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Seasons, Rituals and Society: The Culture and Society of Mithila, the Parbate Hindus and the Newars as seen through a Comparison of their Annual Rites

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INTRODUCTION

In his introduction to a collection of studies entitled *Indian Religion*, R. Burghart succinctly reviews the advances made in the field of social anthropology dealing with the Indic world and describes how in recent years the emphasis of anthropological research in South Asia has been shifting from village studies to the study of the centres of civilization (pilgrimage centres, temple complexes, political capitals, and priests and ascetics). In view of its prefatory nature, the aim of his introduction is clearly to endorse the particular orientation of the papers contained in *Indian Religion*, but at the same time he also maintains that this change has been inevitable (Burghart 1985: 1-10).

There is no denying the fact that such a shift has occurred, but if we should mistakenly regard this type of orientation as the only acceptable manner of studying the culture of the Indic world, this will result in major shortcomings and misunderstandings. Although in regard to its larger objectives the present paper does not run counter to Burghart's goal, it does differ considerably in respect to methods and research topics. This is because I wish to place greater emphasis on those aspects that escape one's attention when one adopts a viewpoint such as that of Burghart *et alia*. These aspects may be broadly divided into three groups, but before discussing them I wish to briefly summarize Burghart's review.

According to Burghart, the social anthropological study of South Asia (modelled on studies representative of the early stages of contemporary social anthropology) began by treating Indian villages as if they were self-contained isolated islands. But as the existence of 'types' came to light in the 1950's (such as seen in discussions of the *jajmānī* system and dominant castes), social anthropologists turned to the study of 'typical villages'. At the same time there also appeared a move seeking to grasp an overall picture of the world of South Asia, and in this connection the self-containedness of villages in the Indic world was refuted. On the one hand the ramifications of caste and kin extending beyond the village were ascertained, while on the other hand attention was drawn to the existence of the Sanskritic 'great tradition' that transcends the 'little traditions' of

village society. But this research method centred on the village underwent changes as anthropology began to have recourse to Indological and historical materials. L. Dumont's research is representative of this change, and using a model of society gained from a Brahmanical perspective and data obtained from village studies, he pointed to the existence of values transcending the regional and historical differences found in Indian civilization. The central focus for the understanding of social relations shifted from the village to the caste system, and emphasis came to be placed on the importance of culture in anthropological research. It was in such a context that people wishing to study general theories of Hindu society and Buddhist or Islam society shifted the locus of their research from the village to the centres of civilization. Importance was attached to the study of Indian civilization from the perspectives of unity and continuity, and it came to be considered (as Burghart himself does) that Indian civilization exists as an object to be understood in relation to subjects who live within it and simultaneously interpret it. The hypothesis put forward here was that the people who had objectified this type of civilization and produced its 'universes' of social relations were the Brahmins, ascetics and kings who situated themselves at or near the pinnacle of society and possessed the power to influence others. Moreover, since they saw themselves as gods in relation to the rest of mankind, it is regarded as no mere coincidence that current research on South Asia has come to focus on the subject of religion.

Burghart's above thesis does carry some conviction as an attempt to position and justify his own research within the current of research going back to Indian village studies. But even if one should make Indian civilization the subject of one's studies, it is not possible to gain an overall picture of this subject through such an approach alone. It is to be surmised that if one adopts a viewpoint such as his, the following three points, for example, will emerge as problematic issues.

1) The majority viewpoint: What guarantee is there that by studying the (minority at the) centre or pinnacle of society, believed to interpret and influence others, it will be possible to study Indian civilization to any better degree? In doing so, the society, activities and interpretations of the general majority considered to be 'influenced' by the minority may very well end up being disregarded. It is indeed necessary to gain a grasp of central ideas and entities, but the 'majority' cannot be grasped through the study of the 'centre' alone. It is doubtful whether one can gain an overall grasp of society and culture without considering at the same time the nature and views of parts other than the centre and ascertaining the interrelationship between them. It goes without saying that even though village society may not represent the entirety of social relations, this does not diminish the importance of the study of village society itself. Religious centres (temples, pilgrimage sites, etc.) and so forth can also not be said to 'typify' the extensive Indic world that encompasses villages.

2) Diversity: It is important to grasp the aspects of unity and continuity in the Indic world. But if this should lead one to close one's eyes to the diversity inherent in the Indic world, then one may end up losing sight of reality. Focussing on

diversity, on the other hand, is in some respects like stepping into a bottomless quagmire, but it is a fact that the greater the diversity, the greater the number of factors that cannot be adequately accounted for from the perspective of 'unity'. There is also a place for the method (although requiring a long process) whereby an overall picture is pieced together through encounters with a diversity of materials.

3) **Regionality:** The segmentalization of society and culture in the Indic world is both found within village society and also exists in a multistratified form at higher levels, and in the study of general theories of Indian civilization this aspect cannot be ignored. In particular, spheres marked by a common language not only represent units in which similarities of various kinds manifest themselves, but are also basic units of social and cultural identity. Focussing on these levels is of equal importance to the focus on castes, and a comparison of different cultural regions may be assumed to provide important leads for the study of diversity.

The issues raised in the above are closely connected to the perspective that one adopts in interpreting the Indic world, but the thrust of my argument here is not that only one particular perspective is correct, but that it often happens that different viewpoints may complement one another. Pointing out the flaws in foregoing research does not necessarily imply its total rejection, nor does it ensure the comprehensiveness of a new approach.

Bearing the above considerations in mind, I shall in this paper undertake a comparative study of the culture and society of Mithila, the Parbate Hindus and the Newars on the basis of an analysis of their annual rites, and I shall thereby endeavour to shed light on the distinguishing features of their respective cultures and societies. In the following I shall first present a brief overview of the three regions considered here and then, having given a table comparing the annual rites of these regions, I shall discuss the relationship between these rites and time, supernatural entities and society, and I shall also comment on theories and concepts important for an understanding of culture and society in the Indic world.

MITHILA, PARBATE HINDUS AND NEWARS

In this section I wish to give a brief description of the three regions and peoples dealt with in this study and also of the districts where I undertook my investigations.

