आसास्युन्दुरीको वाखे वई लोयेड्को ।  
 712 “नान् का जरीको मुचाये दारे वई डोसाईको मायान् ।”  
 713 “नगरी वई डोसाईको मायान् ।”  
 714 “दिपाड् ईसाको निस्पाड् लोड्को मायान् ।”  
 715 “का दिक्कुटीक चिचीको निस्कुटीक लोड्को मायान् ।”

### Nepali नेपाली

- 705 जान्ने नजान्ने खामी राखे ।  
 706 जान्ने नजान्ने बरमी राखे ।  
 707 जान्ने नजान्ने गोणैचा पनि राखे ।  
 708 जान्ने नजान्ने मूल मान्छे पनि राखे ।  
 709 “आजसम्म तिमिले के गर्यौं, कसो गर्यौं?”  
 710 “यो मड्यौलीहरूले नमस्कार गर्नुपर्यो ।”  
 711 आसास्युन्दुरीको भाका, आसास्युन्दुरीको कुरा पनि गरे ।  
 712 “अब यो बेहुलीले धारा पनि चिन्नुपर्यो ।”  
 713 “नगरी पनि चिन्नुपर्यो ।”  
 714 “एक भाग भातको दुई भाग गर्नुपर्यो ।”  
 715 “एक चिम्टी मासुको दुई चिम्टी गर्नुपर्यो ।”

### English

- 705 Knowledgeable and ignorant *khāmi* were brought together.  
 706 Knowledgeable and ignorant *barmi* were brought together.  
 707 Knowledgeable and ignorant *goṇaicā* were also brought together.  
 708 Knowledgeable and ignorant principal officiants were also brought together.  
 709 “What have you done up until this day, and how did you go about it?” [the *guru* said to the bride].  
 710 “The *maḍyauli* must offer their *sevā*,” [ordered the *khāmi*].  
 711 [The *khāmi*] performed the melody and the recitation of *āsāsyunduri*.  
 712 “Now this bride must get to know the water spout,” [said the *khāmi*].  
 713 “She must also get to know the *nagari*.”  
 714 “She must divide one portion of cooked rice into two.”  
 715 “She must divide one piece of meat into two.”

### Thangmi थाङ्मी

- 716 “लौ, निको बालाकाई पिल्काको मायान्” यासीदुकाराणाड् बे, “लौ, याड्देखि बे का टेक्दुठाईते टालाईचा वई रावान् । पेरेक्दु ठाईते चुरुक्चा वई रावान् । निको का सात नस्ता सात नगरी वई नाहुनो । लौ नान् का मागाप्दु ठाईते गाप्चा रावान् । का सेनेवाको भाका वई पिल्काको मायान्” यासीताले ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 716 “लौ, हाम्रो बालालाई राख्नुपर्यो” भन्ने कारणमा त, “लौ, आजदेखि त यो फाटेको ठाउँमा टाल्दै ल्यायौं। उधरेको ठाउँमा सिलाउँदै ल्यायौं। हाम्रो यो सात नस्ता सात नगरी पनि राख्यौं। नपुगेको ठाउँमा पुर्याउँदै ल्यायौं। यो सेनेवाको भाका पनि सक्दै ल्यायौं” भनेर।

*English*

- 716 “So, here, keep our child,” meaning to say, “so, from today, we have patched all the tears; we have sewn all that was unravelled; we have even brought the seven representatives and the seven villages and clans together; we have filled up that which was in short supply; [having done this,] we brought the performance of the *senevā* agreement to an end,” they said.

