CONTENTS

3 Introduction
RITUAL SPEECH IN THE HIMALAYAS: ORAL TEXTS AND THEIR CONTEXTS
Martin Gaenszle

17 RAMMA THE HUSBAND, SUWA THE WIFE: THE CONSECRATION SONG OF A KHAM-MAGAR SHAMAN (NEPAL)
Anne de Sales

41 SINGING ABOUT CREATION: A PUMA HOPMACHAM PERFORMANCE
Martin Gaenszle

71 NUKA: TEXT, MELODY AND MOVEMENT IN A ‘NEW GRAIN’ RITUAL PERFORMED BY THE DUMI RAI OF EASTERN NEPAL
Marion Wettstein, Alban von Stockhausen and Chatur Bhakta Rai

105 THANGMI WEDDING RITUAL TEXTS
Sara Shneiderman, Mark Turin, Bir Bahadur Thami and Hikmat Khadka

147 THE LANGUAGE OF RITUAL IN TANGSA: THE WIHU SONG
Stephen Morey and Jürgen Schöpf

185 LEGLESS AND EYELESS [AND TONGUELESS] IN SEARCH OF INCENSE: ORAL AND WRITTEN VERSIONS OF A BON SPOS RABS FROM NORTHEASTERN BHUTAN
Toni Huber

213 Contributors
Thangmi Wedding Ritual Texts
Sara Shneiderman, Mark Turin, Bir Bahadur Thami and Hikmat Khadka

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 Dolakha and Sindhupālcok districts) and northeastern India (concentrated in the Darjeeling district of West Bengal and the state of Sikkim). 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”. 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 Sindhupalchok 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 sāṅ (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 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.3 We offer a transcription (in Thangmi) and

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3 Following Gaenszle’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. 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

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 hinduisising 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. 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 thot.ko (Consecration of the ritual alcohol offering)

Instead we come directly to the sagun thot.ko 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, jād in Nepali), and thot.ko 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.
**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 bamboo strips that bind together the beams of the house.

38 If you are in the high pastures, move the unmoved with the jatamāsi bush.

39 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.

40 If you are in the middle pastures, move the unmoved with various other plants and by the bhairum leaf.

41 Move the unmoved with the incense of saurisukpā from the Timāl region, oh parmesvari.

42 Now move the unmoved with the divine congregation.

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**Nepali**

34 जलसुचीले नचलाएको चलाउँ, थलसुचीले नचलाएको चलाउँ।

35 गृहमाताले, सामुशुँ, सामुधुरीले नचलाएको चलाउँ।

36 गहुँका खरले नचलाएको चलाउँ, खुल्ले नचलाएको चलाउँ।

37 ठूलो ढोकाको देवताले नचलाएको चलाउँ।

38 सारा बन्धनले नचलाएको चलाउँ।

39 लेको भादेिखि जटामासीले नचलाएको चलाउँ।

40 बैसीको भादेिखि सालघुरीले नचलाएको चलाउँ, गोकुलघुरीले नचलाएको चलाउँ।

41 बॉच ठाउँको भादेिखि नानापातीले, भैरुम्पातील नचलाएको चलाउँ।

42 तिमाल खण्डको सौरिसुक्पाले नचलाएको चलाउँ है परमेश्वरी अब त।

43 यो देवताको सभा नचलाएको चलाउँ।
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_ थाङ्गमी

44 धनसाबा मासाइनादु साडो।
45 ईतरबीये मासाइनादु साडो।
46 लोइवती मासाइनादु साडो।
47 नान्ये का सुनाबङ्गी, गोलाबङ्गी मासाइनादु साडो पर्मेघरी।
48 का वे मेके बानदालेक चिमे बानदालेक का नान्ये मासाइनादु साडो।
49 आल्ताआबार, पाल्ताआबार मासाइनादु साडो।
50 ईयामरी मासाइनादु साडो मै पर्मेघरी।
51 दुदुक्वर्न, सिझङ्कर्वो मासाइनादु साडो।
52 मासाइनादु साडो नान्ये।
53 का नान्ये का जलेघर, कार्षिकर, बिसुनी, बियुकर्मा देवा सै पर्मेघरी।

_Nepali_ नेपाली

44 धनसभा नचलाएको चलाऊ।
45 ईतरबीले नचलाएको चलाऊ।
46 लोइवतीले नचलाएको चलाऊ।
47 अब तौ यो सुनाबङ्गी, गोलाबङ्गी नचलाएको चलाऊ पर्मेघरी।
48 यो त सानो र टूलो टोटलालेन नचलाएको चलाऊ।
49 भुईमा जम्मा गरेको र पातमा राखेको देवताको नचलाएको चलाऊ।
50 टूलो मासीले नचलाएको चलाऊ हे पर्मेघरी।
51 दुदुक्वर्न, सिझङ्कर्वले नचलाएको चलाऊ।
52 नचलाएको चलाऊ अब तौ।
53 यो अब तौ यो जलेघर, कार्षिकर, बिसुनी, बियुकर्मा देवता हे पर्मेघरी।

_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 _toṭalā_ 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, kā̃sesvar, bisuni and bisvakarmā, oh parmesvari.

