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DRUM FABRICATION MYTHS

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Introduction

Over the past few years I have pursued a small-scale research project, focussed on a particular type of drum, as used by the shamans (or *rammā*) of the Northern Magar in west-central Nepal. This drum is called *rē*.

It is composed of a roundish hoop frame, *rēgor*, made of wood of the prickly oak; of a membrane, *syelo*, finished from the hide of a ghoral chamoix, and stretched over one of the two open surfaces of the hoop; of two bamboo canes crossed in the shape of a steep x and hung on iron hooks loosely inside the hoop to serve as drum handles, *hātāssō*, as well as a clattering source of rhythm production; of various iron rivets, *ṭās*, holding together the overlapping ends of the bent frame; of cowhide laces, *tānā*, which keep the membrane stretched over the hoop; and of a tendon, *yel*, to keep laces and membrane fastened; plus of a drum stick, *gajā*, made of *māke*-wood ornamented with various geometrical and pictographic carvings.

This type of shamanic drum can be encountered not only in the Himalayan valleys inhabited by the Northern Magar, but also in those further south inhabited by a mixed Hindu-Magar and Indo-Aryan caste population in the Bāglung-, Pyuthān-, and Gulmi-districts; and in those further west in the districts of Rukum and Jajarkot, predominantly composed of Kami caste villages. The geographical distribution of the *rē*-drum corresponds roughly with the expanse of a complex that has been termed as »Dhaulāgiri shamanism«.

More remote morphological relatives of the *rē*-type drum are: the *ringh* of the Chepang shamans (or *pānde*) in the Mahābhārat Range between the Dhāding- and Chitawan-districts and the *nga*-drum of the Gurung healers (or *pajyu*) in the Kaski- and Lamjung-districts. All these types of drums share as common features a wooden hoop covered with a deer-hide on one side only and a crossed bar inside the frame serving as a handle. In this respect they sharply differ from the drums employed by shamans of any other ethnic group in the Nepal Himalaya, such as those of

the Tamang, Sherpa, Rai, Limbu and other eastern hill populations. These drums constitute variants of a second basic Himalayan type, the elementary features of which are a double membrane attached to both sides of a wooden hoop; and a singular handle standing vertically out from the frame and ending in a ritual dagger of the *phurbu* kind. This drum is morphologically related with the Tibetan *rnga*, whereas the *rẽ*-type points to a kinship with Siberian drums.

This North-Asian connection of the Magar drum can also be drawn in regard to the depictions painted on it. From the wide range of pictorial motifs such as cosmological, erotic or ritualistic ones, those found also on Siberian drums are depictions of celestial bodies; of cosmic spheres and their boundaries; and of drums in schematic reduction (painted on drums).

Useful as these classifications of shamanic drums may be, concerning their fabrication techniques, their morphological features, and their symbolic representations, it should be pointed out as well that each exemplar is also an original, a unique and singular piece. This is not a minor statement, for it concerns not only drums. It is relevant to shamanic practice in general. In distinction to the so-called »high religions« with their codified doctrines set forth in holy scriptures and piles of exegetic regulations, the shamans assemble anew their religious universe each time they sit down for a *séance*; and each time it is re-established, it is slightly different from any other enactment before and thereafter. As many drums as many shamans; and as many shamans as many shamanisms. Each drum in its individual distinctness materializes and recalls this fact to mind. For this very reason any research on the topic is casuistic by nature and deserves to be as concrete as possible.

In the minds of those who make them, own them, hear them, play them, shamanic drums have a life: They are born at one point, get inaugurated, do their job, are worn down, sometimes get repaired and finally die. Therefore each drum has a biography. The drum's biography is dependant on, and determined by the life of its owner or that section of his life, during which it accompanies him. So to write the biography of a particular drum requires some knowledge of the shaman's vita who owns it.

Their individual fate and singular life set aside, all shamans' drums of the Magar share a common primordial predecessor: the first drum of mythic times. The story of this drum is recounted each time a new instrument is to be made or a used one is being repaired. A coherent picture of this

prototype can be put together from a set of mythic chants, each dealing with the original fabrication of a single constituent part for the first drum. As a collection, these recitals are called *dāgori murine kheti*, or »drum fabrication myths« and it is these that I will focus on for the remainder of my presentation.

The collected sum of »drum fabrication myths«, as recorded on May 25th, 1978 in Taka village, Rukum District, West Nepal during a performance given by shaman Parsad of Ghumilbang on the occasion of a drum repair for the damaged instrument of shaman Kathka of Taka village, comprises six individually named recitals of varying lengths (between 13 and 113 verses each) with a total length of 384 different verses. This circumstantial remark has to be made, for another recording on another date with another performer (or even the same one) would certainly come up with a different amount of verses sung and possibly with a different combination of verses and maybe even of recitals. This is an intrinsic trait of oral tradition: the elements of a literary set are never fixed, they are forever changing.

The drum fabrication myths constitute one division of two basic classes of Magar mythological chants. One consists of proper *genesis stories* relating the beginning of the world; the origin of species; of man and his fundamental social institutions; and the formation of his natural environment. The other class is made up of *ritual auxiliary chants* with little or no narrative plot development, dealing either with the first shaman's search for lost souls; or with his fight against and expulsion of unwanted spirits; and lastly, with accounts on finding the appropriate means for ritual operations.

This last group of auxiliary chants is again subdivided into two sections: One concentrates on the primordial search for certain natural products considered to be essential for the correct execution of rituals, such as a tree of a particular species which serves as the patient's life-tree (*suwā*) in a healing séance; a specific type of bamboo (*lo*) suited to be woven into a mat to represent the inhabited world; the appropriate kind of grain – the buckwheat (*lāwā*) – which, when fried, can pacify agitated spirits by its sweet smell and can jump out of the frying pan, a symbolic sign for its capacity to uplift tumbled souls; and the correct variety of an incense plant (*tē*), which alone can purify the space of the ritual and please the deities concerned. The second section of search songs revolves around

the appropriate raw materials needed for the fabrication of the drum prototype. Both subclasses of »search songs«, *khimne kheti*, treat of the so-called Nine Implements, *nau sardam*, the indispensable auxiliary tools of the shaman.

The first of the six recorded drum fabrication myths is called *rēgor khimne kheti* or »searching the drumframe song«. It has a length of 101 verses and is concerned with the search for the appropriate tree from which the wood for the drum frame will be cut. It is not explicitly said who conducts the search, but it is implied that it is the first shaman and his nine assistants. The text just observes that they go to the eastern gate to find a tree

which no Rammā had ever felled
a tree with no ancestors
with no connection to the deities

which no Ranju had ever felled
a tree with no forefathers
with no connection to the spirits

The search for the proper tree is carried out successively in all four cardinal directions, until, finally, in the high north, the members of the expedition come across a tree of sandal wood and of prickly oak wood, *sāndhan sī* / *guipāl sī*. Which of the two species is the right one is again not explicitly expressed, they are both mentioned in a single parallel verse, but inferring from present day practice it ought to be the prickly oak. The chosen tree is honoured with an offering gift of grains and coins and felled in a way that the top points to the east and the trunk to the west – an inversion to the customary burial position of the dead. Then it is bared off its branches, transported down from the steep hill by the helpers – the text says »ridden by them on their genitals«, – trimmed to a lath, measured, heated and bent to a hoop.

On the way back home nine chips of wood are cut off and thrown into all directions to pacify various classes of deities and spirits; and at the village crossroads the two wives of the first shaman greet the new drumframe with a word of blessing and consecrate it with yeast. At the same place the first shaman jumps over the hoop four times subduing with this gesture all negative influences that might be lurking in the vicinity, whereupon he falls into a magical sleep. Using the name of his arch-antagonist as a pseudonym he returns after nine days of slumber, carrying his drumframe into his house, where he sprinkles it with blood of a

sacrificed bull. The first bites of sacrificial meat he throws into all four directions as an offering, while the rest is dried on the central post of the house where from now on also the drum will be kept.

The second of the drum fabrication myths called *syelo khimne kheti* or »searching the drum hide song« concentrates, as the title suggests, on the primordial search for the adequate hide to serve as the drum's membrane. Again the first shaman and his helpers look out in all cardinal directions. In the east they prepare the hide of a mountain sheep and of a mountain goat (*cyepu lu* and *cyangrā lu*); in the south the hide of both a wild and a domestic buffalo (*arnā* and *baĩsi*); and in the lowland the skin of a lowland goat and of a highland goat (*chekarī* and *bākarī*); but only in the northern forests and high rocky places they find what they need as a hide for their drumframe: »the skin of a *jhāral*-deer / the skin of a *ghoral*-deer«. Again the text is not explicit as to which of the two is ultimately the right one, for they are presented both in parallel position, but again, inferring from contemporary practice, it ought to be the hide of a ghoral chamoix.

The third of the drum fabrication myths, the *tānā khimne kheti* or »searching the leather laces song«, seems to be incomplete. It is only 13 verses long and ends abruptly, before the proper leather donor has been discovered. Nonetheless, a considerable list of candidates is presented, such as the spotted cow, the speckled cow, the tufted cow, the dotted cow, the red cow, the black cow and the brownish cow. None of these is suitable, »not apt to establish a standard« as the text critically points out.

The fourth of the drum fabrication myths, the *yel khimne kheti* or »searching the membrane stretcher song« is 32 verses long and possibly also incomplete, even though it mentions at the end the proper tendon to be used for tightening the membrane on the wooden frame, after a series of others made of different bamboo varieties have failed to fit.

The fifth of the drum fabrication myths, the *ṭās kheti* or »song of the iron rivets« relates in its 79 lines how the first shaman pays a nightly visit to Tiko Kāmi, the blacksmith of the netherworld, calling him out of bed and imploring him to fix immediately some iron rivets on his drum before the cock has crowed. This urgency has its reason in the belief that the iron pieces on a shaman's drum have power over the future and health of a patient, and as his fate is determined during the *séances* held at night time, the primordial iron rivets should also be applied then. Reluctantly the blacksmith consents and, at the prospect of a fat compensation (three

turbans, nine offering coins and a sheep sacrifice), kindles a fire, prepares pipes and bellows, employs pincers and hammers, heats and tempers the iron in various grades, until the drum frame is equipped with the requested rivets.

The sixth and last of the drum fabrication myths, the *chokorā kheti* or »song of the first beer«, sometimes also called *lādu khimne kheti* or »searching the yeast song«, is 113 verses long. Its relative length is explained by the fact that almost half of it (46 verses) is dedicated to the invocation and enumeration of predecessors in the shaman's profession. These invocations may precede any of the narrative genesis myths and even the auxiliary ones, – either at the beginning of a *séance* or after an intermission. In these preludes the singing shaman begs his deceased colleagues for support: »guide us on the unpassed fords / guide us on the ungone paths«.

