

BHUSAL, WAPA/MAPA AND JHĀKRI: THE RITUAL SPECIALISTS OF MANGAR COMMUNITY

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Abstract: The paper illustrates the role of ritual specialists *Jhākri* (shamans), *Bhusal* and *Wapa* of Mangar community in safeguarding the oral tradition among Mangars. *Bhusal* and *Wapa* were recognised as priest whereas *Jhākri* served as a faithhealer though their role as specialists of ritual differs with each other. The role of *Jhākri* found in both the areas i.e., Sikkim and Nepal however the terms *Bhusal* and *Wapa* are significantly different. *Bhusal* holds the oral tradition at the same time presents the changes in the certain aspects of ritual through his ritualistic steps like read the verses from text written in Akkharikā (Mangar script) and practices Buddhism simultaneously is an informal training, a person's intuition and desirability to serve in the community push forward him in becoming *Bhusal*. *Wapa* is institutionalized body learn the Buddhistic way of ritualistic process from the Buddhist institution. Conversely *Jhākri* acquire mystic knowledge, its verbal and memorise it. These three ritual specialists reserved their own dignified space within the community on basis of their knowledge and practices. The article critically analyzes the role of these three specialists in safeguarding and promoting the oral tradition among Mangars.

Keywords: Ritual Specialist, Buddhism, Tradition, Textualisation, Institutionalisation.

INTRODUCTION

The Magar/Manger/Mangar/Mongpa¹ is one of the aborigine ethnic-groups (Hooker, 1848) out of the twenty-one inhabiting communities within the state of Sikkim categorised as Mongoloid race, belong to Kirati² sub-cultural group (Sinha, 1975) holding a strong tribal ethos like Limbu, Lepcha, Gurung, Tamang, and so on falls under Tibeto-Burman language family. They speak three different types of languages- *Mangrati/Mangar Dhut, Kham and Kaikē*. These three types of languages are found in Nepal while in Sikkim only one type *Mangrati/Mangar Dhut*. Mangar community falls into Most Backward Class (MBC) within the state of Sikkim although in the Centra list they are included as Other Backward Class (OBC). In Nepal Magar community is the densest reserving the first place within 59 Indigenous Ethnic groups (Thapa, 2008).

Intrinsically, Mangars are an animist indicating more of tribal traits, it has been said that “*Kul bina ko Mangar tyo Mangar nai haina*”³. This statement reflects the significance of ancestors in Mangar community. During *Kulpuja* most of Mangar give sacrifice or offer blood of animals or either birds to the deity. This offering or sacrifices was categorised differently according to their clans. For example Rana clan sacrifices sheep in *Kulpuja*. However among Mangar community in Sikkim there are two sectors one is *Negura* it means who prefers/allow to give sacrifice during *Kulpuja* or in any rituals whereas another one is *Jasmani Sadhu* who does not

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prefer to give sacrifice. As per in custom of Mangar community they were known for giving sacrifices of animals or birds alike in many other Kirati ethnic group but now due to change in certain aspects many of them are avoiding the custom of giving sacrifice and inclining towards non-sacrifice or *Jasmani Sadhu*.

They believed in spirits and deities possessing a distinctive socio-cultural features and practices. The *dhami*⁴ /*Jhākri*, *Bhusal* and *Wapa* are the ritual specialists from their own community and may have some resemblances with other kirati ethnic groups apart, *Bahun*⁵ also perform some rites of the community.

Sinha (2005) in *Communities in Search of Identities in Sikkim* says that despite the influence of strong Hinduism an aboriginal community of Nepal and Sikkim has earnestly protected their traditional customs and practices. An example can be Sited from Mangar community, the desire of community to go back to earlier traditions including language and script what they contemplate as truly Mangar traditions is growing and becoming stronger in the passing days. It has been not easy for them to give out what they have adopted in the past several centuries.

All the communities around the world have their own ritualistic action and behaviour likewise the Mangar community has distinct life-cycle rituals. The two different geographical locations Sikkim and Nepal appeared to have some similarity and dissimilarity in life-cycle rituals even though they belong to same community. The community (Magars) had made some alterations in their cultural and religious practices, this behaviour of them may be a survival strategy in multicultural milieu.