Mithila

Mithila (Mithilā) is the name of a region bestraddling the northern part of the state of Bihar in India and southeastern Nepal; it is bordered on the south by the Ganges (Gangā), in the west by the Gandaki River, in the east by the Kosi River and in the north by the Churia (Siwalik) range of hills in southern Nepal. The principal inhabitants of Mithila speak Maithili (Maithili) as their mother tongue, the number of speakers of which is estimated to exceed 25,000,000,¹⁾ with approximately

2,000,000 living in Nepal. ('Maithilī' is the adjectival form of 'Mithila'.) Maithili is an Indo-European language, and it is sometimes looked upon as a dialect of Hindi. The region of Mithila consists of flat farming areas centred on the towns of Darbhanga and Madhubani in Bihar and Janakpur in Nepal. The inhabitants are divided into several dozen castes and are engaged in various caste and non-caste occupations, but the most basic form of subsistence is farming, with rice the main crop and wheat, millets, beans and vegetables also being cultivated. This region was a centre of Aryan culture from long before the start of the Christian era, and Sītā (the heroine of the *Rāmāyana*) enshrined in Jānakī Temple in Janakpur is believed to have been a native of Mithila (formerly known as Videha). Even today the Brahmans of Mithila are known for their religious conservatism, with their Hindu culture having survived Muslim rule and British colonial rule. The Tirhut culture of Mithila is also known to have exerted considerable influence on the culture of the Kathmandu valley in Nepal during the twelfth to fourteenth centuries.

The areas that I surveyed in Mithila were J village in the vicinity of Madhubani on the Indian side and G village to the south of Janakpur on the Nepalese side. Apart from administration, politics and the education system, the culture and society of both evidence considerable similarities, and the types and procedures of their rituals also have many points in common. A noticeable difference was the fact that, as a result of policies to spread the common (or national) language in Nepal, there were a considerable number of mainly young men able to speak Nepali (the national language of Nepal) in G village, whereas hardly anyone spoke it in J village. In both villages there were many people other than small children who were familiar with Hindi, and even in G village its degree of diffusion was greater than that of Nepali. J village consists of approximately 350 households and G village of approximately 120 households, and both villages are composed of more than ten castes. My investigations were carried out in Nepali, some broken Maithili and (in J village) partially in English. The material on rites given in the following section is primarily on the rites performed in G village, with some supplementary information obtained from the Brahmans of J village.

Parbate Hindus

'Parbate Hindus (Parvate Hindū)' is the generic term for the people who make up the greater part (approximately 10,000,000) of Nepal's population and speak as their mother tongue the Indo-European language of Nepali (belonging to Eastern Pahārī). Their principal sphere of abode is the hill regions of Nepal below 1,800m, and they have spread eastwards from the west until today. They are to be found in all parts of Nepal other than the narrow belts in the north and the south. Their livelihood is centred on agriculture oriented towards wet-rice cultivation, but in actual fact there is little irrigable land, and they will often be found cultivating wheat, barley, dry rice, maize, potatoes, beans and vegetables in hill fields dependent upon rainwater. The Parbate Hindus are also divided into several castes,

but they are few in number, and a distinctive feature is in particular the absence of various intermediate occupation castes. The Parbate Hindus constituted the core of the military and political forces (Gorkhā or Gurkhas) that created the present kingdom of Nepal in the eighteenth century, and the present royal family are also members of this group. The greater part of the population belongs to the two upper castes of Bāhuns (Brāhmaṇs) and Chetris (Nepali corruption of Kṣatriya). In the course of their unification of Nepal into its present form they incorporated under their rule speakers of Tibeto-Burman languages whom they had subjugated, and they not only used them as a source of troops and other forms of labour, but also intermarried with them to a certain degree. Today's kingdom of Nepal may be said to have been built up around the Parbate Hindus with the subordination and cooperation of Tibeto-Burman peoples.

My investigations among the Parbate Hindus were undertaken primarily in B village located in Dhading district, approximately 80 kilometres to the west of Kathmandu, and later I also obtained further information from a man from the same administrative village now working in Kathmandu. B village consists of approximately 70 households composed mainly of Bāhuns, but it also has a considerable number of Kāmīs (blacksmith caste) and some minority castes.

Newars

The Newars (Nevār or Newā:) are native to the Kathmandu valley (approximately 1,300m above sea level) where the capital of Nepal is located, and unlike the above two groups their mother tongue, Newari, is a Tibeto-Burman language. They number approximately 500,000, of whom about half live in the Kathmandu valley while the rest have migrated to bazaars and other commercial centres throughout Nepal. Their livelihood is dependent upon the three mainstays of commerce, craftwork and agriculture (primarily rice, wheat and potatoes). The Newars have been absorbing Indian civilization for more than 1,500 years, and they created a small state centred on the Kathmandu valley, with towns and its own script, in which Buddhism and Hinduism coexisted. Prior to the subjugation of the Newars by the Parbate Hindus in the eighteenth century, 'Nepal' referred to the world of the Kathmandu valley centred on the Newars. Newar society has several dozen castes, and distinctive features include the fact that Buddhists have also been incorporated in the form of several castes and Brahmans are far fewer in number than Buddhist priests (Gubhāju or Vajrācārya).

My repeated investigations among the Newars have been carried out in S village on the western outskirts of Kathmandu. This is a village of approximately 250 households composed of eight castes and a number of recent arrivals. In the initial stages of my investigations here (1970) I used Nepali, but since then I have been using only Newari.

As regards the data constituting the main part of the present study, that concerning Mithila was all obtained in the course of investigations undertaken with a grant-in-aid (for international scientific research) from the Japanese Ministry of

Education between November 1987 and February 1988 and in January to March and August to September 1989. In the case of the Parbate Hindus I have, in addition to data obtained during this same period, also used data from investigations conducted in 1977-78, while in the case of the Newars I have used data obtained from recurrent investigations undertaken since 1970, including those undertaken in 1987-1989.

Among the above three designations, 'Mithila' is a regional name, but I decided to use it in conjunction with 'Parbate Hindu' and 'Newar', terms referring to a category of people and an ethnic group respectively, because there is no suitable term to denote 'inhabitants of Mithila' or 'speakers of Maithili'. Each of these units may be considered to constitute a 'cultural unit' that has a considerable number of common internal features, in addition to language, covering many aspects of culture and that may also be distinguished in various respects from the outside world. When undertaking various comparisons in the following sections, I shall for convenience sake use the expression 'three regions', but the term 'region' as used here is not simply a locality on a map, but embodies the perspective that would look upon each of them as a 'cultural unit'.