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 717 सात नगरी वई नायेङ्गो ।  
 718 “लौ, नान् बुलीबुली खामी वई सेवा, बुलीबुली लाङ्मी वई सेवा, सात नगरी, सात पगरी वई सेवा, का ठु थोपदु वई सेवा, पाङ्ती थोपदु सेवा ।”  
 719 का रतिरति वंशाये नाहुदु, पतिपति वंशा राजाये नाहुदु थिति ।  
 720 का हाईहाई राजाये नाहुदु थिति ।  
 721 का स्युस्यु राजाये नाहुदु थिति ।  
 722 गोल्ला राजाये नाहुदु थिति ।  
 723 लौ, नान् साकालेई मीकाई सेवाचा हेनुनो ।  
 724 निको ठु, निको गोते, पिते साकालेई सेवा ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 717 सात नगरी पनि राखे ।  
 718 “लौ, अब जान्ने नजान्ने खामी पनि नमस्कार, जान्ने नजान्ने लमी पनि नमस्कार, सात नगरी, सात पगरी पनि नमस्कार, मासु पुग्ने पनि नमस्कार, पाती पुग्ने पनि नमस्कार ।”  
 719 यो रतिरति वंशले राखेको, पतिपति वंश राजाले राखेको थिति ।  
 720 यो हाईहाई राजाले राखेको थिति ।  
 721 यो स्युस्यु राजाले राखेको थिति ।  
 722 गोल्ला राजाले राखेको थिति ।  
 723 लौ, अब सबै मान्छेलाई नमस्कार गर्दै लग्यो ।  
 724 हाम्रो नाङ्लो, साथी, सभाको सबै जनालाई नमस्कार ।

*English*

- 717 They brought together seven representatives.  
 718 “So, *sevā* as well to the knowledgeable and ignorant *khāmi*, *sevā* also to the knowledgeable and ignorant matchmakers, *sevā* also to the seven representatives and seven important persons, *sevā* also to those who have received enough meat, and *sevā* also to those who have enough leaves.”



- 719 This tradition was started by the *Ratirati* lineage and the King of the *Patipati* lineage.
- 720 This tradition was started by King *Hāihāi*.
- 721 This tradition was started by King *Syusyu*.
- 722 This tradition was started by King *Golmā*.
- 723 Right then, now he has pretty much greeted everyone.
- 724 *Sevā* to our winnowing tray, to our friends and to all those gathered here.

The preceding passages demonstrate clearly how the Thangmi wedding ritual cycle works to reproduce ethnic identity writ large. As co-author Bir Bahadur Thami explained in reference to Maila Guru's recitations at Ram Jivan and Sangita's wedding, "Marriage is about bringing our community together. It's about the bride and the groom and their families recognizing each other as pieces of the Thangmi *jāti* (ethnicity) and becoming whole" (field notes, January 30, 2005, as cited in Shneiderman 2014: 290). The ritual process works to patch "all the tears" and sew "all that was unravelled" in the social fabric, using the temporally and spatially specific occasion of two young people's marriage to reaffirm the timeless, transcendent continuity of the ethnic collectivity as a whole. By offering *sevā*, or "service" to all members of the collectivity (as represented by the seven clan members), the gurus – and by association the deities – recognize each as an essential part of the whole. Ultimately the bride and groom must also offer such recognition (see below), to each other and each member of their extended families.

### *Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 752 साडो मासाङ्दु साडो ।
- 753 पत्तलको बासुकी बासुन्धारीये मासाङ्नादु साडो ।
- 754 चारकुनको तित्तीसकोटी, हरिचन्द्र, गोपीचन्द्र, सिद्धवान, भगवान्, भगवती जे साईवान् त्यही लोड्वान् सै परमेश्वर ।
- 755 का गुरु सगुने, ओस् सालो ।
- 756 लौ, नान् सगुन लोड्वान् ।
- 757 नान् निस्गोरे पुच्युककाई माझाडाङ् पाल्को मायान् र जोडाईको मायान् र बेहुला नाको मायान् ।
- 758 बेहुलाबेहुलीकाई चिसेवाको मायान् ।
- 759 पहिला बेहुलाको आमा केला, बेहुली सुम्फेरोका सेवाहो ।

### *Nepali* नेपाली

- 752 चलाऊ, नचलेको चलाऊ ।
- 753 पातालको बासुकी, बासुन्धारीले नचलाएको चलाऊ ।
- 754 चारकुनको तेत्तीसकोटी, हरिचन्द्र, गोपीचन्द्र, सिद्धवान, भगवान्, भगवती, जे जान्यौं त्यही गर्यौं, है परमेश्वरी ।
- 755 यो गुरु सगुनले, ओस् सालो ।
- 756 लौ, अब सगुन गर्यौं ।
- 757 अब दुई वटा पुच्युकलाई माझमा काट्नुपर्यो र जोड्नुपर्यो ।