The actual search song commences with the observation that at the time when the sound »nguwar« of his drum came into being, the primordial shaman had no way to stop his shaking unless by drinking alcohol or by scattering yeast. So he sent his two wives out into the wilderness to find the yeast plant, *mahājuri*. With the help of the »habitual drinker« (*matwal bāni*) Mahādev (sic!) they accomplished their mission: drying grain on the world mat *lo* and preparing a bear mash, they added the yeast to it and gave the brew to their dogs to test it: if they went crazy, it was bad, if they became illuminous, it was good. As it turned out to be good, some yeast is strewn on the madly possessed wood of the drum. Immediately it stops trembling and shaking, as did its owner, the first shaman. The drum is now capable of revealing the future and of dissolving dangers.

This is, in its most condensed form, the content of the drum making myths. Some of the plot matter exposed here is openly related in the recitals, while some is only hinted at. Those of the six chants that are explicit search songs, i.e. one to four, are occupied only with the search for the appropriate drum materials. And in this respect they display some common features. All these searches take place along the points of the compass in strict sequential order, starting either in the east or in the north. If east comes first, south will follow, then west and finally north; if north is the starting point, the order remains the same, only with one more search stop. In this way, the searchers, no matter what specific raw

material they search, all describe a circular movement and one in clockwise direction.

This must be seen in correlation with the circular dance movements of a shaman in session. When he performs a *séance* in the service of life, a healing *séance* for instance, his circular movements are predominantly clockwise; when one in the service of death, for instance a commemoration ritual for a deceased colleague, anti-clockwise dance movements prevail. Now the drum of the healer has its *raison d'être* in the recapture and preservation of his patient's life; so when it is fabricated, the clockwise search for its constituent parts works as a reminder of this intention. One might even say, via these clockwise searches the drum's assignment to serve life is established. Moreover, all appropriate drum materials are finally found in the north, high up in the mountains. This is not surprising, for north, in Magar belief, is a region of good luck and health, from where the first shaman himself originated.

The circular and clockwise search movements for the original drum materials are complemented by opposing movements found in the second set of search songs mentioned before. In the auxiliary myths dealing with the finding of the appropriate life-tree, the world-mat, the jumping grain, and the purifying incense, the search movements are exclusively linear, either along an east-west, or a south-north orientation. These two linear movements allude to a virtual pair of coordinates, one along a life-death axis (east-west) and the other along a sickness-health axis (south-north). And these axial alignments are as essential for shamanic space concepts as the circular ones. These various patterns of spatial orientation in the search songs are not just a matter of content, they are also a major tool used to structure the text as an artistic form.

Another such tool and by far the most prominent one is the constant application of parallelism. Parallel constructions in Magar mythological verse are so overwhelmingly dominant that the rare examples where they are absent, attract attention. Parallelism in Magar shamanic oral literature can be characterised as minimalistic: it tends towards repetition. It can be detected within a single line, between two successive lines, between sets of couplets (i.e. pairs of successive lines), and between lines interrupted by other sets of paralleled verse. Here are some examples:

The most common type of parallelism is the one employed inside single lines. A standard Magar verse is constituted by two almost equal half-lines, of which, when sung, the first has seven, the second six syllables, and between which there is a light caesura, in which, however, the reciting shaman does not inhale. Breath is taken in at the end of the second half-line. When two shamans perform together, which in larger *séances* is the rule, the lead-singer recites an entire line before the echo-singer repeats it. In special situations this standard form of antiphony can be changed and each of them will sing different lines without the other one repeating them.

The rhythmic similarity of half lines invites intra-verse parallelism. The most common way is to repeat in the second half-line all members of the first half-line except one single word. Five out of six of all verses are constructed in this way; (the numbers to the left of this and the following quotations indicate the positions they have in the respective chants):

- | | | |
|---|--|--|
| 1 | purba <i>khaṇḍa</i> bāra
they went to the eastern <i>sector</i> | purba <i>ḍhokā</i> bāra
they went to the eastern <i>gate</i>
(<i>rēgor khimne kheti</i>) |
|---|--|--|

Very often this single alteration is also minimalized, to a slight phonetic shift:

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 3 | o <i>sā</i> khu jā māleo
[a tree] with no <i>ancestors</i> | o <i>bā</i> khu jā māleo
[a tree] with no <i>forefathers</i>
(<i>rēgor khimne kheti</i>) |
|---|---|--|

The single altered word in intra-line parallelism may even be a jingle word, especially made up for this purpose. For instance:

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 32 | <i>āsulee</i> kāṣa
with his <i>āsule</i> | <i>pāsulee</i> kāṣa
with his <i>pāsule</i> hunting dogs
(<i>syelo khimne kheti</i>) |
|----|---|---|

The first of the two jingle words – *āsule* – may be totally sufficient in everyday language to denote the dogs employed in a *battue*; the second one is a parallelistic expletive, non-existent in common speech.

In inter-verse parallelism between successive lines, an entire verse is set in parallel to its preceding one:

32	<i>sisai puta jāko</i>	<i>kānul cheojeo bhaigo</i>
33	<i>bhuta preta jāko</i>	<i>bānul cheojeo bhaigo</i>
	from the <i>sons</i> and <i>pupils</i>	the bad <i>signs</i> were cut off
	from the spirits <i>bhut</i> and <i>pret</i>	the bad <i>omens</i> were cut off
		(<i>rēgor khimne kheti</i>)

Intra-verse parallelisms such as:

14	<i>kānul ngā māpaidu</i>	<i>bānul ngā māpaidu</i>
	I have not eliminated the bad <i>signs</i>	I have not eliminated the bad <i>omens</i>
		(<i>rēgor khimne kheti</i>)

can turn into inter-verse parallel constructions between two or more non-adjacent lines such as in the following series:

14	<i>kānul ngā māpaidu</i>	<i>bānul ngā māpaidu</i>
28	<i>o kānul jā bāzeo</i>	<i>o bānul jā bāzeo</i>
37	<i>kānul cheojeo bhaigo</i>	<i>bānul cheojeo bhaigo</i>
42	<i>kānul basināye</i>	<i>bānul bāsināye</i>
47	<i>kānul hājā tāye</i>	<i>akās gharla bānul hājā bhaigo</i>
14	I have not eliminated the bad signs	I have not eliminated the bad omens
28	they made the bad signs go	they made the omens signs go
37	the bad signs were cut off	the bad omens were cut off
42	the bad signs they fell off	the bad omens they fell off
47	the bad signs became happy	in the skyhouse the bad omens be- came happy
		(<i>rēgor khimne kheti</i>)

Here the shaman sings in intensive repetition about bad signs and bad omens which he would like to see eliminated from his client. But in the beginning (line 14) he does not have the means to achieve this yet: his drum is still not made. Later, when the proper drumframe is at hand, the situation improves: He can make the negative signs disappear (lines 28 and

37), make them fall off his drum (line 42), or even turn them into happy and harmless beings (line 47). Thus the repetition contains a progression – analogous (if this comparison be permitted) to the progressions in minimal music.

In the *ṭās kheti*, the »song of the iron rivets«, we come across a chiasmic play of words (pun) in a parallel construction between two adjacent lines:

4	mangal bāra dāzeo	rāto bārā dāzeo
5	rātai kaṭeng bhaigo	dinai kaṭeng bhaigo
	on a Tuesday	on a red day
	all night the drum went kateng!	all day the drum went kateng!
		(ṭās kheti)

Here, the first word in the second half-verse of the first line, *rāto* and the first word in the first half-verse of the second line *rātai* standing in a chiasmic position to each other, are homonymic, but differ in meaning: 'red' and 'night'. The chiasm is completed by the second word of the first verse: *bāra* and the first word in the second half-line of the second verse: *dinai*; here both words are phonetically different, yet the meaning is almost the same: 'day of the week' and 'daytime'.

It may also occur that parallelism is established on the level of pairs of successive lines as the basic unit. The following example brings a whole set of four couplets into parallel relation:

58	utar gharḷa	utar mukhalā
59	lāma piṭlā hāye	brāhā deutā hāye
61	purbu khaṇḍa jāla	purbu ḍhokā jāla
62	bhuta zyeā jā hāye	preta zyeā jā hāye
63	dakhin gharḷa	dakhin mukhalā
64	aulo zyeā jā hāye	agan zyeā jā hāye
65	pachim ghar jāla	pachim ḍhokādā
66	durgā mātā hāye	durgā bhawāni hāye
68	cārai diṣā	cārai mukhalā
69	kānul cheojeo bhaigo	bānul cheojeo bhaigo

58	in the northern house	at the northern exit
59	Lama Piūlā became happy	god Brāhā became happy
61	in the eastern sector	at the eastern gate
62	the bhut spirit became happy	the pret spirit became happy
63	in the southern house	at the southern exit
64	the malaria-spirit became happy	the shivering-fit-spirit became happy
65	in the western house	at the western gate
66	mother Durgā became happy	goddess Durgā became happy
68	in the four directions	at the four exits
69	the bad signs were cut off	the bad omens were cut off (<i>rēgor khimne kheti</i>)

In this example a long sequence of verses are clamped together by parallelism, binding the verses 58 to 66 into a single set of four interrelated couplets. The concluding lines 68 and 69 confirm and summarize this unity, which consists in associating the main four cardinal directions (again in circular and clockwise succession) with supernatural beings. One might be tempted to read this verbal configuration as a tribal mandala. Thus parallelism, as exercised in Magar shamanic verse, does not only correlate corresponding word material in close vicinity, but also over extended passages.

As such, parallel constructions help to ease the memorisation of a huge body of oral literature. One of my Magar teachers estimated that it takes about seven years of apprenticeship until a new shaman controls the entire body of about 10'000 shamanic verses. But parallelism is not a mnemotechnical aid alone. As pointed out, it serves multiple artistic intentions as well: the epic effect, slow motion, dramatisation and minimal narrative progression, – to name only a few. Moreover, it promotes formulaic expression, of which Magar shamanic lore is full. This contradicts to a degree the announcements of scholars studying oral traditions elsewhere, where, as they affirm, improvisation can play a considerable part (see for instance Lord). In the literary production of Magar shamanism, at any rate, improvisation is quite reduced, if compared with the massive recourse to formulaic and prefigured manner of poetic speech.