RITUAL

Ritual is a form of stereotyped behaviour with a social character and rooted in tradition, and although in the broad sense of the term it includes 'etiquette' and 'conventions' designed to oil the wheels of social relations, in a narrow sense it may be understood as stereotyped behaviour concerned with phenomena and entities that lie beyond normal human control or are of a supernatural character. Among 'rituals' of this second category are included stereotyped social actions that, in an active sense, are directed towards supplication and control of supernatural phenomena and entities (e.g., prayers for productivity, communion with the sacred and the eternal, and purification of 'pollution') and, in a passive sense, aim at warding off undesirable influences. Representative of the supernatural are deities, spirits and other entities endowed with sanctity or preternormal forces, while death and certain natural phenomena may be mentioned as typical of phenomena beyond human control. 'Pollution', or the twin concepts of 'purity' and 'impurity', which is believed to be related to various phenomena including death, has also attracted considerable attention as a concept central to ritual and daily life in the Indic world (representative of such research being Dumont 1970). In addition 'time', whose movement is beyond the control of man, is related to all aspects of human life and has close connections with ritual. The rituals (other than 'etiquette') of the societies dealt with here have been broadly divided into the four categories of annual rites, rites of the life cycle, rites repeated throughout the year (*viz.* rites performed daily [*nitya-pūjā*], rites performed on specific days of the week, etc.), and occasional rites. The first three of these categories are themselves in some

way related to time, which hints at the importance of time in ritual. Furthermore, if one directs one's attention to, for example, annual or lifelong cycles of time, not only is the analysis of individual rites necessary, but it also becomes necessary to have a perspective that would treat of each category as an integrated whole.

Ritual is an extremely social form of behaviour. Often ritual is performed simultaneously or on similar occasions by many members of a certain society, or it may be performed collectively, and there are some rituals of which the patent objective is to reinforce social bonds. At the same time, it is not unusual to find that the original (or textual, specialist) significance of the ritual has been forgotten or disregarded and the execution of the ritual becomes an objective in itself, and in such cases it is to be surmised that the connections between ritual and society become even more apparent.

Among the various types of ritual, only annual rites are dealt with in this study and, focussing on time, supernatural entities and society, I shall undertake a comparative examination of the three aforementioned regions. But before doing so, I wish to add some explanatory comments on the accompanying table of annual rites in which I have collated the material used in my comparisons.

The accompanying table represents a list of the annual rites performed on specific dates in the respective societies of Mithila, the Parbate Hindus and the Newars, together with brief descriptions of their content. I have omitted not only occasional rites and rites that are repeated throughout the year, but also annual rites the date of which is for some reason not fixed and rites that would appear to be rather minor or of a partial nature. The rites listed in the table are the principal annual rites performed in the villages where I undertook my investigations, and they do not cover all the rites to be observed in each region. It was, however, deemed necessary to take into account a few rites found in the major cities, and these have been noted in parentheses. The figures appearing down the left-hand margin of the table are simply serial numbers.

The date of each rite has been indicated by month and day. Apart from those given as "1 (solar calendar)", all dates follow the lunar calendar, which differs in both India and Nepal from the calendar that has been officially adopted for administrative purposes. This first day of the month in the solar calendar is called '*saṅkrānti*', and although it originally signified the passage of the sun from one heavenly sign (a sign of zodiac) to another, today this term is applied to the first day of the month (Vaiśākha, etc.) according to the solar calendar. In Nepal the twelve names of the months given in the table are the same as those used officially, but because in the latter case they are based on calculations following the solar calendar, they differ somewhat from the lunar months of the same name appearing in the table. (The difference varies from one year to the next, and major divergences are rectified by intercalation.) The month of Vaiśākha in the solar calendar begins around mid-April in the Western calendar. Because the names of the months differ somewhat in each of the three regions, I have used the Sanskrit names in both the table and the main text. (The names used in each region are noted at the end of the

table.) The 'days' given in the table correspond to what are called 'tithi', and each of the approximately fifteen days during which the moon gradually wanes between the full moon and new moon (*kr̥ṣṇa-pakṣa* ['dark fortnight'], *badi*) and during which the moon gradually waxes between the new moon and the full moon (*śukla-pakṣa* ['light fortnight'], *sudi*) has a name generally deriving from a Sanskrit numeral. These names are also noted at the end of the table, and as may be seen in the column listing the names of the rites, they are also often used in the names of these rites. Today this system is used both in Mithila and among the Parbate Hindus and Newars, but previously the Newars used the Newari names of the months and fortnights, and theirs was not a calendar in which the month ended on the day of the full moon (*pūrṇimānta*), i.e., 15th day of the light fortnight (*sudi* 15), such as that used in the table, but one in which the month ended on the day of the new moon (*amānta*). 'Gūlā' (A16, A32) and 'Ñālā' (A33) are Newari for the months (*lā*) of Gū and Ñā respectively, and they are examples of the older designations having been preserved in the names of rites. (On the Newari calendar see Slusser 1982: 381-391, and on the connections between the north Indian calendar and ritual see Pugh 1983.)

Because the rites that are performed on the same date in Mithila and among the Parbate Hindus and Newars are listed together in the table, this table does not allow one to follow the temporal progression of rites in one particular region; for this it is necessary to go through the table picking out the letters M, P and N (for Mithila, Parbate Hindus and Newars respectively) preceding the names of the rites.

The names of the rites are given in the language of each region, but in the case of the Newars the corresponding Nepali names are also often used (e.g., *Mwahni* [Newari] and *Daśāī* [Nepali] appearing *circa* A47). It is also not unusual for Sanskrit names to be used, even among the Newars. The names of some rites can be understood only in the context of the rites as described in the explanatory comments. The column on the far right indicates in simplified form the principal social units that participate in each rite, and, as will be discussed below, there are considerable differences in this regard among the three societies considered here.

SEASONS, DATES AND RITUAL

As should be evident from the comments made in the previous section, the annual rites of the three societies dealt with here share to a large degree a common time frame. A perusal of the table will, moreover, reveal that the days on which annual rites are performed evidence a rather uneven distribution within the annual cycle. Furthermore, a trend common to Mithila, the Parbate Hindus and the Newars may be observed in regard to this disparity, with many annual rites, including the more important ones, being performed in the four months between Śrāvaṇa and Kārtika. Numerically speaking, approximately 60% of the rites in Mithila and more than two thirds of the rites in the other two regions are concentrated in a

period corresponding to one third of the year. In addition, the rites performed during this time include not a few that continue for several days or even several months, and so the actual concentration of rites during this period is even greater than that indicated by simple figures.

In his analysis of the festivals and calendar of the 'Indo-Népalais' (corresponding to 'Parbate Hindus' as used here), Gaborieau points out the importance of this four-month period (*cāturmāsa*) and the concentration of rites during this time, and he goes on to explain the reasons for it. The main points he notes are the fact that these four months are believed to correspond to the period during which Viṣṇu sleeps, that it is the monsoon season and the busiest time of the year for farmers, that it is an inauspicious period and a time of disorder marking the end of the annual cycle, and that it is a time when man communes with the sacred and the eternal so as to restore order (Gaborieau 1982: 15-16, 23).