- 758 बेहुलाबेहुलीलाई नमस्कार गर्न लगाउनुपर्यो ।  
759 पहिला बेहुलाको आमा आऊ र बेहुलीले तीन पटक नमस्कार गर ।

### English

- 752 Move the unmoved.  
753 Move what has not been moved by *bāsuki* and *bāsundhāri* of the earthly realm.  
754 The 33 million deities (*tettiskoṭi*) of the four directions, *haricandra*, *gopicandra*, *siddhavān*, *bhagavān*, *bhagavati*, we have completed that which we know how, oh *parmesvara*.  
755 *Os sālo*, with the guru's alcohol offering.  
756 *Lau*, we performed the *sagun*.  
757 Now we must cut two *puçyuk* effigies in the middle and join them together again.  
758 We must instruct the bride and groom to say *sevā* [to all those present].  
759 First of all, come here, oh mother of the groom, and bride: say *sevā* to her thrice.

### Thangmi थाङ्मी

- 760 बेहुलीये बेहुलाकाई सुम्फेरो सेवाको मायान् ।  
761 बेहुलाको आमाकाई पहिला, बेहुलाले लिबी, बेहुलीये सुम्फेरोका आपा आमाकाई सेवाहुनो ।  
762 का दिदी मुट्टी जाके नातोले साकालेई मीकाई सेवाको मायान् ।  
763 पहिला बेहुलाये, लिबीलिबी बेहुलीये, का नगरी पालीकाई सेवाहुनो ।  
764 नान् ठु बुझाईको मायान् ।  
765 हाबी निको का आमाको लोन्डो ।  
766 लाङ्मीको कोन्टे ।  
767 खामीको च्यापु ।  
768 मूल मीको कापुको खपटा ।  
769 पहिला गुरी बेहुलीको आपा आमाकाई दि टोके जाके, दि गोरे पैसा, लोन्डो ।

### Nepali नेपाली

- 760 बेहुलीले बेहुलालाई तीन पटक नमस्कार गर्नुपर्यो ।  
761 आमालाई पहिला बेहुलाले, पछि बेहुलीले तीन पटक आमाबाबुलाई नमस्कार गरे ।  
762 यो एकएक मुट्टी चामल राखेर सबै जनालाई नमस्कार गर्नुपर्यो ।  
763 पहिला बेहुलाले, पछिपछि बेहुलीले यो नगरीलाई नमस्कार गरे ।  
764 अब मासु बुझाउनुपर्यो ।  
765 हाम्रो यो आमाको लागि छाती ।  
766 लमीको लागि खुट्टा ।  
767 खामीको लागि च्यापु ।  
768 मूल मान्छेको लागि टाउको ।  
769 पहिला चाहिँ बेहुलीको आमालाई एक माना चामल, एउटा पैसा र छाती ।

*English*

- 760 The bride must say *sevā* to the groom thrice.  
 761 First the groom, then the bride, must say *sevā* to the [groom's] mother and father three times.  
 762 Each holding a handful of this husked rice, [the bride and the groom] must say *sevā* to all those present.  
 763 First the groom, and then the bride, said *sevā* to these representatives.  
 764 Now the meat must be shared out.  
 765 This chest is for [the bride's] mother.  
 766 For the matchmaker, a leg.  
 767 For the *khāmi*, the chin.  
 768 For the main officiant, the head.  
 769 First, to the mother of the bride, one *mānā* of husked rice, one coin and the chest [of the carcass].

*Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 770 गोतेनाङ्गोरे सेवा ।  
 771 साकालेकाई सेवा ।  
 772 पाङ्ती थोप्नादु सेवा ।  
 773 गोतेपीते मायामाङ्गी सेवा ।  
 774 सेवा! का गुरी आमाये लोन्डोडाङ् चिचामीउनो, त्यसकारण का लोन्डो पिचा माखालाम्वान् का गुरी आमाकाई ।  
 775 लौ, बेहुलीको ठु बुझाईवान् ।  
 776 नान् साकमावलीये दि रुपियाते बर्को केलेङ्थ्योडा ।  
 777 त्यसको साकमावलीकाई दि टोके जाके, पाँच पैसा ।  
 778 नान् बुडामावलीकाई दि रुपैयाँको चोलो राथ्योडा । त्यसको का दि टोके जाके, पाँच पैसा ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 770 नाङ्लोलाई नमस्कार ।  
 771 सबैलाई नमस्कार ।  
 772 पाती पुग्ने नमस्कार ।  
 773 गोतेपीते मायामाङ्गीलाई नमस्कार ।  
 774 नमस्कार! यो चाहिँ आमाले छातीमा सुताएको, त्यस कारण यो छाती दिन सकिएन यो आमालाई ।  
 775 लौ, बेहुलीको मासु बुझायौं ।  
 776 अब साक्खे मावलीले एक रुपैयाँमा बर्को ल्याउँथ्यो रे ।  
 777 त्यसको साटो साक्खे मावलीलाई एक माना चामल, पाँच पैसा ।  
 778 अब बुडामावलीलाई एक रुपैयाँमा चोलो आउँथ्यो रे । त्यसको यो एक माना चामल, पाँच पैसा ।

*English*

- 770 *Sevā* to the winnowing tray.  
 771 *Sevā* to all.  
 772 *Sevā* also to those who have received sufficient leaves.  
 773 *Sevā* to the *gotepite* and respected members of the natal household.  
 774 *Sevā* [to the bride's mother]! The mother put it [the groom as a child] to sleep on her chest, so this chest cannot be given to this mother [so instead she receives the chest of the carcass].  
 775 *Lau*, we have shared out the bride's [share of] meat.  
 776 Then it is said that the immediate relatives of the bride's mother would buy a shawl for one rupee.  
 777 In exchange for this, one *mānā* of husked rice and five coins were given to the immediate relatives of the bride's mother.  
 778 It is said that the male kin of the bride's mother arrived with a blouse worth one rupee. For this, one *mānā* of husked rice and five coins [must be given].

*Thangmi* थाङ्गी

- 779 लाङ्गीये तीन वर्षका केटी आमातेङ्थ्योडा ।  
 780 त्याङ् तीन वर्षका कोन्टे खियेङ्थ्योडा ।  
 781 तोको का टुणीको कोन्टे ।  
 782 नान् खामीको गुरी का वेद पढईसीदु बेर्याङ् वाङ्का कालाईदुये ।  
 783 तोको लागि का वाङ्का ।  
 784 लौ, नान् निको का बोरेको रीत तापान् ।  
 785 मायामाइती सेवा ।  
 786 हाम्रो यो बिहे गर्नुभन्दा पहिला यो सगुन ठोत्को गर्नुपर्छ ।  
 787 प्रायः यो शुभ काम गर्दा यो काम गर्नु पर्दछ ।  
 788 यो देउताको सगुनको यसरी गर्नुपर्छ भन्ने हो ।  
 789 हामीले त्यसै गर्नु हुँदैन ।  
 790 सामा सेरगाम् गरेर मात्र यो काम गर्नुपर्छ ।  
 791 यो काम गरेपछि खोलाडाप्लाको काम गर्ने भन्ने कुरा यो चाहिँ थानी बनाएको ।

*Nepali* नेपाली

- 779 लाङ्गीये तीन वर्षका केटी आमातेङ्थ्योडा ।  
 780 त्याङ् तीन वर्षका कोन्टे खियेङ्थ्योडा ।  
 781 तोको का टुणीको कोन्टे ।  
 782 नान् खामीको गुरी का वेद पढईसीदु बेर्याङ् वाङ्का कालाईदुये ।  
 783 तोको लागि का वाङ्का ।  
 784 लौ, नान् निको का बोरेको रीत तापान् ।  
 785 मायामाइती सेवा ।

- 786 हाम्रो यो बिहे गर्नुभन्दा पहिला यो सगुन ठोत्को गर्नुपर्छ ।  
 787 प्रायः यो शुभ काम गर्दा यो काम गर्नु पर्दछ ।  
 788 यो देउताको सगुनको यसरी गर्नुपर्छ भन्ने हो ।  
 789 हामीले त्यसै गर्नु हुँदैन ।  
 790 सामा सेरगाम् गरर मात्र यो काम गर्नुपर्छ ।  
 791 यो काम गरेपछि खोलाडाप्लाको काम गर्ने भन्ने कुरा यो चाहिँ थानी बनाएको ।