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

Thangmi थाङ्गमी

54 सिमाङघाटबाट कुमाङघाट आएको देवता: हाइदिङ्ग, हुईदिङ्ग, साङ्गग्रम, न्युटाटीको देव, सुनै गुंहुङ्गाको देव।
55 देूराक्सा, देूटाको देव, सुनैढाङ्गाद्रोको देव, चिमङ्गार्को देवा सै माङघाट नांड।
56 कमारु देूराक्सा कमारु देवा सै देव।
57 आहा गोर्जुमाको दिमे, ओहो गोर्जुमाको दिमे, बाङ्गाद्रु देवा नांड, का मेकेलाङ्गको देवा, चिमङ्गार्को देवा, ह परमेरी।
58 का माई देवा, का धोकोको देवा, धोकारुलुमको बालो ठेनको देवा, च्युकुन्माचा देवा, गोखामाचा देवा, याङ्गाको देवा, गोठाको देवा, परमेरी का साङ च।

Nepali नेपाली

54 सिमाङघाटबाट कुमाङघाट आएको देवता: हाइदिङ्ग, हुईदिङ्ग, साङ्गग्रम, न्युटाटीको देव, सुनै गुंहुङ्गाको देव।
55 माङघाटको देवं, ठाङ्गाद्रोको देव, ठूलो टोटालाका देवताहुङ्गाट नचलाएको चलाउ।
56 कमारु देूराक्सा कमारु देवा है देवा।
57 आहा गोर्जुमाको दिमे, ओहो गोर्जुमाको दिमे, आएको देव, तिमी यो ठूलो टोटालाको देव, सानो टोटालाको देव, हे परमेरी।
58 यो माई देव, यो धोखाको देव, धांडो ढुङ्गे अरलो गुंहुङ्गाको देव, च्युकुन्माचा देवा, गोखामाचा देव, याङ्गाको देवा, गोठाको देवा, परमेरी यो सबै ठाउँको देवताहुङ्गा चल।

English

54 Now [we call upon] the deities who came from Simāṅghāṭ and Kumāṅghāṭ: hāidingmā, huidingmā, sanggungmā, the deity nyuṭāṭi, and the deity sunai gunggung.
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 toṭalā tree.
56 Now we call upon the deity kamākshanu, from the place called Kamāru.
57 Aha, you deities who have come from Thime of gorjumā, oh you deities who have come from Thime of gorjumā, this deity of the large toṭalā, deity of the small toṭalā, oh parmesvari.
58 The māi deities of the deep places, the deity of the tall road-blocking stone, the deity cyurkummacā, the deity gorkhāmacā, 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 goth, 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. 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** थाङ्गमी

486 साकारेलेसे सेवा, मायामाइलो बई सेवा, गुर्पालिलो बई सेवा, गोतेनाङ्गोले सेवा।
487 पान्ते सेवा, तु थोपादु बई सेवा।
488 निकों जरीको मुझासै बुलीबुली लाद्दी बई डैकाउनो, बुलीबुली खामी बई डैकाउनो।
489 डैकाउदु कारणैबेदु तो डैकाउनो।
490 सुम्पा माणी बई डैकाउनो।
491 रोथोक मेन्चा बई डैकाउनो।
492 नानू मेस्मुचाको नेम्ते हेन्को मायान्य यासीताले खाम लोयेङ्नो।

**Nepali** नेपाली

486 सभै जनालाई नमस्कार, माको माइलाई पनि नमस्कार, गुरुहालाई पनि नमस्कार, नाङ्लोराई पनि नमस्कार।
487 पाली, मासु पुग्नेहरूलाई पनि नमस्कार।
488 हाम्रो बेहुलाले जान्ने नजाले लम्बी पनि जम्मा गयो, जान्ने नजाले खामी पनि जम्मा गयो।
489 जम्मा गरेपिर्छो घौटोमा जाँउँ पनि जम्मा गयो।
490 तीन वटा रोटी पनि जम्मा गयो।
491 एउटा अल्लोको झोला पनि जम्मा गयो।
492 अव बेहुलीसबै घरमा जानुपर्यो भनेको त्यो गरे।

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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 निस्काङाई टिकी बई लागाईतोले।

494 “नान् निस्मुचाको नेम्ते हेन्को मायान्” डाटोले डायइउ वेयाउ बे दीका बाणे बे रोयोक्छ मेन्चा ख्याङ्झीयान्।

495 दिका बाणे बे टिलिलीड टोड़ ख्याङ्झीइन्।

496 दिका बाणी बुसिताले याहान्।

497 निस्मुचाको नेम्ते यायेडान्।

498 दैलोटे याताले ख्याङ्झ ख्याङ्झ ईसेडान्।

499 “लौ का सुम केलान कस्तो सु केलान?” ईसेदाले।

500 पापासीलापाटे, मामासीलापाटे “लौ निको बे का मेस्मुचाकाई हारा लोडो कुनिंदो लोडो?” ईसेदु कारणाई बे लोड खाणोउ बई टाङ्चा हेनेिनो।