The ritual practices by *Bhusal* and *Wapa* brought changes within the custom of Mangar community. The start of using text and inclination towards Buddhism are some practices that reflect changes. *Bhusal* and *Wapa* recognised as priest like Hindu priest or *Bahun* in Nepali exercise text⁶ while performing any ritual written in Sanskrit in a like manner these two (*Bhusal* and *Wapa*) read verses from text in every rite. Regardless the text of *Bhusal* is known by name *Sheychey Mashchay Kajushey Richiot* (*subh-asubh Karmakanda*⁷ in Nepali) in Mangar language written in *Akkharika* script. An appearance of *Bhusal* presents the continuation of old-tradition through rites but difference is earlier those rite were memorized and verbal now it is found in written form. On the other hand *Wapa* follows Theravada Buddhism the text they used is called *Magar Sanskar Paddhati* (Magar Sacraments Method) written in Mangar and Nepali (regional languages) is totally dissimilar with the text of *Bhusal* and also practices of rites are opposite.

According to Doshi and Jain (2001) “ritual is a very complex field”. The specialists of ritual bind the people’s emotions and bring everyone in one platform of the religious devotion through various kinds of ritual. Therefore, rituals and ritual specialist provide an important connection between humans in different stages of life till death.

The main objectives of this study is to know the role of three ritual specialists-

Bhusal, Wapa and *Jhākri* as well as continuation of earlier tradition and the changes brought by the specialists of ritual on certain aspects of ritual through their religious practices. While on the other hand highlighting significance of three specialists of ritual, and their presence on reflecting the distinctive cultural features of Mangar community.

ETHNOGRAPHIC SETTING AND METHODOLOGY FOR THE STUDY

The empirical study was undertaken among the Mangar community of Sikkim and Nepal from September 2018 till January 2020 to comprehend the nature and role of ritual specialists. Altogether 13 ritual specialists were taken from the selected villages Suldung in West Sikkim and Lower Assangthang in South Sikkim dominated by Mangar. In Nepal Butwal (situated in Rupandehi district of Southern Nepal) and Dang (district in Lumbini Province of Midwestern Nepal) are sub-metropolitan cities people from the hilly areas were shifting their residences towards these crowded cities. The reason on selecting these two sites were from the neighbouring villages or small towns like Palpa, Arghakhanchi, Parbat, Gulmi, Syangja, Rukum, Rolpa, Salyan and Pyuthan known for Magar dominated areas. People are moving in Dang as well in Butwal therefore it became more accessible to met two categories of Magar i.e., *Barahmagrat* and *Atharamagrat*.

The participant observation and extended interviews were conducted for all the three ritual specialists *Bhusal, Wapa* and *Jhankri* in understanding their rituals practices. Lastly elders and community members of Mangar were taken into consideration to know the perceptions on ritual specialists and continuation of oral traditions in their everyday life.

RITUAL SPECIALIST AMONG MANGAR COMMUNITY

In both complex and simple societies, the life-cycle ritual reserved the significant space, an individual and group encountered both the sacred and profane problems. The ritual specialists try to resolve it through stratification among society/community which gives meaning of social existence in the culturally bounded areas. They perform such rituals according to the cultural norms.

In the words of Douglas (1973), ritual specialists live as a stratified or “high-grid”⁸ society with a pronounced social hierarchy and a social ethos of piety toward authority.

According to Douglas, the ritual specialist reserved special place in a society. In some society they hold a hierarchical rank as well are assigned with certain authority. For example in Hinduism- the pandits/guru a religious figure holds authority in religious places and also in the custom of the society. Similarly *Bhusal, Wapa* and *Jhākri* in Mangar community reserved social hierarchy and are assigned with the authority of ritual. Accordingly the other member of community follow their

respective decision. Some ritual specialists do not have official training like *Bhusal* on the other hand traditional specialist become specialist by spiritual knowledge like *Jhākri* even though without formal training. They were designated with the status of specialist it's all because their exclusive knowledge from their forefathers. While *Wapa* gains knowledge from religious institution. The actions of specialist of ritual aligned the rituals in a systematic way following all those cultural norms. The title of specialist of ritual generated to them became the peculiarity of any communities/societies' belief system in their respective culture.

Bhusal



Figure -1: Karna Bhadur Thapa during the festival of Barahimizong.