As regards this *cāturmāsa*, in the villages in Mithila and the Parbate Hindu village that I surveyed, the day on which Viṣṇu is said to fall asleep (*Harīśayani ekādaśī* [A11]) and the day on which he is said to awake (*Devot̥ṭhān ekādaśī*, *Ṭhūlo ekādaśī*, *Haribodhinī ekādaśī* [A66, A67]) are generally celebrated as the first day and final day of the worship of the sacred *tulsī* grass, and these four months are regarded as the time of *tulsī* worship. In Mithila rites are performed for putting Viṣṇu to sleep, waking him and, on the day midway between the two, turning him over in his sleep. In the case of the Newar village, there is only a single *tulsī* altar in the square in the centre of the village, and *tulsī* worship is not particularly prevalent, but these four months are recognized as a time for the recital by Brahmans of tales relating to the gods. Of special interest is the fact that in the case of the Newars Gūlā (A16), during which services are held, hymns are sung and music is played in honour of the Buddha for one month, also falls within this period, thus indicating that the Buddhist rites of the Newars exist within the same tradition. As regards the general awareness of the villagers, there were not many people in the Newar S village who knew the word *cāturmāsa* or its connections with Viṣṇu, while among the Parbate Hindus I did hear the classical explanation that *tulsī* symbolizes Viṣṇu's wife Lakṣmī, but it was also not unusual to find that even Brahmans were unaware of any such connections. I did not, moreover, encounter in the villages that I surveyed any explanation linking Viṣṇu (or any other gods) with the concentration of annual rites during this period. Even if such an explanation does have some validity, it is only among a limited number of specialists and researchers, and it lies outside the bounds of the interests of the villagers (including Brahmans).

This four-month period coincides with the monsoon season and in all three regions it overlaps to a certain degree with the rice-growing season, but when considered as a whole it is not the busiest time of the year, and it is only the transplanting or harvesting of rice (or both) that takes place during this time (although there are regional differences and also differences between the lunar and solar calendars depending upon the year in question). As a whole it would seem rather that

various annual rites are performed during the slack season while the rice is growing. In linking this period to the busiest farming season, Gaborieau may be said to have drawn an overhasty conclusion.

Similarly the notion that this period is an inauspicious one is also not usually heard among the indigenous population, and it is not uncommon to find that even the notion that it is a period during which the gods are absent is rather tenuous. If, on the other hand, we consider whether elements that might render this period inauspicious are concentrated in the rites performed during this time, we find that there are some aspects that would seem to affirm this and others about which such an assertion cannot be made. This is a time of the year fraught with natural dangers, and in all three regions (although at different times) rites are performed for warding off insects (A13, A15, A53), and rites for ancestors and messengers from the netherworld (A22, A30, A40, A41, A43, A51, A52, A65) are also frequent. By way of contrast, life-cycle rites such as marriage ceremonies and coming-of-age ceremonies are performed primarily during winter. Among the Newars the dance of the *lakhe* (type of demon) is performed during the month of Gūlā (A16), and although this has now become a form of entertainment, it is also probably connected with the exorcising of evil spirits. In Mithila rites for the serpent god (Nāg) are performed three times over a half-month period during the rainy season (A14, A17, A18). Among the Parbate Hindus and Newars this is performed only once (A18) and it is, moreover, a rather simple domestic rite when compared with other rites. I was told in the villages of Mithila and by Parbate Hindus that worshipping this serpent god has the effect of protecting one from snakes, while in the Newar village it was believed that the serpent god was sometimes a cause of illness, and in all cases people were conscious primarily of the fearful aspects of the serpent god and snakes. In Mithila especially I was told to always beware of snakes when walking outdoors, and I also heard stories of snakes having been found coiled up inside houses during floods, and far greater caution was exercised against snakes here than in the other two regions. The repeated performance in Mithila of rites directed towards the serpent god may be considered to be partly connected with these natural conditions. In considering the cult of the serpent god, it is also necessary to bear in mind this god's aspects as a god of the earth, of water and of agriculture (Konishi 1986a: 63). The fact that the rites centred on the *Nāg pañcamī* (A18) are performed at the height of the rainy season may be considered to indicate links with these aspects. But as far as the interests of the inhabitants of the villages that I surveyed are concerned, it is difficult to infer any such connections. The "original" meaning of each rite must be probed at a different level. Be that as it may, not only is there during the rainy season (summer) a not insignificant number of rites considered to be connected with dangerous entities, such as the rites for the serpent god, but it is also evident that there are also aspects in which the rites differ in accordance with the ambience of the region in question. The perils of the rainy season are expressed most forcefully in the annual rites of Mithila.

The annual rites during the *cāturmāsa* also contain a number of elements other

than those that would render it inauspicious. Among the Newars, a rite for offering food to frogs (A21) and a rice-planting dance (A25) are performed shortly after the transplanting of the rice seedlings. These may be looked upon as rites in anticipatory celebration of the rice harvest, and there is no need to link them to the inauspicious. In addition, the *Durgā pūjā* (*Daśai*, *Mwahni* [A45–50]) and the group of rites surrounding the *Lakṣmī pūjā* (*Dīpāvalī*, etc., *Tihār*, *Swanti* [A51–62]), the two major autumn festivals with elements common to all three regions that are both performed during this period, have been characterized by Gaborieau as rites for the restoration of order on account of the fact that *Daśai* commemorates the victory of the goddess over the demons. But they are in fact both strongly tinged with elements of agricultural rites in celebration of the harvest and domestic rites for family prosperity, such as may be seen in the role of the barley seedlings in the former and the importance of fruit, etc., and the festival for Lakṣmī, goddess of wealth, in the latter. Regarding these as celebratory rites relating to the absence of the gods and chaos in the foregoing period is of course one possible interpretation, but it is also possible to regard them as composite rites in which more substratal agricultural rites have combined with other elements, and in this case there is probably no particular need to link them to chaos or inauspiciousness.

J. F. Pugh, who on the basis of an analysis of the calendar of Banaras has undertaken an examination of the times deemed suitable (or auspicious) for initiating or performing rites (other than annual rites) and various tasks, draws attention to the fact that whereas the *cāturmāsa* is avoided in the case of rites of the life cycle, there are no such restrictions in the commencement of farming tasks, starting the construction of a house, or the opening of a shop, and states that whether a certain time is considered to be auspicious or inauspicious depends upon the type of rite or task in question; as factors used as the basis for determining this, Pugh broadly distinguishes between the movements of heavenly bodies and the seasons, and maintains that agriculture in particular largely follows the seasons regardless of the auspiciousness or inauspiciousness of the movements of the heavens (Pugh 1983: 42–47). This analysis by Pugh has greater pertinence than Gaborieau's interpretation, which would regard the whole of the *cāturmāsa* as being inauspicious, and it would seem worth taking into account in our consideration of annual rites. That is to say, in the case of annual rites too the significance attached to a particular time may be manifold, and the aforementioned elements suggestive of agricultural rites need not be regarded only as rites for driving away the inauspicious. If such an interpretation should prove to be correct, then it also becomes no longer necessary to seek out forced links between the 'inauspicious' and other non-agricultural rites performed during the *cāturmāsa*. A case in point is the fact that the full-moon rites, looked upon as auspicious, are also performed during this four-month period.