501 थेम्बा बई उखातोले नाहुनो।

502 का बाँडीने कोन्टे बई छोल्चा हेनुनो।

503 खाणोउ टाङ्चोले बे मजेरीको छुंउटे होक्योडान्।

Nepali नेपाली

493 बेहुलाको बाँडीने बई जना लमा लाईटी टिका पनी लगाए।

494 “अब बेहुलाको बाँडी आमाको घरमा जाउनप्यो” भनेर एक जना साथीले जलोको झोला भियो।

495 एक जना साथीले त चैतोला जाउ पनी बाक्यो।

496 एउटा रोटी पनी समाएर गए।

497 बेहुलाको बाँडी आमाको घरमा गए।

498 दैलोटे गाएर ख्याङ्झ ख्याङ्झ गरे।

499 “लौ, यी को मान्छे आयो, कस्तो माछो आयो?” भनेर।

500 बेहुलाको बाँडी आमाको “लौ हाम्रो त यो बेहुलीलाई के गरौं, कसो गरौं?” भनेर ढोका पनी उघादै लगे।

501 सैधारलाई पनी नमस्कार गरे।
The groom's father also offered *tikā* to two of the matchmakers.

Saying, “Now we must go to the bride’s parents’ house,” one friend slung the Himalayan nettle bag over his shoulder.

Another friend carried a clay pot of grain beer.

They also carried one piece of bread.

They went to the bride’s parents’ house.

At the door, they made a lot of noise.

“Oh! Who has come, what kind of people have come?” they [the bride’s parents] wondered.

“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.

They offered greetings to the threshold.

Stepping in with their right foot first, they entered.

Having opened the door, they sat down in the middle of the room.

**Thangmi** थाङमी

का छेरुने होकाले भे “लो, नामु हारा लोझो, कुनिङ्ले लोझो?” यासीयोइताले। सुमाका होक्योडान।

“हारा जेतले केलानु कुनिङ्ले जेतले केलानु?” यासीयोडान।

“लो, आमा आपापारे निने ब्यापारे, तुरिणोंको ब्यापारे केलिन् गाईगाइ भे गोटाको जेखा कोरोली चाहायान्” यासीन्।

“निनो कोरोली भे माहोक इसीदु काराणाङ भे, लो निने भे कन्या अर्थाङ्न केलिन्” यासीन्।

बुलीबुली खामी निनसका भे छुचु खेन यासीन्।

पापासीलापाटेये आईकुचा जप्जप्याईनो।

मामासीलापाटेये काराती जप्जप्याईनो।

**Nepali** नेपाली

छेरुमा वसेर “लो, अब के गारी, कसो गारी?” भने। चुपचाप भसे।

“के कामले आयो, कसो कामा आयो?” भने।

“लो, आमा वाहायन, हामी त गाईको व्यापारमा, बाबाको व्यापारा भायो, मलाई त गोटको दूलो कोरली चाहियो” भने।

“हामी कोरली त छैन “भनेरङ, “लो हामी त कन्याको अर्थमा आयो” भने।

दुई जना त जाने नजाले लम्बीले कुकुरको जस्तो अनुहार भनाए।

बेहुलीको बाबुले खुकुरी जप्जप्याई।

बेहुलीको आमले कथिया जप्जप्याई।

बेहुलीको आमले चुलो जप्जप्याई।
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.

“What have you come for, what brings you here?” they [the bride's parents] asked.

“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.”

“But we have no young female calf,” they [the bride's parents] said, “Oh, our purpose is to find a virgin,” they said.

The knowledgeable and ignorant matchmakers made faces like dogs.

The bride's father shook a khukuri at them.

The bride's mother shook a sickle at them.

The bride's mother shook the stone cooking stove at them.

“Lau, now what shall we do, how shall we do it?” they [the bride's parents] said.

“Fine, you are responsible for the house.”

Having given them [the matchmakers] the responsibility, the bride's father left the house.

One of the matchmakers stayed at the house.
Another of the matchmakers followed him [the bride’s father].

[The one who stayed in the house] hung a Himalayan nettle bag containing three pieces of bread [on the household bampā].

One friend had followed [the bride’s father].

He followed him, up he went, and down he went, following all the way.

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Thangmi थाङ्गमी

520 मेलोते याहान् मेलोते बई पोहुनो।
521 जामाते याहान् जामाते बई पोहुनो।
522 नगरिते याहान् नगरिते बई पोहुनो।
523 बोरेते याहान् बोरेते बई पोहुनो।
524 साबाते याहान् साबाते बई पोहुनो।
525 पोहुदु काराणाङ् बे जेखा सोडी जेखा आलाकढाङ् हाक्योइताले बे खाम लोयेङ्नो।
526 आलाकको छेउते होकाले “लौ, खाम लोडी” 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 निहिमा गयो, निहिमा पनि पछ्यायो।
524 सभामा गयो, सभामा पनि पछ्यायो।
525 पछ्याउँदाखेिर त टूलो खोलाको टूलो सीघुमा बसेर कुरा गरे।
526 सीघुमाको छोइमा बसेर “लौ, कुरा गरे” 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.
Like a fish cutting through water, they cut through the conversation.

So, he [the matchmaker] managed to convince him [the father of the bride] to return home.

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).

"Lau, now let's have a talk at home," they said.