In conclusion it may be suggested that the drum fabrication myths as presented in the foregoing lines, could now be compared to the actual

Textual presentation

The drum fabrication myths *dāgori murine kheti*

<i>rēgor khimne kheti</i>	searching the drumframe song	101 lines
<i>syelo khimne kheti</i>	searching the drumhide song	46 lines
<i>tānā khimne kheti</i>	searching the leather lace song	13 lines
<i>yel khimne kheti</i>	searching the membrane stretcher song	32 lines
<i>ṭās kheti</i>	song of the iron rivets	79 lines
<i>chokorā kheti</i>	song of the first beer	113 lines
<i>(lādu khimne kheti)</i>	(searching the yeast song)	

<i>dāgori murine kheti</i>	drum making songs	total: 384 lines
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Recorded on tape in Taka-village Rukum District, Rolpa Zone in West Nepal on May 25th 1978. The performing shamans: Parsad of Ghumilbang, lead-singer; Kathka of Taka, echo-singer. Transcribed, translated and annotated by Michael Oppitz and Rana Prasad Gharti Magar.

rēgor khimne kheti

1	purba khaṇḍa bāra cābiraldeo rammā māgonāyo o sākhu jā māleo deōe mähilnākya	purba ḍhokā bāra ranju māgonāye o bākhu jā māleo dhāmai mähilnākya
5	o sākhu jā māleo dakhin ghar bāra khaira sīlāi guwācāpi rāra o sākhu nā māleo	o bākhu jā māleo dahkin diśā bāra noye baira sīlāi cābiraleo o bākhu nā māleo
10	olja ṭesināe ngārgē gosāyera rammā puran can lāi caudāhārala kānūl ngā māpaidu	olja pāisināe āoe ngā kahāti rāti mākaināo mayam saharla bānūl ngā māpaidu
15	kaḍio rēgor khimo pachim gharla guipāl rēgor khoja guipāl sī jālāi kuwā ṭabā rāra olja ṭesināe	mā sāndhan rēgorko khimo guimāl rēgor khoja guimāl sī jālāi kuwā damā rāra olja pāisināe
20	ngārgē gosāera orge dākūrāra ajhai pani ta hāpāl pākherala sāndhan sī jāye hāpā dāldanaiwo	deōe māyānāo dhāmi māyānāo kaḍio rēgor khimo hāmāl pākherala sāndhan rēgor jāye hāmā dāldanaiwo
25	nāe sāndhan sīlāi kuwāṭ āpa yeda nauai ṭilā yeda o kānūl jā bāzeo ekai ceparī hāida	nāe sāndhan sīlāi kuwā nāpa yeda nauai gaṛē yeda o bānūl jā bāzeo utar ghardā khyera
30	utar gharla puṭhā zyeā jā hāye sisai puta jāko bhuta preta jāko kānūl cheojeo bhaigo	utar ḍhokāla ghosim zyeā jā hāye kānūl cheojeo bhaigo bānūl cheojeo bhaigo bānūl cheojeo bhaigo
35	ekai ceparā hāida bhuta zyeā jā hāye kānūl cheojeo bhaigo ṭinai ceparī hāida dakhin gharla	purbu ghardā khyera purbu ḍhokāla preta zyeā jā hāye brāhā deotā hāye bānūl cheojeo bhaigo dakhin ḍhokāla dakhin ḍhokāla

40	aulo zyeā jā hāye khaira rammā hāye kānul bāsināye cārai ceparā hāida durgā mātā hāye	agan zyeā jā hāye baira rammā hāye bānul bāsināye pachim gharlā khyera durgā bhawānī hāye
45	pāncāi ceparī hāida īswar rājā hāye kānul hājā taye chaye ceparī hāida patāl gharlā	akās ghardā khyera akās gharlā akās gharlā bānul hājā bhaigo patāl gharlā khyera bāsudeo hāye
50	ngā lāi manduruko rāhu cheojeo bhaigo lupā cheojeo bhaigo kānul cheojeo bhaigo sāndhan rēgorlā	sisai puto jāko kitu cheojeo bhaigo lumā cheojeo bhaigo bānul cheojeo bhaigo guipāl rēgortā
55	purbai siren bhaigo nauai sawāre rāi māgākhāmlā jādā utar gharlā lāmā piūlā hāye	pachim goden bhaigo nauai dawāre rāi ādhā kharkhar hodhā kharkhar selra utar mukhalā brāhā deutā hāye
60	nauai ceparā hāida purbu khaṇḍa jāla bhuta zyeā jā hāye dakhin gharlā aulo zyeā jā hāye	purbu mukha khyera purbu ḍhokā jādā purbu ḍhokā jāla preta zyeā jā hāye dakhin mukhalā agan zyeā jā hāye
65	pachim ghar jāla durgā mātā hāye ajhai durgā mātā hāye cārai diśā kānul cheojeo bhaigo	pachim ḍhokādā durgā bhawānī hāye durgā bhawānī hāye cārai mukhalā bānul cheojeo bhaigo
70	sāndhan rēgor lāi caudāhārlā rāira jumā jhākrelnī purkha giṇ rājāe puro āyo raiyo	kātā kholsa mayam saharlā rāira padmā jhākrelnī bhagiwante tāni puro jiuni raiyo
75	nauai ṭilā raiyo jasiwante tāni ṭadā hailida lādusaye oyni āsik bādā yeni	nauai garē raiyo bhagiwante tāni nedā hailida barmāsaye oyni bāke yeni
80	sāndhan rēgor lāi caudāhār jāla	guipāl rēgor lāi mayam sahar jāla

	ekai nāwan haidā	dui nāwan haidā
	cārai nāwan hāyo	sātā jāgi nāra sātī jāgi nāra
	sātā nāmlā	sātī nāmlā
85	ekai dina bhaigo	dui din bhaigo
	cārai din bhaigo	pāncāi din bhaigo
	chaye din bhaigo	āṭhai din bhaigo
	sātā din bhaigo	nauai din bhaigo
	sāndhane rēgor lāi	maite dhāmi jāye
90	o hemānra candra dandu	bindra dandu
	rammā puran can	o gariye bāje o mātālā bāje
	sun bhale jāye dākā	ocho ḍiotaṭ purbu ujyelotaṭ
	candrakheye rēgor lāi	o jimkā rāiwo
	jora rakat hāidā	macādāko ṭiko
95	mā kandelā hāidā	māsesā jā garyo
	o syesā jā hāidā	jāle lātā māle lātā
	cārai tira herzeo	ekai balkan jāncha dui balkan jāncha
	seyū sekal jārāi	sime hā hā jāiraṭ bhumi hā hā jāiraṭ
	bārai nām jātāo	mākartālāi maine khābā rākhyo
100	rākhe rāmmā	rākhe
101	rāpā sāndhan rēgor sā	guipāl rēgor sā

syelo khimne kheti

1	utar gharlā	utar ḍhokālā
	o lo nāru māyo	o tātā māyo
	simariko lāgi	bhungarīko lāgi
	sāndhan rēgor jāye	lumā lusī jāye
5	dāpā sairā bāzeo	dāmā sairā bāzeo
	o deo cālā mārā	o dhāmai cālā mārā
	cyepu lu lāi jaiwo	cyangrā lu lāi jaiwo
	deoe cālā bhaena	dhāmai cālā bhaena
	ge tātāko khojā	ge bātāko khojā
10	purbaī gharlā	purbaī ḍhokā jāla
	cyepu lu lāi jaiwo	cyangrā lu lāi jaiwo
	cālikheko tātā	naureko tātā
	ṭadā māruciye	mātātāko khojī
	dakhin ghar khimo	dakhin ḍhokā khimo
15	mālai nāma jāla	mālai ḍhokā jāla
	arnā lu lāi jaiwo	bhāīsī tātā jaiwo

	tolo mārō ciye	tānāci māyoye	
	tānājā māyo	tablo māyo siye	
	sāndhan rēgor	guipāl rēgor	
20	dāpā sar mārāo	dāmā sar mārāo	
	ajhai pani ta kaḍio	lupā khimo kaḍio	lumā khimo
	mālu nāmko khoḷa	mālu nāmko pāilo	
	kaḍio lupā khimo	kaḍio lumā khimo	
	bārai dāngalā	barai deokhorīlā	
25	māpeṭiko tānā	talo māyo siye	tānā ṭe māyoye
	chekarīko tānā	bākarīko tānā	
	talo mālo siye	tānā ṭe māyo	
	kaḍio lupā khimo	kaḍio lumā khimo	
	jāḍai bhoṭlā	bārai yegharlā	
30	pāncāi pāṇḍawāra	pāncāi pāṇḍawārāi	
	nadā kukhurā	nadā kukhurāṣa	
	āsulee kāṣa	pāsulee kāṣa	
	jala rolda bāra	cedār rolda bāra	
	bista bān jāla	māita bān jāla	
35	āran gharlā	parān gharlā	
	lāla na ghar jāla	pāṭan ghar jāla	
	ādhi mulu gowārje	odhi mulu gowārje	
	asān gharlā	masān gharlā	
	masān gharlā bāze	asān gharlā bāze	
40	pāncā bhāi jārai	pāṇḍawārāi	
	cheka bathān dorā	ghāta bathān dorā	
	ādha guwa guwa bāra	odhā guwa guwa bāra	
	sīkṇa rolda bhaigo	lūkṇa rolda bhaigo	
	sāndhan rēgor jātā	jāral lupā tāze	
45	ghoral lupā tāze	ghoral lupā bohke	
46	sāndhan rēgor jātā	dāpā saran pāriyo	dāmā saran pāriyo

tānā khimne kheti

1	sāndhan rēgor ṭa	guipāl rēgor ṭa
	kaḍio tānā khimo	kaḍio bānā khimo
	dāpā saran mārāo	dāmā saran mārāo
	kaḍio tānā khimo	kaḍio bānā khimo
5	hāie hāimāli dī	hāie jurmāli dī
	māli hāie phoni	māle hāi bohke

	jurmālī phoni	jurmale bohke
	nitānājā māyo	nibānājā māyo
	gujurie phoni	gujüre bohke
10	gorī hāie phoni	rauṭe geye jā bohke
	nakalie phoni	nakale bohke
	rāmlī hāie phoni	rāmle hāi bohke
	nitānājā māyo	nibānājā māyo

yel khimne kheti

1	āoe sāndhan rēgor jātā	ngāe yel nām māleo
	kaḍio yelpā khimo	utar khaṇḍa jāla māyāl nāmko khojī
	utar khaṇḍa jāla	māyāl nāmko pāilo
	jarmutāko yel	ṭayel māyel siye neyel māyel siye
5	rammā puran can lāi	ṭayel māyelo
	rammā ranju jālai	ṭayel māyelo
	kaḍio yelpā khimo	kaḍio yelmā khimo
	ngā yel nāmko khoja	ngā yel nāmko pāilo
	purbu khaṇḍa jāla	purbu ḍhokālā
10	jipā yel jaiwo	lālā pāṭanlā
	ṭayel māyel sike	neyel māyel sike
	kaḍio yelpā khimo	kaḍio yelmā khimo
	māgī bārā māyel	sailā bārā māyel
	kānul māyel	bānul māyel
15	kaḍio yelpā khimo	kaḍio yelmā khimo
	ngā yel nāmko khoja	ngā yel nāmko pāilo
	dakhin gharlā	dakhin diśā jāla
	gāmā calko yeldī	gāpā calko yeldī
	ṭayal māyel siye	neyel māyel siye
20	kaḍio yelpā khimo	kaḍio yelmā khimo
	calpā yel jaiwo	calmā yel jaiwo
	sāndhan rēgorla	tabārā tānātā
	tayal māyel siye	neyel māyel siye
	caudāhārā	mayam sahar lā
25	gaūḍī māyel siye	galbī māyel siye
	kānul māyel siye	bānul māyel siye
	kaḍio yelpā khimo	kaḍio yelmā khimo
	candra ghātā nauai ḍāḍā gāpo	nauai gairā gāpo
	māgī bārā sita	sailā bārā sita