As regards the division between one year and the next, I was told by a learned Newar informant that the end of the annual cycle of rites falls immediately prior to the start of the *cāturmāsa*. In the official calendar of Nepal the new year formerly began in the month of Kārtika according to the lunar calendar, whereas today the

first day of the new year falls in the month of Vaiśākha (mid-April) in the solar calendar (Vikrama calendar). In India, on the other hand, the month of Caitra marks the start of the new year in the Vikrama calendar, while officially the Western calendar, with the year beginning in January, is used, and there are also instances in which *Holi* at the start of spring is regarded as marking the turning point in the year (Babb 1975: 176; Konishi 1986b: 56) or the new year is considered to begin in the month of Kārtika at the time of the *Lakṣmī pūjā* (Konishi 1986b: 45). I shall refrain from going any further into this question, but the practice of explicitly celebrating the New Year on a certain day is at least not to be seen in any ostensible form in the three regions dealt with here, and it is more apposite to suppose that there are several turning points during the course of the year. In this context the start and end of the rainy season and the start of spring are important, and this may be considered to be reflected in the start and end of the *cāturmāsa* and a number of events that take place at the start of spring.

The concentration of rites in the *cāturmāsa* is thus a salient characteristic common to all three regions, and this would suggest that, broadly speaking, these three regions fall within a common tradition. It is also evident from the above that, as regards the significance of and reasons for this concentration, some points raised by Gaborieau are open to question.

Among those elements in which time and its cycles constitute part of the theme of particular rites, elements relating to changes in the seasons, those associated with agricultural rites, and those commemorating or dedicated to a particular day or period may be found either alone or in composite form, and in many cases they will be structured in relation to a supernatural entity. Examples to be seen in all three regions outside of the *cāturmāsa* are the *Vasanta* ('spring') *pañcamī* [A82] and *Holi* (A86), both possessing elements of a spring festival, and the *Śivarātrī* (A85) that falls between them, and they point to the importance of springtime. As may be seen in the table, however, there are regional differences in regard to their content; in Mithila the *Vasanta pañcamī*, for example, contains elements of an agricultural rite that would appear to be of anticipatory celebration, but these are not apparent in the other two regions, and the three regions also differ considerably in the manner in which the *Sarasvatī pūjā* is performed.

There are also considerable regional differences in regard to agricultural rites, and among the Newars in particular there are to be found, in addition to the rites of anticipatory celebration mentioned earlier, rites related to rice cultivation that are peculiar to the Newars, such as the *Ya: marhi punhi* (A77), which includes a rite involving the placing of offerings of dumplings filled with bean paste on top of the rice kept in the storehouse. The rites involving cows and oxen performed before and after the *Lakṣmī pūjā* (A54, A56, A57), on the other hand, are found both in Mithila and among the Parbate Hindus, and in Mithila there is subsequently a further rite for cows. But these are not found in the Newar village studied, and instead rites directed towards the gods and men are performed. These differences show a direct correlation with differences in forms of subsistence, for there is only a

low degree of livestock raising among the Newars. The connections between the aforementioned rites for warding off insects (A13, A15, A53) and agricultural rites should also be considered. For example, the Newar *Gathāmuga* (A15) represents a rite for warding off insects and driving away malignant spirits, and in S village effigies of demons are hung up at crossroads and later burnt, while in the evening a rite is performed in which a bundle of wheat straw is set alight in each house and carried by hand from one corner of a room to another, probably to ritually burn evil spirits and insects. In regard to the Ghaṅṭākarna (corresponding to the *Gathāmuga*) in the town of Bhaktapur, Gutschow (1982: 104) states (without mention of any indoor rites) that because not only dirt from the fields but also demonic beings enter the village after the rice transplanting, the rite is performed in order to drive them away. (There is a tendency for researchers who have dealt with the same rite in other villages to regard it simply as a form of exorcism [Nepali 1965: 377–380; Toffin 1984: 518–519].) Although I did not hear any such explicit explanation of the *Gathāmuga* in S village, in content the rite resembles (apart from the role of specific castes) the examples from other villages (especially that from Kathmandu described by Nepali [loc. cit.]), and it may be considered to have a similar meaning. It is, however, highly questionable whether the interpretation put forward by researchers is shared by the villagers, and they perform the rite rather because it is prescribed by tradition.

The degree of concentration of rites on fixed days are related to the importance of particular days and differences based on the contrast between the light and dark fortnights. Prominent among the days of the lunar calendar is the day of the full moon (15th day of the light fortnight), and in all three regions it coincides with a number of important rites. This does not mean, however, that an important rite takes place on the day of every full moon, and there are also regional differences as regards on which full moon these rites will fall. It is, moreover, not unusual to find that even if they should occur on the day of the same full moon, the name and content of the rite will differ (e.g., A19–21, A68–70, A75–77). The day second in importance to the day of the full moon in regard to the number of important rites with which it coincides is the 5th day of the light fortnight, and a considerable number of rites also take place on the 8th and 9th days of the light fortnight, the 1st and 2nd days of the light fortnight, the new moon (30th day of the dark fortnight [in the almanacs known as *pañcāṅga* the 15th day of the dark fortnight is referred to as the 30th day]), and the preceding 14th day of the dark fortnight. Within the course of a single month, a greater concentration of rites is to be found in the light fortnight, during which the moon waxes, and in all three regions the number of major rites (as given in my table) performed during the light fortnight is more than or close to double that of the dark fortnight. Another distinctive feature is the concentration of rites relating to ancestral spirits, the dead and the netherworld in the dark fortnight (A2, A22, A30–31, A40–43, A51–53, A71, A81). Furthermore, in all three regions particular deities are related to specific days within a fortnight (e.g., Viṣṇu: 11th day; Nāg: 5th day; Sarasvatī: 5th day; Kṛṣṇa: 8th day; Śiva: 14th day). Einoo

Shingo (oral paper) has already pointed out on the basis of P.V. Kane's list of rites (Kane 1958) that annual rites tend to fall on specific days, and the material adduced here also exhibits in general terms a tendency similar to the results of his analysis. This concurrence would suggest that this tendency is to be found throughout the Indic world and that there is authority for it in classical literature.