"Let's talk about the engagement gifts," they said, "Lau, father and mother, now we must call together the bride's paternal relatives."

"We must call together the bride's maternal relatives," they [the bride's parents] said.

The natal household came together.
Like an eagle lying in wait for a chicken, they lay in wait.

Now, they finally had a good conversation.

They performed the part of the ritual that involved exchanging gifts.

They also performed the part of the ritual that involved the cārdām [meaning that they spoke nicely with one another, and exchanged gifts.]

During the cārdām ritual, representatives from four villages sat together.

Seven representatives [of each clan] and seven from each village sat together.

The knowledgeable and ignorant khāmi also sat down, the knowledgeable and ignorant durmi also sat down and they held a meeting.

“In your house is there really a big hāng?” [king]

“Do you really have a large axe? Do you have a large khukuri?”

“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 janajātī 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 थाङ्ग्मी**

545 “माझी काम छु किन्?”
546 यासीदु कारणाङ्खे माझीगाल बई मानीताबान्।
547 धनगाल बई मानीताबान्।
548 साँगाल बई मानीताबान्।
549 निनो मेन्ते निरोडङ्खे, बोसिङ्टोके, विक रा होकुँ?
550 यासीदु कारणाङ्खे बे का निरोडङ्खे, बोसिङ्टोके मानीताबान् यासीदु कारणाङ्खे बे, का हारा बई मानीताबान्।
551 “नान् का चारदामको भाका लोङ्खे।” यासीदु कारणाङ्खे बे चारदामको भाका बई लोङ्खे।
552 का नगरी होत्न्थे "का आसास्तुनुङ्खे बई लोङ्खे मायान्।” यासीदु कारणाङ्खे बे आसास्तुतुनुङ्खे भाका लोङ्खे, बुलीबुली खामी नातोले, का बुलीबुली लाङ्ख्नी नाहुनो। चार नस्ता बई नाहुनो।

**Nepali नेपाली**

545 “माझी काम छु किन्?”
546 भस्ते कारणामा त माझी काम पनि देखेनो।
547 धनगाल पनि देखेनो।
548 साँगाल पनि देखेनो।
549 तिब्रो धर्म निरोडङ्खे बटुङ्खे, उतसिस्मो बटुङ्खे बिप छु किन्?
550 छु भस्ते कारणामा त निरोडङ्खे बटुङ्खे, उतसिस्मो बटुङ्खे देखेनो। भस्ते कारणामा त यो केही पनि देखेनो।
551 “अब यो चारदामको भाका गरो।” भनेपछि त चारदामको भाका पनि गरे।
552 यो नगरी बकोर “यो आसास्तुनुङ्खे पनि गरुण्यो।” भस्ते कारणामा त आसास्तुनुङ्खे भाका गरेर, जान्छे नजान्छे खामी राख्यो, यो जान्छे नजान्छे लम्बी राख्यो। चार नस्ता पनि राख्यो।
“Is there fishing to be done?”
Meaning to say, we didn’t see any fishing.
We also didn’t see any wealth.
We also didn’t see a rich man.
Are there bowls of nirong, bowls of alder, and poison in your house?
Meaning to say, we didn’t see nirongtoko and bosingtoko, that’s to say, we didn’t see anything.
“Now let’s recite the ritual melody of the cārdām,” they said, and with that they recited the melody of the cārdām.
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].
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 *ṭutumbārāṅg* (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* थाङ्ग्मी

618 निको नान् का पहिला चारदामको रीति च्याईन्।
619 नान् का बेहुलाको नेम्ने गुरी बाटो छेकाइयो।
620 का सेनेवाको रीति साईले बई, मासाइले बई होक्को मायान।
621 कातेको सामा दैकाको मायान।
622 लौ, कातेको स्युनुनी हु छ।
623 का स्युनुनीङ्गु गुरी कातेको सामा केल्नो।
624 लेम्बेते निस्सोरे पुष्युक केल्नो।
625 कातेको ठु बई केल्नो।
626 लोंडो बाल्डागोरे सगुन मूल सगुन गुरकाई, ठाका ठोइ गुरको स्वर खुलने।
Nepali  नेपाली
618 हायो अब यो पहिला चारदामको रीति खायो।
619 अब यो बेहुलाको घरमा चाहिए चाहो छो।
620 यो सेनेवाको रीति जाने पनि नजाने पनि बस्नुपयो।
621 यहाँको सामान जम्मा गन्नुपयो।
622 लौ, यहाँको जॉड़ छाने को छु?
623 जॉड़ छानेले यहाँको सामान ल्याउ।
624 नाइलोमा दुई बटा पुच्युक ल्याउ।
625 यहाँसम्म मासु ल्याउ।
626 छाती ल्याउ, पाँच बटा सगुन मूल सगुन गुरुलाई, मीठो जॉड गुरुको स्वर खुल्नलाई।

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  थाङमी
627 नाना निको माल्ली बई नाको।
628 सगुन माथिका पुए शरखुर नाको।
629 लोन्छोते दिमाना जाके, सेनेबाको दिमाना जाके, माल्लीको दिमाना जाके, रु फिए, बुढामावलिको दिमाना जाके, रु फिए, बर्ती बई बलाइनो।