30	kanul cheojeo jaida	bānūl cheojeo jaida
	tiri bārā sita	miri bārā sita
32	yelpā cheojeo jaida	yelmā cheojeo jaida
	[mantra]	

ṭās kheti

1	ye gariyā raida	ye mātāḷa raida
	ye gariyā jāla	ye mātā jāla
	sātā nām bhaigo	pandra dina bhaigo
	mangal bāra dāzeo	rāto bāra dāzeo
5	rātai kaṭeng bhaigo	dinai kaṭeng bhaigo
	khāḷa bārī nazeo	dajyu ṭiko kāmī
	sāndhan ngā rēgor lāi	ṭasa mārīnāyo
	sāndhan ngā rēgor lāi	ṭasa mārīleyo
	bista bānra lupā jāye	lumā jāye
10	ṭās ngā mārīe	bās ngā mārīe
	lāke dājyu lāke	dhaniwanṭe lāke
	ṭinai pagarie diūḷā	nauai tilā diūḷā
	nauai gaṛē diūḷā	ṭasa māri diūḷa
	haijā ṭākin bhandā	bārai burkhā diūḷā
15	raiceo poro raiceo	bārai rāta lila
	tamrai sāndhan rēgor	ngā dokānḷa raiceo
	ngā yeranḷa raiceo	ngā jāpinḷa raiceo
	ajha pani ta	nauai sāndhan rēgor lāi
	lādu sa jāsa	barmā sa jāsa
20	sāndhan rēgor lāi	mākā khilā jāda
	ṭāde dokān bāra	terse dokān bāra
	ṭiko kāmī jāye	lāmdukhee
	o āranḷa bāra	o dokānḷa bāra
	caudāhāra bāje	mayam sahar bāje
25	caudāhāra bāje	mayam sahar la
	ṭiko kāmī jāye	lāmdukhee jāye
	jāde o kukure	bhoṭe o kukure
	hā hā leda gowārje	he-u he-u leda gowārje
	bhalo ngāe kāmēni	bhalo kāmēni
30	keko jāta yenchā	keko bhāta yenchā
	ṭadā hernu gayo	nedā hernu gayo
	dhanna kāmēni	ṭadā cinne bhaena nedā cinne bhaena

	jasaipo nikleo	ṭiko kāmīe
	keko jāta āecha bhani	āphai hernu gayo
35	bista bānra keko	kāja lāi āyo keko kāmīlāi āyo
	dājyū ṭiko kāmī	dājyū lāmdukhee
	sāndhan ge rēgor lāi	sāndhan ge rēgor lāi
	ṭāṣa mārī yēceo	khila mārī yēceo
	ādhārāta lila	keko kāmā holā
40	ngā ngā mādānāye	ngāmi mādānāye
	khālā mājori siye	khālā ngā joraiye
	ajhai paṇi ta mero	khālā mājoraisiwo
	mābūndukā	ajha paṇi mijyū
	mābūndukā	khālā mārī dēke
45	ajai dekhi wārḷa	ajai dekhi parḷa
	uthe deo dājyū	uthe deo dājyū
	sun bhālee jāye	ḍākā choḍinākya ḍādim choḍinākya
	khālā gajoriyo	nālā gajoriyo
	sun bhālee	ḍāka chodeo belā
50	sun bhālee	ḍādim chodeo belā
	purbaī ujjelo bhaigo	khālā jorinākeo
	purbaī ujjelo tā	nālā jorinākeo
	dājyū ṭiko kāmīe	lāmdukhee jāye
	khālā jorinākeo	nālā jorinākeo
55	eko hāta ṭa	māsan deso raida
	eko hāta jāta	mācaurā raida
	māghanajā dāda	mācaurā dāda
	ṭiko kāmī jāye	lāmdukhee jāye
	eka paṇi māryo	kāka phule pāina
60	tyesa paṇi māryo	jampā phule phārwar
	dājyū ṭiko kāmī	dājyū lāmdukhee
	mācaurā liyo	māghana liyo
	ṭhāde dokān jāla	terse dokān jāla
	dājyū ṭiko kāmā jāye	ekai pāina jāpeo
65	kāka phule pāina	adhā relo mātāe odhā relo mātāe
	ripā relo mātāe	rimā relo mātāe
	gaūḍī relo mātāe	galbi relo mātāe
	deoe pāina jameo	rātāleko pāina
	kunda pāina jāpeo	karnā phule pāina cārai pāina jāpeo
70	kāka relo bhaigo	rimā relo bhaigo
	sepā relo bhaigo	serō relo bhaigo
	sisai ngā putu	bhālo ngā jaran lāi
	gaūḍī cheojeo bhaigo	galbī cheojeo bhaigo
	kānūl relo bhaigo	bānūl relo bhaigo

75	jasiwante bhayo ye gariyā rairā dājyu ṭiko kāmī jālai sāndhan rēgor jātā	bhagiwante bhayo ye mātālā rairā sira pagarī baidera chārjār bhaigo sāndhan ge rēgor ṭa
79	sāndhan ngā rēgor ṭa	

chokorā kheti

1	gura bābue maryo pittr jāye je yū seta ngā boh lāyo gita tamro	gura bābu singa rammā bābu raman rammā je kaḷ seta ngā boh gāyo gita hāmro
5	je āgee sama āūsī joglā sāndhan rēgor lai cyepu lujā sākhū sunāi dinchu	je bākee sama punni joglā guipāl rēgor lai cyangrā lujā bākhū sunāi dinchu
10	gura bābu jāye bābu bal bahādure bābu budhe rammā ghāta laidā yēceo dakhin ghartāo	bābu gulāph singhe bābu dal bahādure najāneko ghāta nāhiṛneko bāṭa bāṭo bidā yēceo dakhin ḍhokā jālāo
15	āndhī kholā jāko ngā sarpasā lede ghāta paināceo utar ghara bārai kuṭi bāng lāo	jātāi laurī lede ngā lāpasā bāṭa paināceo utar ḍhokādā ānkhe alākhera
20	kāku jaije māni najāneko ghāta ghāta laidā yēceo gura ge pitra kāku kāsī	kaku rāma rammā nabujheko bāṭa bāṭa laidā yēceo gura ngā deora kāku kaile rammā
25	gura bābu jāye bābu anan singhe jijyu gorkhe rammā jijyu lālji rammā jijyu ranga rammā	bābu nārayan rammā bābu pancu rammā jijyu bhorse rammā jijyu bhakteni bājyu daljīte rammā
30	najāneko ghāta ghāta laidā yēceo	nāhiṛneko bāṭa bāṭa laidā yēceo

	māgī ge ḃarāṣa	selā ge ḃarāṣa
	pāṭan devi jāṣa	bhaie bhagwāṣa
	galde na leo	kāku bhalāyo
35	kāku cundurāṣa	kāku ghana jāṣa
	utar khaṇḁa jāla	rammā boliyo
	nauai cāre jālāo	nauai dhāre jālāo
	bābu kāmāreṣa	bāta laidā yēceo
	bābu jāṣā rammā	bābu bādur rammā
40	bābu manrā jeṣa	gura bābu jāra
	talnā nām bada	pare ngā daulesa
	unā dinko sākhū	unā dinko bākhū
	sākhū sunā yēceo	purkhā paḁā yēceo
	tirthā jugḁa	dharmā jugḁa
45	cārai jug jāḁa	cārai mānamila
	unā dinḁa	unā bārḁa
	utar khaṇḁa jāla	utar ḁhokāḁa
	jāḁai bhoṭ jāla	tānā tālā jāla
	syergwā bā jāla	nauai lāṭā sita nauai lāṭi sita
50	sombāraiko āūsī	mangal bāre punni
	āūsī jogḁa	punni jogḁa
	rātai nguwar bohke	dinai nguwar bohke
	bhalo rammā jāte	bhalo ranju jāte
	o lāyo jā māleo	o gāyo jā māleo
55	ore bāceo	bācchī gorkhā bāceo
	bhalo ngāe imānni	bhalo padmāni
	bhalo ngāe imānni	kāncchī jumā jhākrelni padmā jhākrelni
	lādu sachaiyēcin	barmā sachaiyēcin
	jumā jhākrelni	padmā jhākrelni
60	utar ghar bānī	utar ḁhokā bānī
	mahādeoe leonga	pārbatie leonga
	neptai parna gaigo	goptai parna gaigo
	dhanna mahādeoni	dhanna pārbatini
	purkhā gin rājātā	purkhāi gin dhanitā
65	oh otharā māleo	opatharā māleo
	deoe sanca māyo	dhāmai sanca māyo
	o jijyue deoe	o bājyue deoe
	rātai karkar bhaigo	dinai karkar bhaigo
	deoe sanca māyo	dhāmai sanca māyo
70	ajhai pani ṭa otharā māleo	opatharā māleo
	lādusa jā māyo	barmāṣa jā māyo
	dhanna mahādeoe	matawāl bānī
	dhanna pārbatinie	utar khaṇḁa jāni