As regards fixed days, there are certain rites which, based on the Purāṇas and other classics, are held to commemorate some event or being, but it is to be readily surmised that these have evolved under the strong influence of the seasons and calendrical auspicious days. It is not unusual to find that what is regarded as the festival of a particular god or a festive day based on a certain myth is also a seasonal festival or coincides with the day of the full moon. In addition, specific days of the week or days of the lunar month are set aside as days of worship and fasting (*vrata*), and they are observed on a voluntary basis primarily by women for fixed periods of time such as six months or one year. Representative of the days for performing *vrata* are Sunday, Tuesday and Friday and, in the case of the lunar calendar, the 8th and 11th days of the month; the days of the week may also be linked to particular deities. Among the three regions, the observance of *vrata* is most popular in Mithila, while among the Newars the occasions for observing it and the people who do actually observe it are relatively few in number. In Mithila, Sunday is regarded as the day for performing the *vrata* for Sūrya (sun god; the same applies among the Parbate Hindus), Tuesday the day for performing the *vrata* for Hanumān (monkey god of the *Rāmāyaṇa*), and Friday the day for performing the *vrata* for the goddess Śantoṣimātā. The large number of *vrata* performed primarily by women in Mithila, to be further discussed below, and the presence of deities such as Śantoṣimātā who are relatively unknown among the Parbate Hindus and Newars hint at links between Mithila and the cultural sphere of Bengal.

If one now examines in greater detail the correspondences between certain days and individual rites, one finds that, in addition to points in common, there are also major differences among the three regions. For example, it is rare to find that the same type of rite is performed on the same day in all three regions. The only rites of the same name performed on the same day are a small number of rites of deities linked to the specific days of a *pakṣa* noted above (A11, A18, A26, A85, A86), and even in these cases there are marked differences in the manner in which the rites are performed. The half-monthlong festival (*Durgā pūjā*) culminating in the *Vijāya daśamī* (A49) and the group of rites centring on the *Lakṣmī pūjā* (circa A53), which represent the two main annual rites in all three regions, exhibit considerable similarities in both the time of their performance and their content, but they are known by different names in each region, and there are also differences in the manner of their execution. The group of rites including the *Lakṣmī pūjā* is known collectively as 'Tihār' by the Parbate Hindus and 'Swanti' by the Newars, while in northern and eastern India it is known by the generic term 'Diwālī' (*Dīpāvalī*), but in Mithila the *Dīpāvalī* and the rites of the following three days are each regarded as separate rites (see table). As regards other rites, apart from a small number

with the same name in two regions, different rites are performed on different days in all three regions.

In the above connections between the seasons and the calendar on the one hand and annual rites on the other, we find that while the cultures of Mithila, the Parbate Hindus and the Newars are framed within a common tradition and have all preserved certain substratal elements, each exhibits characteristics of its own resulting from the influence exerted by the natural environment, means of subsistence, geography and conditions pertaining to cultural history.

As regards the 'common tradition' alluded to here, the 'Sanskritic Hinduism' of Srinivas (1952: 34 *infra*), the 'great tradition' of Marriott (1955: 181 *infra*) and the 'textual complex' of Babb (1975: 212), all concepts with their basis in classical literature and positing a pan-Indian deployment, may be said to have a certain validity, even if they do involve some moot points. I intend to comment on these concepts in the following sections too, but here I wish to take note of the fact that those rites and ritual periods that are considered to belong to the 'great tradition' are by no means homogeneous, but are composed of diverse elements, and that their 'classical' exegesis has not necessarily infiltrated among the people performing these rites. In his analysis of the *Mahādeva-pūjā* as performed in Mithila, Einoo (1989) has demonstrated that it contains elements deriving from various classical texts. It may similarly be supposed that more substratal and autochthonous elements such as agricultural rites are to be found variously interfused with larger festivals and ritual periods such as the *cāturmāsa*. In cases when a certain rite or ritual period constitutes a composite such as this, it is highly questionable whether it is possible to elucidate its meaning only on the basis of a certain classical explication (e.g., 'period during which Viṣṇu sleeps') or a certain text. The meaning found in the classics will also be of a composite nature, and as for the 'meaning' the rite or ritual period holds for the people living therein and performing the rite today, there is not necessarily any guarantee that they share and experience this 'classical meaning'. Rather, as was noted earlier, the general populace tends to leave the question of 'meaning' in the hands of the specialists and to attach greater significance to the execution of the rite itself as an embodiment of tradition. In such circumstances, the manner in which the 'meaning' is understood when the rite is actually being performed may be far removed from the explanations given in the classics or by specialists. The elucidation of the 'classical meaning' is, of course, a task of considerable interest, but there will be instances in which this interpretation is on a level differing from the awareness of those actually performing the rite.

ANNUAL RITES AND SUPERNATURAL ENTITIES

In all three regions many of the annual rites considered here have names that directly denote supernatural entities such as deities, ancestral spirits, sages, evil spirits, the lord and messengers of the netherworld, and mythical beings. There are

in addition also agricultural rites, rites marking changes in the seasons, rites for the longevity and health of kin, rites for making donations and exchanging gifts, and rites connected with myths and ritual custom for performing or abstaining from certain actions (fastening of the sacred thread, taking of food, gathering of sacred grass, etc.), but in these cases too related supernatural entities will often be worshipped.

In the analysis of the supernatural entities of the Indic world, the aspect to have attracted particular attention is the structure of its pantheon, and a variety of theories and arguments have been put forward, including a differentiation between Sanskritic gods and village gods (Srinivas 1952), gods of the great tradition and gods of the little traditions (Marriott 1955), a threefold division of supernatural entities (Harper 1959, Babb 1975), a classification of deities based on different types of offerings (Fuller 1988), and a distinction based on whether or not a Brahman priest is necessary for worshipping a particular deity (Sharma 1970). In the following, bearing these views in mind, I shall examine points shared in common by the three regions and also regional differences.

Similarities between the three Regions relating to Supernatural Entities

Supernatural entities may be broadly divided into three groups, namely, deities, evil spirits, and beings intermediate to these two groups. As regards deities, one may recognize a hierarchy among the deities of the great tradition, or Sanskritic deities, such as Viṣṇu, Śiva, Lakṣmī and Sarasvatī, the goddesses among them such as Durgā and Bhagavatī who receive blood sacrifices, and other deities of the great tradition such as the serpent god Nāga, and it is also possible to posit distinctions and differences in ranking between these deities and the more local deities to be mentioned below. In this respect it may be said that in general terms the pantheons of the three regions exhibit a high degree of similarity (including the tenuousness of Brahmā's presence). (On the hierarchy of the gods in the pantheon of the Parbate Hindus, see Bennett 1983: 48–49.)