Bhusal is acknowledged as a priest who performs the life-cycle rituals within Mangar community. The term '*Bhusal*' was coined from their existing cultural practices, it has been said that it was used to summon an elderly person. There was a belief that those elderly person were blessed with the knowledge along with experiences, they were the guardian of the community providing proper guidance, under their supervision each individual especially youth lacking in the traditional knowledge. They are guided in a right way which shall be productive and obliging to the generation. It has been also noted that *Bhusal* as a sub-clan comes under Rana⁹ clan. *Bhusal* plays the major role in the community. He is a performer, preserver

and instructor, every step of rituals are inspected and instructed accordingly.

Bhusal is the necessity of the community, in the earlier days it was accessible to get elderly person's advice in community gathering and ritual; but now the scenario is different some of elderly people are not in a position to supervise or give advice because they have forgotten their earlier ritual or some of them have only glimpses, also most of them are confused with the ritualistic systems either they have to follow Hinduism either Buddhism in contrast with their existing cultural background. So there is a need of one particular individual or section in providing proper guidance to clarify every individual doubts regarding their custom within the community and also to help them in recalling or understanding their traditional custom.

There are no such special criteria in becoming *Bhusal* as it is based on the person having keen interest and desire to serve within the community. An individual should be familiar with an *Akkharikā* script¹⁰ then it shall be easier to him in understanding and interpreting each and every procedure of rituals.

The role of *Bhusal* is not only limited as a priest but also as an influencer. *Bhusal* has a strong grip in script; they fluently narrate the verses in Mangar language though their services which influence other members of Mangar community to be familiar with the script and language. They are also working on the teaching of Mangar language especially among the youth so the presence of *Bhusal* will be very much fruitful in preserving language and also spreading language in the community. It will help in increasing the number of *Bhusal*, recently Mangar language teacher is also engaging themselves in such practices.

Bhusal does not acquire their knowledge or practices from an institution. Karna Bahadur Thapa most popular and familiar face among the community is the first one to begin such practice from a small village Suldung geographically located in West district of Sikkim which is a Mangar dominated place. According to K. B. Thapa he did not get any formal training, he knew some aspects of rituals from his late grandmother and elders while just for a kind of honorific because it was believed that a disciple without a teacher or guru is meaningless, so to respect those wording for a name only he sought for a guru from the same village was a Mangar shaman once in awhile he visits him. In his opinion a person with true intuition and in touch with script possible to become a *Bhusal*, under his supervision many disciples were seeking knowledge.

Bhusal does not have specific attire however they present themselves by wearing a specific colour i.e., yellow that symbolises purity. They wear a yellow colour shawl like garments while doing almost all rituals. The use of yellow colour can be seen in the cultural attire of female in the form of *patuka*¹¹ and *potey*¹². *Bhusal* used specific plant known as *Bhimsen pati*¹³. *Bhusal* does not give sacrifice or is not in favour of offering blood. This gesture reflects their inclination towards Buddhism, instead they offer seasonal fruits and flowers to the deity.

Bhusal has an authority in taking decision of ritual, those decisions are considered important steps in guiding community, in addition All Sikkim Mangar Association (ASMA) helps for further implementation of decision, though each and every community member respect the decision of *Bhusal*. In recent scenario so far *Bhusal* is only becoming a male job, not a single female has been recorded in this service. It might be so that they are not willing to engage themselves into this service or only the male are practicing. Whatever the reasons there is no objection on female becoming a *Bhusal* and she is free to choose her path.

The presence of *Bhusal* in a community provides unique features. Every society/community has their own rituals which differ from each other, correspondingly knowledge, power and performance of ritual specialist act accordingly to their respective society/community, while another reason is self-sufficiency having their own ritual specialist of Mangar community.

Wapa

In Nepal, *Wapa* is widely used to recognise ritual specialist of Magar community like *Bhusal* in Sikkim. *Wapa* is also the result of a desire of the Magar community residing in Nepal to have their own specialist, so they do not have to seek or depend on outsider/other community priest for performing their ritual.

The literal meaning of *Wapa* is *Wa* signifying a person who knows whereas *Pa* means imparting knowledge, so *Wapa* acts as an instructor who instructs or teaches the custom is a fully institutionalised based practices, if a person thought of becoming *Wapa* then he has to leave his family for a certain period of time and to take shelter in a Buddhistic institution where he spends time in meditation and learns to acquire knowledge of Buddhistic path, and also lives life of a *bhikshu*¹⁴. As living a life of *bhikshu* they said that whatever comes in their bowl or house offers them they can not refuse. Refusing is considered as disrespecting the food and people's devotion towards them.