75	bāghai bāose pōni nāgai laiye mānchī galde bira rālāi yi moco zyeā rālāi saka pache jaiceo mahājūrī lāi	hākin gao jāni pachim gharlā cārai bir rālāi yi karam zyeā rālāi lādu sachainānī barmā sachainānī ekai bārļā ṭādā chārjār jaiyo nedā chārjār jaiyo
80	simā dur rālāi lopā jāla o tharā jāḍa ajhai pani ṭa dhanna jumā jhākrelni	pimā dur rālāi lomā jāla mā jurnulā otharā jāḍa cārai bir jārāi yi mānchī jālāi āsik dāḍa yeunī bāke dāḍa yeunī
85	kāya sipan dāḍa koye lāto dāni purkha gin rājā lāi lādu goe cinī ṭutee namārānkin gaūḍī namārānkin	kāya bāgen dāḍa koye bātho dainī ṭuṭyo narānakin bhagyo narānakin pāṭī goe cinī bhajyo namārānkin galbī namārānkin
90	lādu chārjār tānī tinai rāte tānī lādu chārjār bhaigo acal dawāre rāi	pāṭī chārjār tānī tinai dine tānī pāṭī chārjār bhaigo macal dawāre rai
95	āran jaine rammāe o lāgitā ajhai pani ṭa māmantriko lāgitā lādu ṣa jā thānceo	āran jaiko lāgi ranju o lāgitā raksī boṭol ṭaye māmantriko lāgi pāṭī ṣa jā thānceo
100	nauai sawāre rāi nauai ṭilā thānceo utar ghara bāra utar gharlā thengā sī jālāi	nauai dawāre rāi nauai gaṛē thānceo utar ḍhokā bāra utar ḍhokālā mungā sī jālāi
105	lādu ṣa jā charaikā karkar māgunāe olja ṭesināe ngārge gosāye ngārge āoe ngā gariyelā	barmā ṣa charaikā jeojeo māgunāe olja pāisināe dāngorae āoe ngā mātālā
110	rammā puran can lāi rammā puran can lāi gaūḍī ngā mā rānye goye ṭaboyo	puro āyo mātāye rammā ranju jāye galbā ngā mā rānye gopi ṭaboyo
113		

rēgor khimne kheti — Searching the Drum Frame Song

- 1 They went to the eastern sector the assistants went to the eastern gate
To find [the tree for the drumframe] which no Ranju had ever felled
 which no Rammā
 A tree with no ancestors a tree with no forefathers
With no connections to the deities with no connections to the *dhāmi* gods
5 A tree with no ancestors a tree with no forefathers
They went to the southern house in the south direction
 In order to find out in order to detect
 The acacia-wood this wood acacia
 It had no ancestors it had no forefathers
10 It showed the future by itself it told the future by itself
 My master and my owner this is my story
 I made no connections at night with Rammā Puran Tsan
 At the crossroads on the main road
I have not eliminated the bad signs I have not eliminated the bad omens
15 What type of drumframe do you I search the *sāndhan* drum
 search
In the western house they searched for the she-frame of the prickly oak
 for the he-frame
 They found the *guipāl* wood they found the *guimāl* wood
 At a waterpond at a watersource
 It showed the future by itself it told the future by itself
20 My master and my owner I have not to the deity nor to the *dhāmi* gods
 been presented
My owner's drum is not yet perfect what kind of drumframe do you search
 On the male hillslope on the female hillslope
 The *sāndhan* trees the wood for the *sāndhan* drum
 Have been covering the male and the female slopes
25 This *sāndhan* wood this *sāndhan* wood
 They heated at the waterwell they measured at the waterwell
They paid to it nine offering coins nine offering grains
 They made the bad signs go they made the bad omens go
They sliced off one chip of wood and threw it to the northern house
30 In the northern house at the northern gate
The spirit of the mountain storm the spirit of the rainbow became happy
 became happy
 From the pupil's offsprings the evil influences were cut off
The bad omens of the evil spirits *bhut* and *pret* were cut off
 The bad signs were cut off the bad omens were cut off

- 35 After slicing off a second chip of wood
The *bhut* spirit was happy
The bad signs were cut off
After slicing off a third chip of wood
At the southern house
40 The malaria-spirit became happy
The shaman of the acacia-tree
The bad signs they fell off
After slicing off a fourth chip of wood
And mother Durga became happy
45 After slicing off a fifth chip of wood
The king of gods Iswar
The bad signs became happy
After slicing off a sixth chip of wood
And in the house of hell
50 And from my patient
The sign of zodiac was cut off
The sign of the he-sheep
The bad signs were cut off
On the *sāndhan* drum
55 The top of the drumtree fell to the east
The nine assistants
Rode it on their sexual parts
To their northern house
Lama Piūlā became happy
60 After slicing off a ninth chip of wood
In the eastern sector
The *bhut* spirit became happy
In the southern house
The malaria-spirit became happy
65 In the western house
Mother Durga became happy
- they threw it towards the eastern house
towards the eastern gate
the *pret* spirit was happy, god *brāhā* was happy
the bad omens were cut off
they threw it towards the southern house
at the southern gate
the shivering-fit-spirit became happy
of the acacia-wood became happy
the bad omens they fell off
they threw it towards the western house
goddess Durga became happy
they threw it towards the sky
became happy in the sky house
in the sky house the bad omens became happy
they threw it towards the house of hell
the snake-god of hell Basudev became happy
the pupil's offspring
the *keto* comet was cut off
the sign of the she-sheep were cut off
the bad omens were cut off
on the *guipāl* drum
the trunk fell to the west
the nine helpers
pushing it this way that way
towards the northern exit
god *brāhā* became happy
they threw it towards the eastern exit
towards the eastern gate
at the eastern gate
the *pret* spirit became happy
at the southern exit
the shivering-fit-spirit became happy
at the western gate
goddess Durga became happy

	Mother Durga is still happy	goddess Durga is still happy
	In the four directions	at the four exits
	The bad signs were cut off	the bad omens were cut off
70	The covering-hide they needed	for the <i>sāndhan</i> drum
	They brought it to the crossroads	they brought it to the main road
	The shaman's wives Juma Jhkrelni	and Padma Jhkrelni said
	Our royal husband	you've been lucky
	You brought a long life-span	you brought long life
75	You brought nine offering coins	you brought nine offering grains
	You will become renowned	you will become lucky
	They said this	time and time again
	Both sprinkled the drum	with <i>lādu</i> yeast and <i>barma</i> grains
	And gave a blessed dictum	a blessed word to it
80	At the crossroads	on the main road
	The shaman did one jump	he did two jumps
	Over the <i>sāndhan</i> drum	over the <i>guipāl</i> drum
	After jumping four times	he went into a magical sleep
	In his magical sleep	in his magical slumber
85	One day passed by	two days passed by
	Four days passed by	five days passed by
	Six days passed by	eight days passed by
	Seven days passed by	nine days passed by
	And Maite Dhāmi	took his <i>sāndhan</i> drumframe
90	To his two wives	Candra Dandu and Bindra Dandu
	And Rammā Puran Tsan went to his	to his maternal home
	house	
	When the cockcrow time had come	when the east began to brighten
	He brought his Candrakheye	drumframe to his house
	He put some blood on his forehead	as an unction sign
95	After cutting the bull Candrakheye's	they prepared the first bite
	loin	
	After his first bite of meat	the spotted dumb dog helper
	Threw some meat in four directions	and one pain was gone a second pain
		was gone
	The heart and kidney meat	made god <i>sime</i> happy made god <i>bhume</i>
		happy
	After smoking it above the fireplace	they kept the dried meat on the central
		post
100	Keep it	Rammā keep it
101	On the heated <i>sāndhan</i> drum	on the <i>guipāl</i> drumframe

	At the honourable client	at his parental home
35	At the workshop	at the forge
	At the Kāmi's red house	at the house in Totāpātan
	He looked all around	this way that way
	In the house of <i>asān</i>	in the house of <i>masān</i>
	He went to the house of <i>masān</i>	he went to the house of <i>asān</i>
40	All five brothers	the five Pāṇḍava
	Went to the fenced deerstand	to the deerstand at the ford
	They went in a crowded group	this way that way
	They came to search in the woods	they came to search at the rocks
	And for the <i>sāndhan</i> drum	they got a <i>jhāral</i> deer
45	They got a <i>ghoral</i> deer	the drum hide of the <i>ghoral</i> deer was born
46	And now the he-snake was controlled	the she-snake was controlled by the <i>sāndhan</i> drumframe

tānā khimne kheti — Searching the Leather Laces Song

1	For the <i>sāndhan</i> drum	for the prickly oak drum
	What lace should he search for	what standard should he set
	For he could not control the he- snake	he could not control the she-snake
	What lace should he search for	what standard should he search for
5	Should the cow be a spotted cow	should the cow be a speckled cow
	From the womb of the spotted cow	the spotted bull was born
	From the womb of the speckled cow	the speckled bull was born
	Both were not sufficient as a drum lace	not sufficient for the standard
	From the womb of the tufted cow	the tufted bull was born
10	From the womb of the red and black cow	the red ox was born
	From the womb of the speckled cow	the speckled bull was born
	From the womb of the dotted cow	the dotted bull was born
	All were not sufficient as a drum lace	not sufficient for the standard

yel khimne kheti — Searching the Membrane Stretcher Song

- 1 On this *sāndhan* drum I do not have a membrane stretcher
 What kind of membrane stretcher search the membrane stretcher in the
 shall I search northern sector
 In the northern sector are the traces of the membrane stretcher
 The *jarmutā*-bamboo membrane not once and not another time
 stretcher did not fit
- 5 It did not fit for Rammā Puran Tsan
 It did not fit for Rammā Ranju
 What kind of male membrane what kind of female membrane stretcher
 stretcher shall I search shall I search
 I will search my membrane stretcher on the traces of the membrane stretcher
 In the northern sector at the northern gate
- 10 He made of *ji* bamboo a membrane at Lālāpātan
 stretcher
 But it did not fit not once and not another time
 What kind of male membrane what kind of female membrane stretcher
 stretcher shall I make shall I make
 It does not fit the *magi* helping it does not fit the *sailā* helping spirit
 spirit
- It does not fit the bad signs it does not fit the bad omens
- 15 What kind of male membrane what kind of female membrane stretcher
 stretcher shall I make shall I make
 I will search my membrane stretcher on the traces of the membrane stretcher
 At the southern house in the south direction
 He made of *gāpā* lowland bamboo a a female membrane stretcher
 male
- But it did not fit not once and not another time
- 20 What kind of male membrane what kind of female membrane stretcher
 stretcher shall I make shall I make
 He made of plain *cal* bamboo a a female membrane stretcher
 male
- On the *sāndhan* drum the stretcher did not fit
 To one of the holes time and time again
 On the crossroads on the main road
- 25 It did not fit the narrow passes it did not fit the narrow ways
 It did not fit the bad signs it did not fit the evil omens
 What kind of male membrane what kind of female membrane stretcher
 stretcher shall I make shall I make

- | | | |
|----|--|--|
| | From Candraghat he jumped | to the nine ridges and over the nine valleys |
| | With his <i>māgi</i> helping spirit | with his <i>sailā</i> helping spirit |
| 30 | With his shining <i>tiri</i> spirit | with his shining <i>miri</i> spirit |
| | After he cut off the bad signs | after he cut off the bad omens |
| 32 | After he cut off the he- <i>yel</i> bamboo | after he cut off the she- <i>yel</i> bamboo |
| | [mantra] | |