Nepali  नेपाली
627 अब हास्य माल्ली पनि राखो।
628 सगुन माथि काथु शरखुर पनि राखो।
629 छाती, एक माना चामल, सेनेबाको एक माना चामल, माल्लीको एक माना चामल, रु फिए, बुढामावलिको एक माना, चामल रु फिए, बर्ती 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 थाङ्गमी
630 नानू आसातोइ केलनो।
631 ढेलाच्युङ्गली नानो।
632 दोयात्रियाच्या नातोले बकोळे ढाकाईनो।
633 नानू आयु लोमेंदु माणाई बाह पाठीको तोको छोका, बाल्डागोर टाईते किला सासोले पेउँको स्याउँला साप्नो।
634 उपुको वाला हाली का टुटुम्बाराङ्ग बनाईनो।
635 नानू सेनेवा लोहँग मायान्।

Nepali नेपाली
630 अब तेनजाङ्ग ल्याउँ।
631 ढेलाच्युङ्गली राखँ।
632 दोयात्रियाच्या राखेर बकोळे ढाक।
633 अब आयु सरको रोटी, बाह पाठीको जाँड छोका, पाँच ठाउँमा किला गाडेर पेउँको स्याउँला गाड।
634 उपुको पात हाली यो टुटुम्बाराङ्ग बनाउँ।
635 अब सेनेवा गानुपयो।

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 ्तुंबाराङ्ग (wedding tent).
635 Now we must perform the senevā.?

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 Gompha Āpok (Gompha Cave).”
After doing this, we will herd the groom inside.

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.

We herd in five kinds of offerings, five ́to álā flowers and the saimundro.

First we herd in the saimundro; after which we drive in the bride.

After leading the bride in, having placed five ́to álā 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.
Now the bride and groom sit in the place where the senevā will be performed.

Then the alcohol offerings for the main officiant.

Along with the spines of banana leaves, and the bread with which the path was blocked, are needed.

Now we exorcise the funerary spirits of the seven brothers and seven sisters.

There is a saying that seven brothers married seven sisters.

After gathering together madyauli and lokanti, some oil in a small wooden vessel and turmeric and leaves on a leaf plate, the ritual must commence.

Now the khāmi performs the ritual.

In order for him to speak without ceasing, grain beer must be given to the khāmi.

Nepali नेपाली

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Now the khāmi performs the ritual.

In order for him to speak without ceasing, grain beer must be given to the khāmi.
Sevā also to the winnowing tray.

Sevā to the congregation that has gathered.

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.

This is a ritual started by King Patipati.

Seven representatives and seven important persons came together.

Then we affirmed the agreement of the senevā.

Five kinds of offerings were made, the offering to the main officiant was also made.

This meat, the chin [of the carcass] and all of the required items were in position.

This is the agreement of the senevā.

In order for the two matchmakers to go from the groom’s house to the bride's house, the groom even offered them a tikā [made of sindur].

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.
The two knowledgeable and ignorant matchmakers went to the bride's house, where they received sindur tikā from seven representatives of the clans and seven representatives of the villages.

So then, they went to the bride's house and made a loud noise: khyāng-khyāng.

“Who has come? What kind of person has come?”

The matchmakers replied, “We are helpless, you must give us a torch.”

Bringing a padlock, one of the matchmakers opened the door.

At the large door, they each put their right foot first.

They sat in the middle of the floor.

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?”

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 tikā.
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 थाङ्गमी
679 मेलोटे याहान् मेलोटे पोहुनो।
680 जामाते याहान् जामाते पोहुनो।
681 वीरेटे याहान् वीरेटे पोहुनो।
682 नगरीते याहान् नगरीते पोहुनो।
683 ईसीदु काराणाङ् वे सोढी आलाकेन होटाले फक्राईचा बानुनो।
684 थाङ्गमा उत्तुने उनिङ्ग खाम्का कटाईचा हेतुनो।
685 आम्चानेये उनिहु चामेक कोटेदु उनिहु खाम्को काटाइचा हेनेङ्नो।
686 ईसीदु काराणाङ्ग बे खिये खिच काटाईचा हेनुनो।

Nepali नेपाली
679 मेलोमा गयो, मेलोमा पछाड्यो।
680 जता पनिव गयो, जता पनि पछाड्यो।
681 बिहेमा गयो, बिहेमा पछाड्यो।
682 नगरीमा गयो, नगरीमा पछाड्यो।
683 भन्ने कारणमा ते खोलाको सृज्ञामा बसेको फाकाँएक लयो।
684 थाम्पा मुसाले जस्तो कुरा काट्दै लयो।
685 चोया मुसाले चोया काटे जस्तो कुरा काट्दै लयो।
686 भन्ने कारणमा ते माछाले पानी काटे जस्तो कुरा काट्दै लयो।

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 नेम्ने येयेङ्नान्।
688 नेम्ने दिका लाङ्खीये बे हिड़की जीतो ज्योउटोले नाहुतोले।
689 “हारा लोड़ा, कुनिहु लोड़ा?” नेम्ने होको येङ्नान्।
690 “लौ, आपामाली” आर्को उनिहु निस्स्थेन लोयेङ्नो।
691 “लौ, कोस्तोलिको भाका लोड़ो मायान्” यासीयो येङ्नान्।
692 “चारदामको भाका बे नाइन नेम्ने बे” चारदामको भाका लोयेङ्नो।
693 “नाइने नेम्नेहाडू जेखा निन्दु? रापा जेखा निन्दु? आईकुचा जेखा निन्दु? निरोइटोके, बोसीइटोके रा निन्दु?”