### English

- 779 It is said that the matchmaker spent three years looking for a bride.  
 780 And over these three years, his legs shriveled [due to overuse].  
 781 In return for that, he received the goat's leg.  
 782 It is said that the *khāmi*'s chin hurt from reading the *ved*.  
 783 In return for that, he receives this chin [of the goat].  
 784 *Lau*, this marriage ritual has been concluded.  
 785 *Sevā* to the respected members of the natal household.  
 786 [Guru explaining in Nepali:] Before this wedding of ours is undertaken, this *sagun thoṭko* must be performed.  
 787 Usually, while carrying out auspicious works, this task must be performed.  
 788 This *sagun* of the deities must be carried out in this way.  
 789 We cannot do it just any old way.  
 790 This task should be performed only after *sāmā sergām* [gathering together all the materials that are needed].  
 791 After performing this task, the *kholāḍāplā* must be performed, [and for that purpose] this shrine has been constructed.

In these final segments of the *senevā*, the sacrificial goat offered by the bride's family at the groom's house is parceled out between various ritual participants. The mother of the groom receives the chest, the chief matchmaker the leg, the *khāmi* the chin, and the chief *guru* the head. Often the *khāmi* and *guru* are one and the same person, in which case he would receive both cuts of meat. Once the meat is distributed, the marriage ritual itself is formally concluded; the bride and groom are fully united and most attendees disperse.

#### 4. *Kholāḍāplā* (Return of the deities to the divine world)

The final stage of the wedding is the *kholāḍāplā*, in which the deities who have been called into presence are dispatched back to the divine world. Experientially, this feels almost like an afterthought – most guests have left, many are sleeping after the nearly 24 hour ritual, and the *khāmi* and/or *guru* chants almost on his own, speaking directly and exclusively to the deities. The recitations of the *kholāḍāplā* largely repeat those of the *deva sāng* and *sagun thoṭko* as described and presented above. Deities and their territorial abodes are named, and they are asked to “move the unmoved” with reference to several household and ritual

objects visible within the home in which the ritual takes place. All of the deities are then collectively called into a “shrine” which the guru constructs out of grain offerings and effigies. Once in the shrine, the guru beseeches the deities to rest at peace and be sated with the offerings they have received. Upon conclusion, the “shrine” is disassembled and disposed of in a nearby water source, thereby returning the deities to their territorial abodes. *Phāselung* is the local Thangmi name of the hamlet where the ritual is taking place.

### *Thangmi* थाङ्मी

- 900 काब्रेचउरको लिङ्गो देवा, खोकको देवा, खोलाडाप्लाको देवा कुवापाडाड केलने सै देवा है नान्बे ।  
 901 का वई दाईनो थाचा केलने सै दे वा है नान्बे ।  
 902 फासेलुड लोडबोडाडको बाबु दिलको छाया, आमा दिलको काया का वई होक्दु ।  
 903 मुई उनिङ् छुसीचा केलने ।  
 904 डाडाणेड उनिङ् थाचा केलने ।  
 905 बर्मा उनिङ् वाला छुसिचा केलने ।  
 906 काबे चालाको वाखे डडडको वाखे लोङ्को डातावाले । सर्जेखोला लिङ्दाङ्को बाबुदिलको छाँया  
 आमादिलको काया ।  
 907 का वई लोङ्को डातावाले । का वई दाईनो थाचा केलने ।  
 908 माथोपनीदु थोप्चा केलने ।  
 909 शान्तिका सम्पूर्ण थाचा केलने, ओस् सालो ।

### *Nepali* नेपाली

- 900 काब्रेचौरको दुङ्गाको देवता, खोचको देवता, खोलाडाप्लाको देवता थानीमा आऊ है देवता है  
 अब त ।  
 901 यो पनि दाहिने भएर आऊ है देवता है अब त ।  
 902 फासेलुड ठाउँको बाबु दिलको छाया, आमा दिलको काया यो पनि छ ।  
 903 केरा जस्तो पसाएर आऊ ।  
 904 चरा जस्तो भएर आऊ ।  
 905 अम्रिसो जस्तो पात हालेर आऊ ।  
 906 यो त चालाको भाषा गर । डडडको भाषा गरौं भनेर । सर्जेखोला लिङ्दाङ्को बाबु दिलको  
 छाया आमा दिलको काया ।  
 907 यो पनि गरौं भनेर । यो पनि दाहिने भएर आऊ ।  
 908 नपुगेको पुग्दै आऊ ।  
 909 सम्पूर्ण शान्ति हुँदै आऊ, ओस् सालो ।