ṭās kheti — Song of the Iron Rivets

- | | | |
|----|---|--|
| 1 | They brought the drumframe to
their house | they brought it to their maternal home |
| | In their house | at their maternal home |
| | Seven days went by | fifteen days went by |
| | On a Tuesday | on a red and inauspicious day |
| 5 | All night the drum resounded <i>kateng</i>
Elder brother Tiko Kāmi | all day the drum resounded <i>kateng</i>
prepared a pair of bellows made of sheep
skin |
| | To fix the iron rivets | for my <i>sāndhan</i> drum |
| | He fixed the iron rivets | for my <i>sāndhan</i> drum |
| | My honorable client an offering
please | male and female sheep |
| 10 | I fixed the iron rivets | I put the iron rivets on |
| | Take all away elder brother take it | bringer of wealth |
| | I'll give you three turbans | I'll give you nine offering coins |
| | I'll give you nine offerings of mixed
grain | let us fix the iron rivets |
| | When this has happened | I may give you twelve wooden pots of
beer |
| 15 | Bring light meal bring it | in the twelfth night |
| | Bring your <i>sāndhan</i> drum | bring it to my workshop |
| | Bring it to my forge | bring it to my smithy |
| | If that is not enough | for your nine-holed <i>sāndhan</i> drum |
| | Bring also <i>lādu</i> yeast | and <i>barma</i> grain |
| 20 | Keeping the <i>sāndhan</i> drum | under the armpit |
| | Ramma went with his assistants | to the workshop on the wayside crossing |
| | To the forge of Tiko Kāmi | on the steep and lenient hill |
| | To the workshop | of the arm-aching blacksmith |
| | They went along the crossroads | they went along the main road |

- 25 At the crossroads on the main road
 The mountain dogs the mastiff dogs
 Of Tiko Kāmi of the armaching blacksmith
 Were barking *hā hā* they were barking *hē hē*
 I am the gentle Kāmi's wife said the gentle Kāmeni
 30 What caste are you from what subclan are you from
 And she went to regard them this way and that way
 But the blessed Kāmeni did not she did not recognize them
 recognize them
 Immediately thereafter Tiko Kāmi came out of the house
 To see for himself what caste they might be
 35 My honourable clients what job did what work did you come for
 you come for
 Elder brother Tiko Kāmi elder brother arm-aching blacksmith
 For our *sāndhan* drum for our *sāndhan* drum we came
 Let us fix the iron rivets let us fix the nails
 It can't be that important to come during the love-plays of the night
 40 My face cannot look straight my eyes cannot see straight
 I cannot join the bellows with the pipe
 I could not yet join the bellows with the pipe
 My dear *mit*-friend at the place outside the stable
 Let us join the bellows at the place outside the stable
 45 Maybe at daybreak in the morning
 Let us get it done elder brother let us get it done elder brother
 Before the golden cock has finished before the night is over
 crowing
 You must have joined the bellows with the pipe
 At the time the golden cock has finished crowing
 50 At the time the golden cock has finished with the night
 When he had joined the bellows the east began to brighten
 When he had joined the pipe the east began to brighten
 When elder brother Tiko Kāmi the armaching blacksmith
 Was joining pipes and bellows
 55 He carried pincers in his one hand
 And carried a small hammer in his other hand
 Holding a big hammer holding a small hammer
 Tiko Kāmi the arm-aching blacksmith
 Prepared at first the crow-flower temper
 60 After that he completed the berry-flower temper
 Elder brother Tiko Kāmi the armaching blacksmith
 Took up the small hammer took up the big hammer
 In the workshop at the crossing of the steep and lenient hill

	Elder brother Tiko Kāmi	increased the temper of the iron
65	The temper of the crow-flower	could not destroy neither this nor that
	It could not destroy the male future marker	could not destroy the female future marker
	It could not destroy the narrow passes	it could not destroy the narrow ways
	To increase the temper of the deities	he increased the temper of the pheasant- blood
	In the vessel he increased the temper	of the ear-flowers four tempers
70	And now the crow could be destroyed	the future marker could be destroyed
	<i>sepā</i> could be destroyed	<i>serō</i> could be destroyed
	My pupil and my son	my gentle successor
	The narrow passes have been cut off	the narrow ways have been cut off
	The bad signs have been destroyed	the bad omens have been destroyed
75	They carried the drum back to the house	back to their maternal home
	Where it became renowned	where it became lucky
	For elder brother Tiko Kāmi's honour	they bound a turban around his head
	And so the <i>sāndhan</i> drum	became completed
79	My <i>sāndhan</i> drum	our <i>sāndhan</i> drum

chokorā kheti — Song of the First Beer

1	Our teacher father	teacher father Singā Rammā
	Dead ancestor	father Raman Rammā
	I was born from your heart	I was born from your kidneys
	It was yours to give the songs	it is ours to sing the songs
5	According to your order	according to your word
	At the new moon time	at the full moon time
	We attached the hide of a mountain sheep	the hide of a mountain goat
	On the <i>sāndhan</i> drum	on the <i>guipāl</i> drum
	I let you hear about the ancestors	I let you hear about the forefathers
10	Of all my teacher fathers	father Gulāph Singh
	Father Bal Bahādur	father Dal Bahādur

	Father Budhe Rammā	on the unpassed fords on the unknown paths
	Give us guidance on the fords	give us guidance on the paths
	At the southern house	at the southern gate
15	At the Āndhi Khola river	where the tailless stick-snake lives
	Show me the fords	show me the paths
	Me and my tailless snake	me and my tiger
	At the northern house	at the northern gate
	At the twelve Kutibang	at the Ankhe-Alakhe-people
20	Uncle Jaijmāni	uncle Rama Shaman
	On the unpassed fords	on the ungone paths
	Give us guidance on the fords	give us guidance on the paths
	Master our ancestor	master our deity
	Uncle Kāsi	uncle Kaile Rammā
25	Of all our teacher fathers	father Nārayan Rammā
	Father Anan Singh	father Pancu Rammā
	Greatgrandfather Gorkhe Rammā	greatgrandfather Bhorse Rammā
	Greatgrandfather Lalji Rammā	greatgrandfather Bhokte you two
	Greatgrandfather Ranga Rammā	greatfather Daljite Rammā
30	On the unpassed fords	on the ungone paths
	Give us guidance on the fords	give us guidance on the paths
	With our <i>māgi bārā</i> helping spirits	with our <i>selā</i> helping spirits
	With the deity of Pātan	with younger brother Bhagwan
	You are the wild boar	uncle Bhalayo
35	With uncle Cundura	with uncle Ghana
	At the northern sector	calling the Rammā
	At Naucare	at Naudhare
	With father Kāmare	give us guidance on the path
	Father Jansi Rammā	father Badu Rammā
40	Father Manrāje	all our teacher fathers
	After having gone to the netherworld	with my spotted boar of the paria-caste
	Ancestors of many days	pedigree of many days
	Let us speak of the ancestors	let us enumerate the forefathers
	In the third age	in the religious age
45	In the four ages	amongst the people of the four ages
	After many days	after many years
	In the northern sector	at the northern gate
	In cold Dolpo	at Tānātāli
	At Syergwabā with the nine male	and female dumb dogs
50	At the new moon of a Monday	at the fullmoon of a Tuesday
	At new moon time	at fullmoon time

- The *ngumar* sound of the drum was
born at night
Gentle Rammā
He had no armour
55 So he went beyond
Both my gentle faithful ones
Both my gentle faithful ones
You two please purify some *lādu*
yeast
Both Juma Jhākrelni
60 The two went to the northern house
They called in at Mahādeo's
They kneeled down
You two praiseworthy Mahādeo
Our royal husband
65 He has no beer mash
The deities did not give him rest
The deity of his greatgrandfather
Made him lightly shake all night
The deity did not give him rest
70 So far he has no beer mash
They did not give him *lādu* yeast
Praiseworthy Mahādeo
Praiseworthy Parbati said
From the place of tigers and of
wolves
75 At the western house
The wild boars
These *moco* spirits
At the very end he ordered them
Within a year the *mahājuri* yeast
80 They dried the barley seeds
On the male *lo* mat
And they put the beer mash
The four wild boars
Blessed praiseworthy Juma Jhākrelni
85 To feed the beer mash
To see if they turned dumb
If you see that your royal husband is
wiped out
- the *ngumar* sound was born at day
gentle Ranju
had no song
to the village of Bacchigaon
both my gentle Padma-wives
younger wife Juma Jhākrelni and Padma
Jhākrelni
and purify some *barma* grain
and Padma Jhākrelni
went to the northern gate
they called in at Parbati's
they bowed down in front of them
and praiseworthy Parbati
our wealthy husband
has no beer mash
the *dhāmi* gods did not give him rest
the deity of his grandfather
made him shake lightly all day
the *dhāmi* gods did not give him rest
has no beer mash
they did not give him *barma* grain
with his drinking habits
from the northern sector
from Hakin village
of the man who wears a snake skin
the four boars [have the yeast]
these *karam* spirits [have they yeast]
to purify the *lādu* yeast to purify the
barma grain
was ready time and time again
and wheat seeds
on the female *lo* mat
into a small bamboo basket
and these people there
and advised her
to their hunting dogs to taste it
or if they turned wise
or his soul will run away

	Then the yeast is rotten	and the mugwort too is rotten
	If you see that he is not wiped out	and his soul will not run away
90	If you do not see the narrow passes	if you do not see the narrow ways
	Then the yeast is perfect	then the mugwort is alright
	Within three nights	within three days
	The yeast will be perfect	the mugwort will be perfect
	The lazy assistants	and the diligent assistants
95	Will do their duty	in the workshop
	For the Rammā	and the Ranju
	Until then	the raksi bottle will be ready
	For our man of knowledge	for our man of knowledge
	Place the <i>lādu</i> yeast	and place the mugwort
100	You nine assistants	you nine helpers
	Place the nine offering coins	place the nine offering grains [in front of me]
	They went to the northern house	they went to the northern gate
	At the northern house	at the northern gate
	When they were sprinkling <i>lādu</i>	and sprinkling <i>barma</i> grain
	yeast	
105	On the crazy wood	on the wood possessed by madness
	It did not start to shake	neither heavily nor lightly
	But it showed the future by itself	it told the future by itself
	My master	my <i>dāngora</i> drum
	In this my house	in this my maternal home
110	Rammā Puran Tsan's	life time is not long
	Neither Rammā Puran Tsan's	nor Rammā Ranjus
	I do not see the narrow passes	I do not see the narrow ways
113	Do not rip out the <i>goye</i> souls	do not rip out the <i>gopi</i> souls