Nepali नेपाली
687 घरमा गए।
688 घरमा एउटा लमीले हृदिकी जीतो पोलेर रखेछ।
689 “के गरी, कसरी गरी?” घरमा बसे�।
690 “लौ, बाबुहरू” मिङ्को जस्तो पुईं अनुहार बनाए।
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.]

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**Thangmi** थाङ्गमी

694 “नियो रापा जेखा बई मानी, राजागाल बई मानी, साहगाल बई मानी” यासीन्।

695 यासीदु कारणाङ्ग वे लौ नान चारदामको भाका बई लोहुनो।

696 चारदामको भाकाङाङ्ग वे खुईतुङ्ग चेनेमाटीको भाका बई लोहुनो।

697 “लौ, नाने नम्भे ने वास ग्याम्सीहु उनिंदु रान्यासीसं केलिङ्गान्।”

698 हिरियो चहुरेठु सुरिको साथा लोहुनो।

699 खुईतुङ्ग चेनेमाटीको भाकाङाङ्ग वे व्याकारी बई नाहुनो।

700 नान स्नेवाको भाका लोङुनो।

701 छ्याभाराती का बई याइङ्गेखी पिकाचा हेनुनो।

702 का चामाईकाई चिरिया सुकीतोले का डामारीकाई पिनौ।

703 का सेनेबाको भाका लोहुनो।

704 सेनेबाको भाकाङाङ्ग वे बुङीबुङी लाङ्ग्री नाइकेङ्गो।

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**Nepali** नेपाली

694 “हामीले बन्चरो टुलो पिन देखेनौ, राजा साहू पिन देखेनौ” भन्नो।

695 भने कारणामा ता लौ अब चारदामको भाका पिन गरे।

696 चारदामको भाकावाट त खुईतुङ्ग चेनेमाटीको भाका पिन गरे।

697 “लौ, तिबो घरमा त मौरी बुझ्याए जतै बुझ्याए आए।”

698 हिरियो चोरामा सुरिको सभा गरे।

699 खुईतुङ्ग, चेनेमाटीको भाकामा त पाउरी पिन राख्यो।

700 अब तीन पाथी चामल, तीन पाथी चिउरा पिन राख्यो।

701 आजहेङ्ग नून पिन फुङकाए लयो।
“We didn’t see a large axe; we also didn’t see a rich and powerful person [in the house],” he said.
Meaning to say, now they also performed the melody of the cārdām.
After the melody of the cārdām, they also performed the melody of the khuitung and cenemāṭī.
“Lau, they came and surrounded your house like bees,” [they said].
On green pastures, they talked happily.
[He] also offered a turban while performing the melodies of the khuitung and cenemāṭī.
Then [he] also offered three pāthi of husked rice and three pāthi of beaten rice.
From today, we have also untied [the bond of] salt.
Having exorcised this daughter, she has been given to our son-in-law.
This melody of the senevā was performed.
[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.
709 “यायेदेखि नाङै भे हारा लोङुनान् कृत्याइ लोङुनान्?”
710 “नान् त्या चाहोलीपालायि यौबे लोङ्घो माहान्।”
711 आसास्युन्दुरीको भाका, आसास्युन्दुरीको वाखि वई लोमेढि नो।
712 “नान् का जरीको मुखथे दारे वई डोसाइको मायान्।”
713 “नगरी वई डोसाइको मायान्।”
714 “दित्याङै ईसाको निस्पाङै लोङ्घो मायान्।”
715 “का दिकुटीक चिथीको निस्कटुटीक लोङ्घो मायान्।”

Nepali नेपाली

705 जाले नजाले खामी राखे।
706 जाले नजाले बरम्री राखे।
707 जाले नजाले गोणेचा पनि राखे।
708 जाले नजाले मल मान्खि पनि राखे।
709 “आजसम्म निर्मालीये गयी, कसो गयी?”
710 “यो मडायलीहुँले नमस्कार गणुपयो।”
711 आसास्युन्दुरीको भाका, आसास्युन्दुरीको कुरा पनि गरे।
712 “अब यो बेहुलीले धारा पनि चल्नुपयो।”
713 “नगरी पनि निचरुपयो।”
714 “एक भाग भातको दुई भाग गणुपयो।”
715 “एक चिम्टी मासुको दुई चिम्टी गणुपयो।”

English

705 Knowledgeable and ignorant khāmi were brought together.
706 Knowledgeable and ignorant barmi were brought together.
707 Knowledgeable and ignorant gonaicā 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 madyauli 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 “लो, निको बालाकाई पिङ्काको मायान्” यासीदुकारणाङ्गि बे, “लो, यायेदेखि भे का टेकुटाइटे टालार्खचा वई राखान्। पेरेकु टाइते भुल्चचा वई राखान्। निको का सात नस्ता सात नगरी वई नाहुनो। लो नान् का मागान्दु टाइतेगण्वा राखान्। का नेनबाको भाका वई पिङ्काको मायान्” यासीताले।
716 “So, here, keep our child,” meaning to say, “so, from today, we have patched all the tears; we have sewn all that was unravelling; 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.