### *English*

- 900 Oh deities of the stone, deities of the gorge and *kholāḍāplā* deities of the place  
 known as *Kābrecaur*, come to the shrine, oh now you deities.  
 901 Come like this, to the right side, oh now you deities.  
 902 The shadow of the father’s heart and the body of the mother’s heart of the place  
 called *Phāselung*, these are also here.

- 903 Come, ripening like a banana.  
 904 Come, being like a bird.  
 905 Come, growing leaves like the bouquet grass.  
 906 Talk in the language of these traditions. Saying, let us speak in the tradition of  
*ḍāṅḍāṅ* [the sound of the shaman's drum], the shadow of the father's heart and  
 the body of the mother's heart of the place called *Sarjekholā Lingdāṅ*.  
 907 Meaning let us also do this, let this also come to be on the right side.  
 908 If you haven't enough, well then please come feeling sated.  
 909 Come, feeling completely peaceful, *os sālo*.

### Conclusion

Writing about Anakalangese society, on the Indonesian island of Sumba, anthropologist Webb Keane notes that ritual speech “creates authority by enacting icons of imputed ancestral originals” and that it “exemplifies the problem of agency because of the way it foregrounds the ambiguous authorship of spoken words: they must be attributable at once to the speaker and the ancestors” (1997: 24). The same may be said for the language, register and speech patterns in which Thangmi wedding rituals are performed. There is something about ritual speech that “compels speakers to be aware that their words are not fully in their control” (ibid), and thereby open to misunderstanding or misattribution. There is a vulnerability among *khāmi* and *guru* who perform Thangmi wedding rituals: they are at once elevated and empowered by the timeless quality and ancestral gravity of the ritual register, and yet critically aware of its inherently reflexive character. “While saying things about the world, ritual speech is constantly making reference to itself” wrote the organizers of a 2010 workshop on ‘Ritual Speech and Subjectivity’.<sup>9</sup>

Thangmi ritual speech is heavily stylized and highly marked, and distinctively different from everyday speech. The Thangmi ritual register includes rhythms and rhymes absent from the vernacular, and is replete with repetitive elements, reduplications and paired couplets. While loans (both nominal and verbal) are a common feature of everyday Thangmi, such borrowings are mostly from Nepali, Newar (Nepal Bhasa) and even English in the vernacular. The Thangmi ritual register, by contrast, borrows more from Sanskrit, Tibetan and Classical Newar, reinforcing a widespread sense that Thangmi ritual speech “embodies an unchanging heritage that transcends the here and now” (Keane 1997: 115). This sense of linguistic elevation, loftiness, antiquity – even superiority – in Thangmi ritual speech is further advanced by the use of specialized lexical items for otherwise mundane nouns that have commonplace vernacular equivalents. These elements are not sacred per se, meaning that non-officiants are free to use them, but they are inextricably linked to the production and context of Thangmi ritual, and essentially meaningless outside of ritual activities.

At the level of practice, we can see how each instance of marriage at once serves to unite two individuals and their families, and to reproduce the ethnic collectivity as a whole through a social ritual that incorporates the entire community. The fact that some

<sup>9</sup> See <http://art.rituel.memoire.free.fr/?p=311>, last accessed 10 December 2015.

elements of the ritual cycle have been subject to Hinduisation does not diminish their power within the Thangmi social context. Rather, the wedding ritual with its many components should be viewed as a synthetic whole that has remained remarkably vibrant as a ritual form over time, even if some of its specific contextual elements have shifted in relation to broader socio-religious transformations. Indeed, each wedding is different, according to the personal style of the officiant; the characteristics of the locale where it is conducted and the territorial deities who abide there; and the personal traditions and desires of the two families in question, not to mention the bride and the groom themselves. By presenting excerpts from the recitations at one actual wedding event, we hope to have contributed to the ongoing discussion about the broader dynamics of cultural, linguistic and ritual change both within the scholarly community and the Thangmi community itself.

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