Annotations to the *rēgor khimne kheti*

- 2 The name pair Rammā and Ranju designates the first shaman, Rammā Puran Tsan. While the first term *rammā* is still used today as a general Kham designation for 'shaman', replacing the Nepali word *jhākri*, the second term *ranju* will be encountered only in the context of mythological chants, – as a parallelistic filler.
- 3 »... with no ancestors«, »with no forefathers« means: a drum, which has never existed before.
- 10 With these words the singer alludes to the divinatory capacities of the drum.
- 11 »My master and my owner« is the address of the acacia-wood to the first shaman.
- 17 The verbal duplication of the prickly oak into a male *guipāl* and a female one *guimāl*, is a frequent procedure in mythic style of speech. It serves the requirement for parallel words. The usual way of accomplishing this is to add to the word stem a male ending *pāl* or *pā* in the first half-line and a female ending *māl* or *mā* in the second half-line. Moreover, dual sexuality plays an elementary role in mythic times, not only for living beings, but also for objects and natural phenomena, see for instance *hāpāl/hāmāl* (in verse 21) and *hāpā/hāmā* (in verse 24) for the »male and female slope«.
- 26 »... they heated it, they measured it«: are short-hand descriptions for steps in the fabrication process of a drumframe. After a drumtree has been located by its subsequent owner, it will be felled by some assistants. Then it will be debranched and carried to a well nearby (acts which the text leaves unmentioned in this passage, but deals with later on in lines 55 and 57). Near the well, the trunk of the tree will be cut to a lath. This will be measured to get the right size and then be heated over an open fire, as to be bent to a round frame more easily. In case the lath breaks in the difficult task of bending it (which is a bad sign for its future owner), a second lath will be cut, measured and bent. Once this stage has been reached, the bent frame will be deposited into a circular hole in the soil where the drum-makers throw offering gifts over it such as coins, chicken-blood and grains, as stated in verse 28.
- 31 The spirit of the mountain storms, *puthā zyeā*, which is also the spirit of the northern, high altitude pastures, will attack people in the guise of a mountain storm or a snow avalanche. The rainbow spirit, *ghosim zyeā*, also a spirit of high altitude pastures, can make people disappear. Thus, both spirits are especially dangerous for shepherds, hunters and those who travel through alpine regions.
- 32 »... from the son and pupil ...«, *sisai puta*: The text alludes to the successor of the first shaman, Barca Pargil Pu, who is Rammā Puran Tsan's own son and his first and only pupil. He is the primordial representative of all new initiates, that is of all those who aspire after a new drum.
- 35 »... a second chip of wood«: Up to the present day the makers of a new drum scrape off nine chips of wood from the drum lath and throw them into all direc-

tions at nine different stopovers on their way back from the forests. This is an important ritual gesture, by which they beg the supernatural beings forgiveness for having felled a tree.

- 36 The spirits *bhut* and *pret* usually appear as a pair. They reside in natural objects, such as rocks, trees or in marshy places. They can be harmful to man in many ways. The *bhut* spirit has the head of a water buffalo. God *brāhā*, called Brahma by preference in the Hindu context, the divine source of all Being, is redefined in Magar religion as the all embracing principle of ancestorship. As *sidha brāhā* he is worshipped by all Magar clans; he has the power to animate the shaman's staff, *kothye*.
- 40 The malaria spirit, *aulo zyeā*, and the spirit of shivering fits, *agan zyeā*, bring various kinds of fever to man. They reside predominantly in the southern plains, where malaria is widely spread.
- 44 In the Hindu pantheon Durgā is the *śakti* of Śiva. According to Magar astrology it is an auspicious sign to meet goddess Durgā in a visionary dream.
- 46 The »king of gods«, *iswar rājā*, is none other than god Indra.
- 49 The snake-god of the netherworld, Basudev, tries to drag newborn children into his reign. He is warded off with the help of drawings of protective circles.
- 52 The zodiac is a demon, known under the name of *rāhu*. He causes eclipses of sun and moon; *kitu* or *ketu* is a comet; both are planets with extremely negative astrological connotations.
- 53 »The sign of the he-sheep/the sign of the she-sheep« *lupā/lumā*: The singer alludes to the companion sheep of deceased people, which guide the souls of the dead to the Pass of the Beyond, located on the eastern border of Magar territory, mapped out as Jaljala Pass. When, as in this verse, the companion sheep of the dead are repelled, it will follow that the shaman's client will be rescued from the dangers of death.
- 55 In this verse the felling of the drumtree is recounted, which is already a *fait accompli* in verse 26. It is essential that the tree falls eastward with the top. The east-west direction is considered to be the direction of life and death. A drumtree which has all its life ahead as a drum and which will be used to prolong life, should never point into the direction of death when felled. Deceased people, on the other hand, are layed out and later buried with the heads pointing west and their feet pointing east.
- 57 To ride the trunk of the drumtree »on the sexual parts« is a habit still practised today. This symbolism allows the assumption of an erotic partnership between the shaman and his drum. At least it can be stated that by riding the trunk, the drum makers allude to the future function of the drum as a vehicle, a kind of horse, on which the shaman undertakes his transcendental journeys.
- 59 In Magar lore Lāmā Piülā is a legendary bonpo priest from Dolpo.
- 70 This verse anticipates the application of the drumhide on the frame, a subject to be treated in detail in the next drum fabrication myth, the *syelo khimne kheti*, in

- which the long search for the appropriate membrane precedes its application. In contemporary practice the hide is applied to the drumframe also on a crossroads outside the village, just as stated in the next verse.
- 72ff. Up to the present day it is the drumowner's wife who greets the new hoop with a word of blessing at the entrance to the village.
- 78 Sprinkling the drumframe with yeast brings about its appeasement, see also the »Song of the First Beer«, verse 104.
- 81 »... did one jump«: By jumping over the drumframe the shaman appropriates the power of the wood. At the same time he subdues the evil influences that might be nesting there. This custom is continued up to the present day.
- 84 The magical slumber, *sātā*, is enacted in present day *séances* by the shaman's lying down on the floor in a sleeping position. Putting his drum under his head like a pillow he remains in a motionless state for some time, until he starts trembling, then shaking and finally moving about on all fours, transformed into an animal tutelary spirit.
- 89 Maite Dhāmi is one of the main opponents of the first shaman Rammā Puran Tsan. Here, after his nine-day slumber, the shaman employs this pseudonym to remain unrecognized.
- 90 Candra Dandu and Bindra Dandu are the two wives of Maite Dhāmi, Rammās arch-enemy. In correspondence to verse 89 the names of these women are used by two wives of Rammā as codenames.
- 93 In this verse the drum is given the name of the sacrifice which it receives, i.e. the name of the bull Chandrakheye.
- 94 Not only the shaman is beneficiary of the sacrificial blood: some of it is also sprinkled over the drum. Both shaman and drum are said to be invigorated by it.
- 96 The dumb dog, *lātā kukur*, is a clowesque assistant of the shaman.
- 98 The pair of deities, *sime* and *bhume*, are the »master of the swamplands« and the »god of arable land«. In the mythic chants they usually appear together in formulaic juxtaposition.

Annotations to the *syelo khimne kheti*

- 2 Right from the beginning of this chant the search for the appropriate drumhide, *syelo*, is combined with the search for the ideal leather laces, *tānā*. This juxtaposition is repeated several times in the course of the song (in the verses 9, 13, 17, 19, 25 and 27), so that one might conclude the two items are fashioned in a single operation. This, however, is not the case. In present day practice the leather laces are made of cowhide, i.e. of domestic stock, while the membrane is fabricated from the hide of a deer, the ghoral chamoix. The *ghoral* supplies the hide for the drum's membrane also in other ethnic surroundings, among the Tamang, the Chantel and the Chepang for instance. This deer should not be hunted,

it should be found dead. Nevertheless, the apparent brevity of the search song for the leather laces might be explained by the fact that the search is already treated in the preceding song on the drumhide.

- 6 The connection made in this verse between the correct raw materials for the drum and the shaman's dance is indicative: The drum is the ideal rhythmic supporter of the dance. Moreover, the dance is introduced as being divine.
- 7 The hides of the mountain sheep, *cyepulu*, and of the mountain goat, *cyangrā lu*, which are discovered in this verse as being not the right ones, are said to be appropriate in a verse of the *chokora kheti* (see verses 7 and 8), falsely so, as we will hear later on.
- 9 »... to create a standard«: This is an explicit indication for the charter value of the myth. In the mythic chant the prototype is fixed for each constituent part of the drum and each successive drum has to be rebuilt according to it.
- 15 The »lowland of the Terai«, *mālai*, designates the Indian plains, situated south of the plains in the inner Terai, located in the regions of Dāng and Deokhuri (mentioned in verse 24).
- 24 The adjacent regions of Dāng and Deokhuri in the inner Terai are traditional winter destinations for the sheep- and goat-herds of the transhumant Magar of the North.
- 29 The literary translation for »Dolpo« should be »Tibet«, or *bhoṭ*. But every local lay person listening to the myths, knows very well that in this context only Dolpo can be meant.
- 31 The five Pāṇḍava brothers, i.e. Dhamrāj (son of Viṣṇu); Bhimsen (son of Bāyu); Arjun (son of Suriya); Nahakul (son of Duryudan); and Sahādev (son of Duryudan). They normally play only a role in Magar astrology, but are mentioned in this mythological context, because they are good hunters; and good hunters are needed to kill the timid deer of the mountains.
- 32 The jingle word *āsule/pāsule* refers to the hunting dogs of mythic times, encountered also in the genesis stories.
- 38 A visit in the house of the spirits of the dead, *asān* and *masān*, is meant to remind the audience of the dangerous task that consists in searching for the drumhide.
- 44f. The text mentions two different varieties of wild Himalayan goat as the appropriate ones, *jhāral* and *ghoral*. But it is clear to everyone that only the latter can be taken to provide the correct hide for the membrane.

Annotations to the *tānā khimne kheti*

- 12 The different varieties of cattle enumerated in the preceding lines play also a role in a popular genesis story of the Magar tribe. According to this legend, *vaṃsāvali*, the first ancestor, a half-god with a divine pedigree, comes from the inside of a steep rock, located north of the present habitat of the Magar. Entering the

human world he meets a young woman and makes love with her. From their children derive the three proto-clans of the Magar, the Gharti, the Budha and the Pun. As his inheritance the divine ancestor brings a yoke, servants and cows from the gods' dwelling place behind the rock. There are white cows, brown ones, black ones, spotted ones, and speckled ones parading into the human sphere; when green ones and tumeric-coloured ones appear, the woman shrinks back and her husband returns them to the interior side of the rock; that is why they do not exist nowadays in our world.

- 13 As the text ends abruptly after this line, it is not clear which one of the diverse varieties of cows provides the proper leather laces for the drum.

Annotations to the *yel khimne kheti*

- 5 The varieties of bamboo that are successively tried out as materials for the membrane stretcher, starting in this verse with the *jarmuta*-kind, followed by the *ji*-, *gā*-, and *cār*-bamboo, are only temporary choices. In the end it has to be the tendon *yel*.
- 10 The hamlet Lālāpātan is one of the original places of Magar shamanism. It is located on the northern slopes of the Jangla Bhanjyang Pass.
- 13 The *māgi*- and the *sailā*-spirits are secondary helpers of the shamans, belonging to the class of *bqā*. They are invoked to enlarge the shaman's ecstatic powers.
- 28 Candraghat is a village to the south-west of Magar country.
- 30 The pair *tiri* and *miri* are secondary helping spirits of the *bqā*-class. They are embodied in the rays of the sun.
- 32 The chant is interrupted in this line by a *mantra*. It is not clear whether the story continues, telling us more about the *yel* or not. When the tendon is stretched over the drum frame the assistants cry out: *ghumike yel!* »Jump on the frame, tendon!« in order to transfer to the tendon the responsibility for the success of their action.