717 They brought together seven representatives.

718 “Also 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.”
This tradition was started by the Ratirati lineage and the King of the Patipati lineage.

This tradition was started by King Hāihāi.

This tradition was started by King Syusyu.

This tradition was started by King Golmā.

Right then, now he has pretty much greeted everyone.

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 jātī (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 थाङ्गमी

752 साडो मासाङ्दु साडो।
753 पत्तलको बासुरी को बासुन्धारीये मासाङ्नादु साडो।
754 चारकुनको तेतीसकोटी, हिरचन्द्र, गोपीचन्द्र, सिंधवान, भगवान, भगवती जे साईवान् त्यही लोइवान् सै परमेश्वर।
755 यो गुरु सगुने, ओस् सालो।
756 लौ, नान् सालो।
757 नान् निस्गोरे पुच्युककाई माझाङ्गाङ्ग पाल्को मायान् र जोडाईको मायान् र बेहुला नाको मायान्।
758 बेहुलाबेहुलीकाई चिसेवाको मायान्।
759 पहिला बेहुलाको आमा केला, बेहुली सुम्फे रोका सेवाहो।

Nepali नेपाली

752 चलाक, नचलेको चलाक।
753 पाल्को बासुर, बासुन्धारले नचलाएको चलाक।
754 चारकुनको तेतीसकोटी, हिरचन्द्र, गोपीचन्द्र, सिंधवान, भगवान, भगवती, जे जान्यही त्यही गयो, हे परमेश्वर।
755 यो गुरु सम्फे रोका, ओस् सालो।
756 लौ, अब सालु।
757 अब दुई बटा पुच्युकलाई माझामा कार्ण्यो र जोइन्त्यो।
758. बेहुलालेबेहुलीलाई नमस्कार गर्न लगाउनुपयोग।
759. पहिला बेहुलाको आमा आौँ 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 (tettīskot. ī) 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 pucyuk 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 थाङमी
760. बेहुलीले बेहुलाको सुमफेरो सेवाको मायान्।
761. बेहुलाको आमाको पहिला, बेहुलाले सुमफेरोका आपा आमाकाई सेवाहुनो।
762. का दिदी मुटी जाके नातोले साकालेई मीकाई सेवाको मायान्।
763. पहिला बेहुलापये लिलिली बेहुलीले, का नगरी पालीकाई सेवाहुनो।
764. नान् ठु बुझाईको मायान्।
765. हाती निको का आमाको लोंडो।
766. लाझीको कोन्ट।
767. खाम्लको च्यापु।
768. मूल मीको काउको खपट।
769. पहिला गुरी बेहुलीको आपा आमाकाई दि टोके जाके, दि गोरे पेसा, लोन्डो।

Nepali नेपाली
760. बेहुलीले बेहुलालाई तीन पटक नमस्कार गर्नुपययो।
761. आमाको पहिला बेहुलाले बेहुलाले पिछ्छ बेहुलीले तीन पटक आमाकाई नमस्कार गरे।
762. यो एकएक मुटी चामल राखेर सबै जनालाई नमस्कार गर्नुपययो।
763. पहिला बेहुलाले पिछ्छ पिछ्छ बेहुलीले यो नगरीलाई नमस्कार गरे।
764. अब मासु बुझाउनुपययो।
765. हाम्रो यो आमाको लागँ छाती।
766. लाझीको लागँ खुडा।
767. खाम्लको लागँ च्यापु।
768. मूल मासुको लागँ टाउको।
769. पहिला चाहिए बेहुलीको आमालाई एक माना चामल, एउटा पेसा र छाती।
The bride must say *sevā* to the groom thrice.

First the groom, then the bride, must say *sevā* to the [groom’s] mother and father three times.

Each holding a handful of this husked rice, [the bride and the groom] must say *sevā* to all those present.

First the groom, and then the bride, said *sevā* to these representatives.

Now the meat must be shared out.

This chest is for [the bride’s] mother.

For the matchmaker, a leg.

For the *khāmi*, the chin.

For the main officiant, the head.

First, to the mother of the bride, one *mānā* of husked rice, one coin and the chest [of the carcass].

**Thangmi** थाङ्गमी

The bride must say *sevā* to the groom thrice.

First the groom, then the bride, must say *sevā* to the [groom’s] mother and father three times.

Each holding a handful of this husked rice, [the bride and the groom] must say *sevā* to all those present.

First the groom, and then the bride, said *sevā* to these representatives.

Now the meat must be shared out.

This chest is for [the bride’s] mother.

For the matchmaker, a leg.

For the *khāmi*, the chin.

For the main officiant, the head.

First, to the mother of the bride, one *mānā* of husked rice, one coin and the chest [of the carcass].