Figure -2: On final day of funeral the deceased family offerings some food to Wapa.

Wapa follows the Theravada Buddhism¹⁵ a branch of Buddhism. The reason on following this particular branch is its simplicity and minimalistic way of life. In their opinion Theravada Buddhism is the purest form of Buddha's teaching and it is not easy to follow in this materialistic world where human mind is full of materialism. The foremost reason is expenditure, economically most of the families belong to middle class or agricultural background where earning is so limited that it becomes difficult for them to fulfil their daily basic needs, so because of this limited expenses it is not possible for them to adopt such kind of extravagant religious practices like Lamaism, if they adopt Lamaism then it is like adapting another extravagant Hindu priest.

M.S Thapa was the first person to popularise Buddhism in the community through his writing. According to him Buddhism is the right path for the community that gives them an identity within the country where the influence of Hinduism is much more, furthermore it is way to show that they did not fit into the Hinduism where every day they face the domination of higher caste, superior and inferior, and many other factors. Therefore, they are now following the Theravada Buddhism.

Wapa wears specific attire during ritual which looks like shirt/pant in maroon colour. The symbolic meaning of maroon is wisdom or dignity representing the simplicity and detachment from materialism. 'Nepal Magar Boudhha Sewa Samaj Rupandehi Zilla Samiti' has been publishing the ritual book in Magar and Nepali. The motive behind publishing this book in these regional languages is that it

would help general people to conduct their own ritual by themselves. They do not need any ritual specialist. As mentioned in above para every household ritual is performed by *kutumba*¹⁶ or head of family even today in absence of specialist they are the one who fulfils the responsibility. As time passes an influence of other religion and culture is impacting so much that they started to forget their tradition and depends upon outsider viz., Hindu priest. Therefore to regain forgotten status and make them self sufficient they published these books in regional languages making easier to understand.

Wapa as a ritual specialist is very much popular in urban region in comparison to rural parts of Nepal while among Magar also within *Baharamagrat*¹⁷. In the rural areas they are following their earlier custom and Hinduism simultaneously only minimum number of household now steeping into the Theravada Buddhism. However another group of Magar *Atharamagrat* still believed in Shamans and continuing the tradition of shamanism.

According to *Wapa* Buddha is in everything, they practice his teaching. *Wapa* means male priest whereas female priest is called *Mapa*. The male priests are not only on a focused point of being ritual specialist but the female are also in the alignment. In comparison with the *Wapa* the number of *Mapa* are not in active role, they are not so popular like *Wapa*, nevertheless they were reserving their status passively in a community. Both of these ritual specialists gained their knowledge from the same Buddhistic centre. There is no restriction or no particular age on becoming *Wapa* and *Mapa*, but the most registered was the middle-aged person taking active participation especially the ex-service men were involving themselves into this practice.

The influence of Buddhism in the community somehow is seeking for a distinctive identity. According to them Buddhism is their religion, they believed Buddha belongs to their community so it is necessary for them to follow this religion as a devotee encouraging other members of Magar to adapt this practice to convey a message of solidarity throughout the country. Then a question arises what about the earlier traditions and ritual they are following through ages. Ritual is not only an activity but allowing meaning to a person in search of existence in this world, their origin, cultural background and belonging at some point they were transforming their meaning of existence from traditional to Buddhism.

Shamans (*Dhami/Jhākri/rma*)

Shaman as faithhealer is a journey of men and women, who are blessed with the mystical power travel into the world of unseen directed by spiritual forces during an altered state of consciousness¹⁸. An illustration of Shamanism by scholars is still on process, innumerable definitions were written to describe the word Shamans or Shamanism. Most scholars had accounted shamanism as 'pre-eminently a magico-religious phenomenon' (Eliade, 1964). "Shaman" the term is originated

by Tungusic '*saman*' an actual explanation is 'one who is excited, moved, raised' (Casanowicz, 1924).

Krippner (2000: 191) defines Shamanism as "a group of techniques by which its practitioners enter the 'spirit world', purportedly obtaining information that is used to help and to heal members of their social group". Shamanic vocation is a gift by the spirits was handed out to a rightful person at any age, sometimes a person did not aware of this call or in some cases early or late in life, a very spontaneous and hereditary form passes through a former shaman to a chosen kinsmen of an accurate descendent (Krader, 1954).