Considering the question now from the perspective of the methods employed in performing the rites, we find that in this respect too the three regions share many basic features. One example is the distinction made between the treatment of deities and so forth and the treatment of ancestral and evil spirits. The worship of deities and seers has been formalized in a type of oblatory worship called '*pūjā*'. The *pūjā* is a service in which the officiant purifies himself and makes offerings to a supernatural entity that has been invoked (or is represented by an image or some form of animal, plant or mineral); the basic offerings are water, food, flowers, incense and lamps, and often bells will be rung and music played while the offerings are being made. Although the *pūjā* is sometimes performed as an occasional rite, it is also frequently incorporated into annual rites. Services for ancestral spirits, on the other hand, are called '*śrāddha*' and are centred on the act of offering up sacrificial rice-cakes called '*pinḍa*'. As a rite relating to the afterworld, the *śrāddha* has been incorporated into rites of the life cycle, and it appears only rarely as an

annual rite (A40, A41). Evil spirits tend to become objects of propitiation and exorcism rather than objects of worship, and although they do appear in some annual rites (A13, A15), they are addressed more often in occasional rites (e.g., for recovery from illness), which do not require the presence of a Brahman priest. There are various local evil spirits, but the *bhūta* (evil spirit), *rākṣasa* (demon) and *preta* (spirit of the dead) are found in all three regions. As a means of propitiation, special importance is attached to offerings.

The above would suggest that the general scope and some concrete aspects of the pantheon of supernatural entities, as well as its treatment, are shared in common by all three regions, and this would point to that aspect of uniformity based on the 'common tradition' of these regions. In view of the diffusion of this tradition and its links with classical literature, it is obvious that it is not only the high-ranking deities that are shared by all three regions. The high-ranking gods make up this tradition in conjunction with other deities and ancestral or evil spirits, and they include entities of lower prestige or those that do not require Brahman priests. The terms 'great tradition', 'Sanskritic' and 'textual' hint at both the prestige of particular elements and the extent of their distribution, but these concepts are not necessarily adequate for an understanding of shared elements when supernatural entities are considered in transregional terms, and a viewpoint embracing all entities ranging from high-ranking gods to evil spirits is necessary.

Alongside the above shared features, there are also considerable regional differences in the types of deities and similar entities to be found in the three regions under consideration. In the following I shall consider the salient differences.

Regional Differences among the Deities

As regards regional differences among the deities, the presence of Buddhism is a major distinguishing feature of the Newars, but since various studies of Newar Buddhism are already available, I shall not go into this subject here. It may be noted, however, that in S village there are few purely Buddhist rites (A7, A16, A32), and (as is the case among Newars in general) it is normal practice for Buddhists to perform ostensibly Hindu rites, as a result of which it is often difficult to distinguish between the two.

Among classical deities exhibiting regional differences, a striking example is Jānakī (Sītā), allegedly born in Mithila, where rites related to her are noticeable (A6, A73). Other rites connected with her include an occasional rite performed in G village in Mithila and called *Aṣṭajām*; on a suitable day devotees will worship Sītā, Rāma and Hanumān by performing a fire service (*homa*) and singing in turn for twenty-four hours and will then in conclusion serve a meal to at least eleven Brahmins (*brāhmaṇ bhojan*). This rite is not found in the other regions, and it may be regarded as an example of a difference deriving from a special connection between a particular region and a particular myth. (The first day of the *Aṣṭajām* performed in 1989 coincided with the day of the Śivarātrī [A85], but rather than looking upon this as the veiling of a rite in honour of Śiva by the Vaiṣṇava *Aṣṭajām*

[Rāma being looked upon as a manifestation of Viṣṇu], it is more appropriate to assume that an auspicious day was selected for performing the *Aṣṭajām*. This is because, as may be inferred from, for example, the fact that the *Śiva* (/ *Mahādeva*) *pūjā* is performed every morning in the homes of the people of Mithila, the cult of Śiva enjoys considerable popularity and, as may be seen in the presence of flagstaves of Hanumān in shrines dedicated to Śiva, the fusion of elements of both sects is quite normal.)

Further conspicuous regional differences concerning classical deities include the worship of Sūrya in Mithila (A5, A63, A72) and the festivals for Bhindya: (Bhīmsen, Bhīmasena) among the Newars (A27, A84). Among the peoples of Nepal, the Newars are known for their business acumen, and the war god Bhīmasena is widely worshipped among them as a god of commerce. The worship of a particular god by a particular group of people may also be seen in the links between clerks, metalsmiths, blacksmiths, etc., and the god Viśvakarma, and these are all examples of the relationship obtaining between stereotypical occupations and their tutelary deities.

Even when a deity is to be found in all three regions, there may be considerable regional differences in the associated rites. For example *Tīj* (A34), a rite dedicated to Śiva and performed primarily by women, is hardly celebrated at all among the Newars, and *Narāknivaraṇ* (A81), a *vrata* for Śiva, is rarely heard of even by name outside of Mithila.

In regard to goddesses too there are not only points in common, but also regional differences. In the homes of upper-caste families in Mithila there is a room called '*bhagvatī ghar*', in a corner of which is enshrined (without any image) the goddess Bhagvatī, and she is worshipped on various occasions as shown in the table. This goddess is also called '*kul-devtā*', or 'clan deity', and serves as an important object of worship at marriage ceremonies and other life-cycle rites. In B village of the Parbate Hindus there is a festival dedicated to Bhairavī (A76) in which a rock at the foot of a large tree on a nearby riverbank serves as the object of worship; this is an important festival with much local colour in which the people of the neighbourhood participate at will, and in this village it is, along with the festival for the Brahman clan deity *kul-devtā* (/ *-devatā*), the largest festival of the year. The largest festival among the Newars of S village is the Viṣṇudevī festival (A74). Viṣṇudevī does not, however, appear as the name of a classical Hindu goddess, and her name is probably a corruption of Vaiṣṇavī; this may be inferred from the iconographical characteristics of her image and from the spelling 'Vaiṣṇuvī-devī' appearing in old documents preserved in S village. (On the Viṣṇudevī festival, see Ishii 1978 and 1980.)

The largest festival in G village in Mithila is the *Durgā pūjā*, and this is followed in scale by the *Dīpāvalī* and *Holī*. The *Durgā pūjā* (*Daśai*, *Mwahni*) and *Dīpāvalī* (*Tihār*, *Swanti*) are likewise regarded as major festivals among the Newars and Parbate Hindus (whereas *Holī* is on the decline, partly because of government restrictions). It is, however, important to note here that the largest festival differs

in each region. This is typified by the festival for Viṣṇudevī in S village, where she has an importance far exceeding that of other goddesses and 'classical' gods such as Śiva, Nārāyaṇa and Kṛṣṇa, reflected both in the daily worship of the villagers and also in the size of her temple. In the case of Newar villages, it is normal to find that the deity to which particular importance is attached differs from one village to another. In Mithila, on the other hand, among the deities as a whole, importance is set, in the case of Brahmans, on, in addition to Durgā, the aforementioned Bhagvatī as well as Śiva, who is made the object of a daily morning *pūjā* and is also worshipped in other occasional rites, and, in the case of other castes, on the deities peculiar to certain localities or villages to be mentioned below.