**Nepali** नेपाली

The bride must say *sevā* to the groom thrice.

First the groom, then the bride, must say *sevā* to the [groom’s] mother and father three times.

Each holding a handful of this husked rice, [the bride and the groom] must say *sevā* to all those present.

First the groom, and then the bride, said *sevā* to these representatives.

Now the meat must be shared out.

This chest is for [the bride’s] mother.

For the matchmaker, a leg.

For the *khāmi*, the chin.

For the main officiant, the head.

First, to the mother of the bride, one *mānā* of husked rice, one coin and the chest [of the carcass].
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 थाङमी

779 लाङमीय तीन वर्षका केटी आमातेदेह्योडः।
780 त्याङ तीन वर्षका कोन्टे खियेदेह्योडः।
781 तोको का टुणीको कोन्टे।
782 नान्खामीको गुरी का बेद पठईसीदु चेराङ बाङ्गा कालाइदुये।
783 तोको लागि का बाङ्गा।
784 लौ, नान्निनको का बोरेको रीत तापान्।
785 मायामाइली सेवा।
786 हाम्रो यो बिहे गुरुमेव भाइला यो सुगुन टोलको गनुपछ।
787 पुरायः यो शुभ काम गदा यो काम गनुँ पद्दछ।
788 यों वेउताको सुगुनको यसस्री गनुपछ भन्ने हो।
789 हाम्रीले त्यसै गनुँ हुँदैन।
790 सामा सेरगाम गर्वर भात यो काम गनुपछ।
791 यो काम गरेपछि खोलाङ लाङ्को काम गन्ने भन्ने कुरा यो चाहि धारी बनाएको।

Nepali नेपाली

779 लाङ्कीय तीन वर्षका केटी आमातेदेह्योडः।
780 त्याङ तीन वर्षका कोन्टे खियेदेह्योडः।
781 तोको का टुणीको कोन्टे।
782 नान्खामीको गुरी का बेद पठईसीदु चेराङ बाङ्गा कालाइदुये।
783 तोको लागि का बाङ्गा।
784 लौ, नान्निनको का बोरेको रीत तापान्।
785 मायामाइली सेवा।
It is said that the matchmaker spent three years looking for a bride. And over these three years, his legs shriveled [due to overuse]. In return for that, he received the goat’s leg. It is said that the khāmi’s chin hurt from reading the ved. In return for that, he receives this chin [of the goat]. Lau, this marriage ritual has been concluded. Sevā to the respected members of the natal household. [Guru explaining in Nepali:] Before this wedding of ours is undertaken, this sagun thotko must be performed. Usually, while carrying out auspicious works, this task must be performed. This sagun of the deities must be carried out in this way. We cannot do it just any old way. This task should be performed only after sāmā sergām [gathering together all the materials that are needed]. After performing this task, the kholādāplā 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 sāṅg and sagun thotkō 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 थाङमी

900 काँग्लुक्लो लिङ्को देवा, खोक्को देवा, खोलाडाप्लाको देवा कुत्वापाङ्को देवाको चेन्ने सेम देवाको चेन्ने है नान्ने।
901 का बई दाईनो थाचा केन्ने सेम देवाको चेन्ने है नान्ने।
902 फासेलुङ्ग लोडोबाङ्को बाँडु दिलको छाया, आमा दिलको काया का बई होबुङ्ग।
903 मुई उनिड खुसीच चेन्ने।
904 डाङाणेङ उनिड थाचा केन्ने।
905 बर्मी उनिड बाणा बसिच चेन्ने।
906 कावे चालाको बाँडु डाङाणेङको बाँडु लोडो डाताबाले। सजेक्खोला लिङ्को बाङ्को डांडाको छा्या आमा दिलको काया।
907 का बई मोडो डाताबाले। का बई दाईनी थाचा केन्ने।
908 मायभोङ्गु थोण्या केन्ने।
909 शान्तिको सम्पूण थाचा केन्ने, ओस् सालो।

Nepali नेपाली

900 काङ्गुङ्को ढुङ्को देवता, खोक्को देवता, खोलाडाप्लाको देवता थानीमा आउ है देवता है अब त।
901 यो पनि दाविने भएर आउ है देवता है अब त।
902 फासेलुङ्ग ठाउँको बाँडु दिलको छाया, आमा दिलको काया यो पनि छ।
903 चेन्ने जस्तो पसाएर आउ।
904 चारा जस्तो भएर आउ।
905 अभिसो जस्तो पार हालेर आउ।
906 यो त चालाको भामा गर। डाङाणेङको भामा गरौ भनेर। सजेक्खोला लिङ्को बाँडु दिलको छाया आमा दिलको काया।
907 यो पनि गरौ भनेर। यो पनि दाहिने भएर आउ।
908 नपुगेको पुरुष आउ।
909 सम्पूण शान्ति हुँदै आउ, 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.
Come, ripening like a banana.
Come, being like a bird.
Come, growing leaves like the bouquet grass.
Talk in the language of these traditions. Saying, let us speak in the tradition of dāngdāng [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 Lingdāng.
Meaning let us also do this, let this also come to be on the right side.
If you haven’t enough, well then please come feeling sated.
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’.9

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

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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