The shamanism still in practices in a community many researchers had published their works and forwarded their views. In his documentary "*Shamans of the Blind country (1981)*", Michael Oppitz explores the Shamanic rituals of Magar in North-West Nepal, he uncovered the most initial phases, their ritualistic performances, curing and healing. Through this documentary it is possible to analyze the foundation of Shamanic tradition and their ritualistic performances which play a major role in a community.



Figure -3: *Jhākri* performing ritual in Kulpuja

According to Macdonald (1975) *Jhākri* is an "interpreter of the world". In his elaboration *Jhākri* is "a person who falls into a trance, during which time voices speak through his person, thereby enabling him to diagnose illnesses and sometimes

cure them, give advice for the future and clarify present events in terms of their relationship to the past. He is therefore both a privileged intermediary between spirits (who cause and cure illness) and men; between the past, present and future; between life and death, and most importantly between the individual and a certain social mythology.

Jhākri tradition is much popular in many communities at the same time can be seen as a cultural identity. In Mangar community, the tradition of *Jhākri* is still alive; among Magar *Atharamagrat* and *Kaike*¹⁹ in Nepal as well in Sikkim the community trust in the healing of shamans. The *Jhākri* is a colloquial term used in Nepali to summoned shamans. Apart from this common term different communities name it differently, *Phendengma* in Limbu, *Bongthing* in Lepcha and so on, therefore Magar used the term *Jhākri/Dhami* to recognised the shaman but it has been noted that within Magar community there are seven major clans and sub-clans so *Jhākri* is a sub-clan of Thapa clan. They believed that *Jhākri* as a term came from this sub-clan.

As claimed by legends of *Kham* Magars, the foremost shaman is Puran Tsan. In *Kham*²⁰ Magars the compellation of shamans is *rmā* or *armā*²¹, (*ramā* by meta-thesis in some dialects) which maybe etymologically related to the Tibetan *rmā-bya* (*bya* 'bird') meaning 'peacock' or 'mottled bird' (Das, 1902). According to this statement of Das the shaman belongs to *Kham* Magar covered themselves with the blue Monal Pheasant's (*Dāphe* in Nepali) feathers. The long established customary of *Kham* Magar has been strikingly transforming in some regions. Conversely this *shamanism* custom of *Kham* Magar manifest the continuation and noumenal in upgrading culture.

The dreams of novice plays vital role in shamanism through dreams neophyte obtained directions. These dreams were mechanism of communication of spirits, ancestors, nature and animals. They reveal the path towards shamanism, the practices on shamanism is formed on an ethical training of compassion and services. Shamans wear particular attire during any rites their attire is a source of mystical power it also furnish an insightful fount of spirits.

The drum and shaman are connected and every beats of drum is applied to fend off the magic of evil and cure an illness. "As an interpreter of the world *Jhākri*'s main task is to remedy crises and deflect anxieties and stresses that arise in the context of day-to-day interpersonal interactions which are frequently attributed to angry divinities or the malice of witches and evil spirits" (Maskarinec, 1989, 1995, 1998, 2008).

Jhākri remains engrossed in a whole night dramatic ritual performances *cintā*, is a moment of reorienting condition of responsiveness where shaman offers sacrifice. This ritual look alike theatrical artistic presentation includes an instrumental demonstration of drumming, singing, dancing at the same time involved the consumption of culturally formidable image of healing. *Jhākri* is categorised into

two categories- *Lhasa and Kashi*²². It means *Jhākri* who belongs to *Lhasa* offers blood and gives sacrifice, conversely *Kashi* category does not give sacrifice rather these are replaced with seasonal fruits or flowers but within the *thann*²³ they place some elements of animals or birds.

Shamanism is a demonstration of psychological consciousness or unconsciousness. It is the transition where scientific syllogism and rational certitude were repudiated during the process of understanding of factuality. This transition ceaselessly astonishes people on how they interlink the mystic world, how their minds work during this process many theories and examinations were presented and interpreted but there are some facts which are still uncovered.

In the words of Ryan (1999), Shamans as a faith healers were so functional in hunting-gathering and fishing tribes that they were considered as first psychotherapists, first physicians, first magicians, first performing artists, first storytellers, and the first weather forecasters in the humankind whereas their coexistence also marked in nomadic-pastoral, horticultural, agricultural and in urban societies.