Annotations to the *ṭās kheti*

- 1 The chant begins with the statement that the fabrication of the drumframe is practically completed, only the iron rivets are missing which hold together the bent ends of the lath, which, up to this point, had been held together provisionally with bamboo strips.
- 4 »Red days« are days of inauspicious constellation.
- 5 The primordial sound »kateng« which the drum lets go without being sounded, is a sign for its untamed ferocity.

- 6ff. In a short sequence of verses starting in this line a preview is given on the activities of the blacksmith of the netherworld, the main description of which is presented later (starting with verse 51).
- 9 The person asking for a sacrifice is none other than the blacksmith whose craze for profit is notorious. Here, and in the subsequent dialogue, it is not always easy to establish who of the dialogue partners is speaking. Oral tradition has no quotation marks.
- 20 Starting with this verse the visit of Rammā Puran Tsan in the forge of Tiko Kāmi is recounted; the previous dialogue between the two should therefore follow. This shows that the mythic narration is not always linear, it cuts forward and backward.
- 23 »The arm-aching blacksmith« is a formulaic attribute of Tiko Kāmi, an euphemism for his ardour.
- 26 What has been translated as mastiff dogs is given in the original as »Tibetan dogs«, *bhoṭe okukure*.
- 35ff. Here is the beginning of the dialogue between shaman and blacksmith, some scraps of which have already been interspersed in the opening lines of the chant.
- 41 »Joining the bellows with the pipe« is a paraphrase for an enormous heat of the fire in the forge, prerequisite for the iron works.
- 43 The expression *mit*-friend, in Kham *mijyu*, designates a pact of ceremonial friendship between two partners. It obliges them to extend mutual hospitality and to support each other; it excludes consecutive marriages between members of the two parties.
- 46ff. The urge with which the shaman presses the blacksmith to complete the iron work before daybreak, is connected with a need for secrecy. If it were executed in plain daylight the work could be seen by enemies.
- 59 The »crow-flower-temper«, and the tempers that follow, such as the »berry-flower-temper« (verse 60), the »pheasant-flower-temper« (verse 68) and the »ear-flower-temper« (verse 69) are poetic metaphors for various water mixtures in which the heated iron will be tempered. Each mixture produces a different degree of hardness. The metaphors serve to guard the secrets of the blacksmith's knowledge.
- 66 »Future markers« are material objects to indicate the future. These divinatory devices consist of some scraps of cloth and fingernails of the patient rolled to miniature balls. These balls are put on the shaman's drum which then is beaten while held in a horizontal position. In this way the balls begin to dance over the membrane. Depending on the spot where they stop moving or where they fall off the frame, they provide variable allusions to the patient's future.
- 71 The pair of spirits *sepā* and *serō* are supernatural beings of the swamplands, sons of *separā*, a spirit residing in wet places, at watersources and in morasses. All three of them cause polio.

Annotations to the *chokorā kheti*

- 1 The »song of the first beer« commences with a so-called *pittr khulne* or »invocation of the ancestors«, in the course of which all professional predecessors and teachers of the performing singer – be they dead or alive – are invoked. Their list varies from performer to performer, as each shaman has a different set of ancestors and teachers. In the recorded case presented here, the list contains 26 shamans, beginning with Singa Rammā, a healer from Sera, who was 65 years old and alive at the date of the recording in 1978. The invocation of the ancestors is a kind of prelude to the recitational part of a *séance*. It has to precede the first myth recounted in a sitting; in a night-long *séance* it may be repeated after an intermission.
- 2 Raman Rammā was a shaman from Sera who died approximately around 1963.
- 6ff. As the invocations of the ancestors can be the prelude to any myth, they are unspecific for the occasion. To overcome this, a performer may put in a few lines indicating the actual occasion, such as some words about drum making. The entire invocation of the ancestors ends with verse 45.
- 10 In 1978 Gulāph Singh was the oldest living shaman of Taka, aged 84. He died six years later in 1984, aged 90. He was a member of the Budha clan.
- 11 Bal Bahādur, in 1978 about 57 years old, is the head shaman of Taka, widely recognized for his knowledge, zeal and wit. Dal Bahādur, in 1978 about 55 years old, is a reincarnation of his own father Rupsingh. He has been many years in the service of the Indian Army Assam Rifles.
- 12 Budha Rammā, renowned for the beauty of his singing, is a blind shaman of Taka. He was about 60 years old in 1978.
- 15 The Āndhi Khola is a confluent of the Kāli Gandaki, to the south-west of Pokhara. It flows through territory outside the sphere of the Northern Magar.
- 20 Jaijmāni and Ram Rammā are names of two non-identified shamans.
- 24 While the shaman Uncle Kasi could not be identified, Uncle Kaile, also called Kāle, is known as a healer who died around 1980 and has since been reincarnated twice: once in his nephew Dute Rammā and in the *dhāmi* or spirit medium Bhim Bahādur Gharti.
- 25 Nārayan Rammā is a blind shaman of Taka, who died around 1958 and was reincarnated in Sarki.
- 26 Anan Singh Gurung was a famous shaman of Taka who died around 1960. He was the paternal uncle of Beth Bahādur Gurung, whose *gel* or ancestral spirit he is. Pancu Rammā was a shaman of Taka who died around 1971. He was, like Anan Singh, a descendant of Gurung immigrants, who moved into Magar villages approximately five generations ago as copper miners.
- 27 Shaman Gorkhe from Taka, who died around 1890, was the greatgrandfather in the paternal line of Man Bahādur, one of the three great shamans of the seventies. He is Man Bahādur's *gel* or ancestral spirit. Bhorse Rammā, who died around

- 1900, was the greatgrandfather in the paternal line of Chame Budha and his *gel* or ancestral spirit.
- 28 Lalji and Bhokte were both shamans of the Budha clan who died in the 1920ies.
- 29 Ranga Rammā, who died around 1930, was a shaman of the Budha clan. His reincarnation is Kathka Budha, one of the leading shamans of Taka. Daljite, also a shaman from Taka, of the Gharti clan is the pre-incarnation of Harka Gharti.
- 32 The spirits *māgi* and *selā* (sometimes *sāilā*) belong to the class of secondary spirits called *bṛā*.
- 34 Balayo was a shaman of Taka who died in the 1940ies.
- 35 Cundura and Ghana are two non-identified shamans.
- 37 The place names Naucare and Naudhare are alpine pastures about three hours walk above and away from Taka. The verse could also be translated as: »On the nine ridges / on the nine high pastures«.
- 38 Shaman Kāmāre was the grandfather in the paternal line of Bal Bahādur Budha and is his *gel*, his ancestral spirit.
- 39 Jansi of the Budha clan was a shaman in Taka, who died around 1925, himself a *dhāmi* or spirit-medium. Badur was a shaman in Taka of the Budha clan, who died in the 1940ies.
- 40 Manrā, member of the Budha clan, was a shaman in Taka, who died around 1955.
- 41 The »spotted boar of the paria-caste«, *pāre daule*, is none other but *galde vir*, one of the protagonists of the Barcāmeni genesis myth. In that story the wild boar, amorous of the orphan girl Barcāmeni, accompanies her on a journey to the Terai in the lowlands – a metaphor for a journey to the netherworld. On their way back the boar brings lost souls back to the surface, by kicking them up on its back. Through this act the wild boar becomes one of the nine principle helpers, *dōwa*, of the shaman.
- 48 Tānātāli is the birthplace of the first shaman, Rammā Puran Tsan, both a mythical and real place, located near the village of Tārākot in southern Dolpo, on a hillslope beyond the Jangla Bhanjyang Pass, which divides the territory of the Northern Magar from Dolpo, an enclave of Tibetan culture. All indispensable accessories of the shaman originate at Tānātāli.
- 49 Syergwab »the high meadow of the syergwa-tree« is a place-name, found predominantly in parallel position to that of Tānātāli.
- 52 Besides the sound imitation »kateng« the sound »nguwar« is one of the *urlauts* of the shaman's drum. Both sounds are part of the genesis story of the drum.
- 55 Bacchigaon is a twin village of Taka, overlooking the Utar Ganga; the two villages are about 15 minutes walk away from each other.
- 59 Up to the present day the brewing process and its preparations, such as the collection of yeast, are activities reserved to women. When this division of labour is being discussed, women claim their right by reference to the mythical figures Juma Jhākrelni and Padma Jhākrelni.

- 61 In the mythology of the Magar the divine couple of Mahādev and Parbati appear as creators of the universe; they also create man out of ashes and bird's droppings.
- 66 They »... didn't give him rest« means: the shaman is not master of his trance. He cannot stop his shaking, *ghune*, typical sign for someone who has been selected by supernatural forces to become their medium, but who is too inexperienced to decide the moment of possession himself, or someone, who lacks the necessary means such as yeast to stop it.
- 72 »The habitual drinker«, *matwal bāni* is a surprising epithet for Mahādev, but one fitting well into the context. As the primordial yeast is sought for the production of the first alcohol, it makes sense to ask someone who is an expert in alcoholic beverages. Among Hindus of the Himalaya *matwal* are called caste people among whom alcohol drinking is a habit.
- 74 Hakin is identical with Hukam, an old Magar village in the valley of the Pelma Khola.
- 77 The spirit pair *moco zyeā* and *karam zyeā* is interchangeable with all those spirits that cause premature death. Amongst these are the child spirit *rā*, who is specialised in killing small children and the spirit of white lime, *sarā zyeā*, who pushes people over rocks and cliffs. Both these spirits need careful ritual attention.
- 105 »... the crazy wood / the madly possessed wood« is the drumframe in its savage state, before it has been appeased by yeast.
- 108 The word *dāngora* is a general term for the shaman's drum in the Himalaya, the specific Kham word for which is *rē*. It can be encountered in the variants *dhyāng-ro*, *dhāgori*, *dhāgorio*, *dāngora* or *dākura*. It may be associated with the onomatopoeic word *dhyāng*, which in Nepali reproduces an »explosive sound«. It is tempting at the same time to connect the Himalayan word *dāngura* with the Siberian and Mongolian word variants *tūngūr*, *dūūngūr* or *dūnūr*, – all of which designate a shamanic drum.
- 113 Ripping out a soul of a human being by supernatural force is the beginning of illness, a process which will eventually lead to death, unless the shaman is able to bring the soul back and reincorporate it into his patient's body.