The three ritual specialists of Magar community come so long way in depicting rituals have shown their significance as well reserved their dignified place in the community, although they had adapted and altered certain aspects of rituals in their practices; some went through informally believing upon their intuition, on the other hand some engaged themselves in a formal training in an institution and on the other side some of them were chosen by a former shaman and directed through spirits. They are named separately according to their practices and the way they instruct rituals, but the goal of these ritual specialists were inclined in the same direction, they play the crucial role in carrying on the traditions of community.

The change in ritual aspects can be noticed through their inclination towards Buddhism, before Buddhism they were known as nature/ancestor worshippers, even today they are continuing their age old traditions. However after adopting Buddhism an image of diety is reflecting in the form of Buddha.

Bhusal practices the earlier traditions and Buddhism parallely. In death ritual a man with the *kukri* or *khukuri* walked before the deceased. In earlier days *khukuri* as an equipment was helped to clear the path also keep away animals and spirit, still the tradition of carrying *khukuri* is in practice whereas at the same time in the name of deceased, family offers lamps for the peacefulness of the soul for the next 49 days, the tradition itself is a representation of Buddhistic practices. While on the other hands *Wapa/Mapa* is about Buddhism practices, they wholly inclined into the Buddhism and were known as Buddhists. Some of Buddhistic centre were established through the community's contribution is to mark their identity. This centre would help further growth and also in practicing *Wapa/Mapa* as a ritual specialist. *Bhusal* and *Wapa/Mapa* as a priest represents a regional difference in

the same community (Mangar). Such practices mark of their existence in the multi-cultural niches.

On the other side, *Jhākri* were found in both the geographical locations (Sikkim and Nepal). Existence of them in the community is an evidence of continuing the long-established traditions till now. The shamanism has active role in the death ritual, after finishing all the ritual from the *Bhusal*, then deceased family invites a *Jhākri* for a whole night ritual called *cintā*, to know about the deceased last wish. *Jhākri* acts as mediator in conveying message of deceased to a family whereas in Nepal within Magar community particularly in the urban areas where maximum numbers of Magar had shifted their residence in the town and in *Barahmagrat* the tradition of *Jhākri* was declining day by day. Whereas in the hilly terrain or in villages the *Jhākri* is still in practices especially in *Atharamagrat*, they still believe in healing of them.

The textualization and institutionalisation had changed the perspective of having oral culture of the community, now due to this everything was recorded or in written form, even if they have to change certain things they go with the paper work instead of verbal. This alteration is a shift from memorising and practical expertise towards the theoretical and documented.

The systematization of ritual mechanism in textual form comprehends in designing ritualization distinctly over those efficacious oral societies; while in alignment the textual format of ritual exercises initiate an institutionalized authority. It also implied in transferring command to those who have access on interpreting the text from those who are holding their long time grip on recollection, superiority and practical proficiency²⁴ ('traditional authority' according to Weber and Bloch)²⁵, at the same time it interconnected the ubiquitous morals of native and disclosure of orthodoxy over orthopraxy²⁶ (Bell, 2009).

The textualization practices persuade re-contextualization of the present, in addition it emphasized that the past emerged to be in existence, without depending upon the present or independently and requisite on reconciliation; an authority on inscription of the past unbar an aperture between the present and past, it also ordered different structures of mediating authority, and may be constituted a 'sanctified traditions'²⁷ not via prevailing on evocation of the past progression accompanied by present despite through owning an advantage of accessing into the reference of the past (Bell, 2009).

As proposed by Weberian theory (1936), the miscellaneous aspects of ritual specialist with or without literacy seem to be rudimentary to such system. Noticeably, the connection in between human and non-human powers based on consequence of the innate mastery with regard to the rightful ritual implementation gravitate eventually censorious effectiveness, on the other side it also encourages as well as perpetuates proficiency, and also promotes equitable judgement on the rightful

implementation of ritual by a common people or other lineage oracle. Assuredly, diverse researches on priesthood or religious specialists have advocated on arising of office or institution furnish a steady as well as holding religious power which is impossible in the content of shamanic and clairvoyant intercessor, kind of holding religious power grant a better understanding in the interlinked of institution, it is apparent in the course of conferring or validate powers on such priest that they own limitless authoritativeness.

Victor Turner (1989) stated that the priest maintains beliefs and practices of religion, through various rituals they communicate with the transhuman entities along with cultural objects. The power they acquire was based on religious knowledge as like *Bhusal* and *Wapa/Mapa*. While Shaman (*Jhākri*) is a sub-type of priest, flexible and mobile shows expertise in controlling spirits later and gets possessed by the spirits and delivers oracles by séance. They provides profound role as healers and cure illness through person-to-person manner. Sometimes the functions of priest and shaman are found in the same individual and similarly medium also form a single subtype of religious functionary.

CONCLUSION

The ritual specialists (*Bhusal, Wapa/Mapa and Jhākri or Dhāmi [Shamans]*) represent the distinctive identity of Magar community in the multi-cultural space. Ritual specialists uphold the faith, keep the flock together by their leadership, hold authority in religious domain and have certain status in the society/community. Some are trained or have acquired special knowledge or spiritual gifts these qualities are qualified to perform certain religious activities. They developed certain distinctive personality traits that make them capable of performing such works. These traits also made them competent to find religious solutions. They are authorized to interpret religious codes, holy laws and ecclesiastical rules and even social norms. These changing roles depend on the circumstances and need. They act as a religious intermediaries that mediate between deity and humans.

The representations of them give a virtual meaning on dimension of existence; though these ritual specialists are reflection of continuity as well change in certain ritual aspects give a new outlook to the community at the same time considered as a survival adaptation in the progressing world. They represent a community urge for having their own ritual specialists, they also work as a preserver of customs with a view to educate the younger generation about their rituals. It may also be noted how ritualistic process of *Bhusal* and *Wapa* using text gives an indication of transformation of oral tradition into textual tradition where everything is written, recorded and analysed.

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Notes

1. The ethnonym Magar/Manger/Mangar/Mongpa signified the one (Mangar) community. Mangar/Manger is widely used throughout India whereas Magar is the most familiarised. Mongpa signified that Mangar belongs to Mongoloid Race. They called themselves children of Mongols.
2. The term Kirat is a corrupt form of Kiriati, Kiryat or Kirjath which means a fort or town in Maobite language of the Mediterranean region. London Religious Tract Society, *New Biblical Atlas*, pp. 78, about *the Ancient Towns of Maobite people in the Mediterranean Region called Kiriati or Kirjath* in Chemjong, History and Culture of Kirat People, pp. 2.
3. An ancestor plays the vital role in the animist society; they worshipped them as a household deity or as guardians. They believed that remembering and worshipping ancestors will keep them away from any kind of hazards and bless them with prosperous and peaceful life. It's meant without worshipping ancestors an individual that recognise as a Mangar.
4. *Dhami* is a shaman; in Nepali shaman can be called as either *Jhākri* or *Dhami*. Both the terms give the same meaning and belief.
5. Bahun reserved the place of upper caste among the caste system in Nepali community. They were religious specialist or priest like Brahman in Hinduism.
6. As Hindu priest acquires the mastery of Vedas while *Bhusal* does not acquire such kind of proficiency. So for Vedas they still depends on Hindu priest.
7. Auspicious-inauspicious life-cycle ritual
8. Douglas, *Natural Symbols*, pp. 86-87.
9. Mangar have seven major clans- Alley/Ale, Rana, Thapa, Budhathoki/Bura, Roka, Gharti and Pun, and each seven clans have sub-clans respectively, eg. In Rana sub-clans are: Assami, Arsami, Bhusal, Gyangmi and so on.
10. *Akkharikā* is a Mangar Script. The term is divided into two words *Akkhā* and *Rikā* which means letters, alphabet and writing was first introduced by M. S Thapa. He was an author of the "*Prachin Magar ra Akkhā Lipi*" in Nepali version.
11. *Patuka* or waistband comes under the traditional attire. It is a long fabric, where female used to wrap in her waist.
12. *Potey* is a traditional ornament, it is kind of necklace which is made of yellow beads.
13. Eclipta Prostrata family: Compositae.
14. *Bhikshu* means a beggar life in Theravada Buddhism. *Wapa* is to live like a beggar for certain periods of time.
15. The Theravada Buddhism was preached by Gautama Buddha otherwise called as Sakyamuni

Buddha denotes an initial phase of Buddhism and prominently identified as Hinayana Buddhism. The origin of Theravada Buddhism traced back to around 6th century B.C. at the Deer park of Isipatana, now the named as changed into Sarnath located in Varanasi of India. After enlightenment of Buddha, he started his first preaching to five friends of his groups and known as the Pancavaggiya Bhikkhus. Buddha had devoted his forty-five years in the progress of Theravada Buddhism till attaining Mahaparinibbana (Great Deceased) in the Sala grove of the Mallas of Kusinara. It is known as ‘the doctrine of the Elders’. <https://Shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in> (Introduction-Theravada Buddhism).

- 16 During earlier days the traditional form of marriage in Magar community was matrilineal cross-cousin marriage, a man marries his real or classificatory mother’s brother’s daughter. The generic terms for “wife giver” and “wife receiver” are *māiti* and *bhānja* respectively. The term *bhānja* (or *bhānji* in Nepali) refers to sister’s son. But whereas among Magar, this term meaning is maintained and as well extended, such as sister’s son, daughter’s husband, brother’s daughter husband, husband’s sister’s son, and finally including all those who receives or can receive a girl as wife from the own Ego group. Thus, *bhānja* means the “wife receivers”.

Oppitz, *Death and Kin amongst the Northern Magar*, pp. 377-341.

So *Kutumba* means “wife receivers” also locally called as *bhānja juwai* (*juwai: son-in-law or younger sister’s husband*) or *juwai chela*. In recent phase this form of marriage is not in practice, but still the term *Kutumba* exists in the community.

- 17 There are two divisions of Magar i.e., Baharamagrat and Atharamagrat, within Baharamagrat-Ale, Rana and Thapa clans and within Atharamagrat-Budhathoki/Budha, Gharti, Pun and Roka clans of Magars.

In conversation with Bom Kumari Budha Magar (President of Atharamagrat Magar) in Nepal, according to her in the past, Magars were living in Mol (Black) and Palpa (White) region. Later Pal area was named as Gorkha. The Mol or kala kshetra (Black region) was confederation of eighteen Magar kingdoms known as Atharamagrat, on the other hand of the Palpa or gora kshetra (White region) was confederation of twelve Magar kingdoms known as Baharamagrat.

- 18 Altered State of Consciousness (ASC) was initially coined by Ludwig to denote alterations in the perception of self and the surroundings that are different from everyday waking consciousness. 1990, pp. 18-33.
- 19 In Magar there are three languages Magar *Dhut*, *Kham* and *Kaike*. So the speaker of *Kaike* language is called as *Kaike* Magar. The *Kaike* language is also known as Fairy language or *Tarali Kham*; speakers from Tarali in Sahar Tara found in the areas of Dolpa and Karnali district of Western Nepal. Also see Maya Daurio (2012). The Fairy Language: Language Maintenance and Social-Ecological Resilience among the Tarali of Tichurong, Nepal. Himalaya, *Journal of the Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies*, vol. 31(1), article 8.

Available at: [http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/vol31/iss1/8\(Fairy](http://digitalcommons.macalester.edu/himalaya/vol31/iss1/8(Fairy)

- 20 *Kham* is one of the languages of Magar. It belong to Tibeto-Burman speaking group and geographically it covered the areas of Northern region of the middle foothills in the Far Western Region i.e., south of the Rukum, Rolpa in Rapti, Zone and Baglung

- districts in Dhaulagiri Zone. The *kham* language is also known as *Kham-Pang*. Also see Molnar Augusta (1981). *The Kham Magar Women of Thabang- the status of women in Nepal*. Tribhuvan University Kathmandu, Nepal: Centre for Economic Development and Administration, field studies, vol. II.
- 21 Further reading Linda L. Iltis (2002). The Nine Witch Sisters: Gender and identity in a Shaman's song from Nepal. *Himalayan Research Bulletin*, XXII (1-2). <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254617309>
- 22 Lhasa is the capital of Tibet located in Southwest of China and Kashi is located in the northern part of India Varanasi. These two places are known for their religious significance.
- 23 A particular place decorated and purified for the deity or ancestors.
- 24 Ahern, *the Problem of Efficacy-Strong and Weak Illocutionary Acts*, pp: 13-14.
- 25 Weber, *the Sociology of Religion*.
- 26 Goody, *the Logic of writings*, pp. 16-18.
- 27 Catherine, *Ritual Specialist, Ritual Theory and Ritual Practice*, pp. 136.

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