In his study of the divine hierarchy, based on a village survey conducted in central India, Babb has proposed a threefold classification of the gods into the most powerful gods of sacred literature, the numerous local deities who are relatively featureless, and the malignant spirits and so forth ranked below these (Babb 1975: 238-244). This scheme involves a number of problems, such as the fact that there are deities who are completely neglected in certain regions (and cannot therefore be regarded as powerful) and the fact that Babb minimises the dangers associated with scriptural gods, but in the context of our present discussion it is flawed by the fact that no consideration is given to regional differences. The deities regarded as powerful and important in a certain region may indeed be directly connected with the scriptures, but there will also be instances in which they are local deities that have been modified or selected in accordance with the needs of that particular region.

Deities whose presence is regionally limited are especially prevalent in Mithila. In G village deities such as Dihavār Bābā, enshrined in the Brahmā-sthān, Mādhav Ṭhākur, said to be the tutelary deity of the barber caste (Hazām), Rāgo Bhuiyā, who is worshipped primarily by members of the Dhānuk caste in a place that was formerly forest and who prevents tigers from appearing, Dhām Damiyāin, worshipped by the Bind caste, and Malaṅg, who if not worshipped causes the outbreak of fires, are enshrined in small shrines (all bare of any image) generally on the outskirts of the village. In a neighbouring settlement to the west, the god Salhes (or Śaileś), who assumes the form of a warrior on horseback and is worshipped primarily by members of the lower caste of Dūsadh, is enshrined together with images of his retainers, and if one visits other neighbouring villages, one will encounter the names of many other deities too. Among these, the deities of G village apart from Malaṅg are all worshipped together at a 'service for the village gods' (*gamaiyā pūjā*) that takes place on the Monday after the *saṅkrānti* of the month of Jyeṣṭha or on any day after Friday during the month of Āṣāḍha. It is said to be performed primarily to pray for a successful harvest.

In Mithila the clan gods (*kul-devatā*) of patrilineal kinship groups also have names. For example, the clan god of the Brahman clan (Kāligāme) from Kāligām is called Śokhā-sambhu-nātha, while that of members of the Kāyastha caste is called Kārikha-mahārājā. This practice of giving individual names to local gods, caste

gods and clan gods is also commonly found in Bihar and the Terai in Nepal (Grier-son 1885: 403–407; Dahal 1978).²⁾

In this respect the Parbate Hindus and Newars exhibit certain differences. It is true that if one surveys their pantheons as a whole, one will find that the Parbate Hindus have local gods and clan gods with individual names (Gaborieau 1982; Bista 1972: 63; Yasuno 1988) and that among the Newars there are deities such as the mother god with Newari names (Nepali 1965: 306–313; Toffin 1984: 482; Slusser 1982: 216). But many of these deities have also been given names deriving from classical literature (*ibid.*; Bennett 1983: 132). Among the Newars clan gods do not normally have individual names, and this is also not unusual among the Parbate Hindus. Among the Newars the clan god is invariably known simply as *digu dya:* or *agā dya:*; *digu dya:* is often represented by a number of natural stones, and in S village he is worshipped once annually around the month of Vaiśākha (A4). *Agā dya:* is the clan god of certain upper-caste patrilineal groups and is kept hidden from outsiders. Although he is frequently represented by means of an image, the name of this image does not usually come into question. In the case of the Parbate Hindu B village too the clan god of the Brahmans, its main inhabitants, is known simply as *kul-devtā* (/–*devatā*) and has no individual name; it is represented by a large tree on the village outskirts and is worshipped once every two years by the patrilineal clan on the day of the *Dhanya pūrṇimā*. In both S village and B village there are no deities corresponding to the ‘village gods’ of G village, and all entities classifiable as deities, whether worshipped during annual rites or enshrined in temples and shrines, are known by the names of classical gods (although there are some with corrupt forms, such as Bhindya: deriving from Bhīmasena). Thus, if we compare the structure of the pantheons of the Parbate Hindus and Newars with that of Mithila and the surrounding Ganges plains, we find that in the former case there have been preserved deities known only by collective general names, and there are relatively few local and other gods with only individual names. This may be considered to be a consequence of the process whereby in cultures on the periphery of the Indic world, such as those of the Parbate Hindus and Newars, substratal, indigenous elements have been preserved on the one hand, while on the other hand efforts have been made to identify various deities with the gods of the ‘great tradition’ considered to be of greater prestige and linked to the Indian classics. In view of the fact that in Mithila, regarded as one of the strongholds of Hindu culture, local deities coexist with those of the ‘great tradition’ and that similar examples of coexistence have been pointed out elsewhere in India (Marriott 1955: 196–197; Babb 1975: 239–240), the process of attempting to assimilate with the ‘great tradition’ as evidenced among the Parbate Hindus and Newars may be considered to have advanced too far in certain respects. This is, as it were, a form of ‘excessive cultural transformation’, and if one uses the term ‘Sanskritization’ in its broad sense as used by Marriott (see below), it may also be described as ‘over-Sanskritization’. This type of process is no doubt to be frequently observed in areas peripheral to major civilizations.

At this stage I wish to comment briefly on the usage of the term 'Sanskritization'. The concept of 'Sanskritization' within the Indic world was initially proposed as a term to denote the process whereby lower castes adopt the customs of upper castes, especially Brahmins, in order to enhance their own status (Srinivas 1952: 30; 1972: 6). Ever since it has been widely used and has also provoked much discussion, but at the same time it has, largely unconsciously, been subjected to a broader interpretation. This is already found in Marriott's study dating from 1955, where 'Sanskritization' is used not necessarily in connection with the upward mobility of castes, but in the sense of "the spread of the great tradition" (Marriott 1955: 193). This latter usage is also convenient when dealing with cultural change in areas peripheral to Indian civilization, and as a result of this extended interpretation the concept of 'Sanskritization' may be said to have greatly increased the sphere of its applicability. But as an analytic concept it is necessary to distinguish between cases that involve the upward mobility of castes and cases that do not. Here I shall accordingly distinguish between the two by referring to the former, original usage relating to the upward mobility of castes as 'Sanskritization in the narrow sense' and the latter usage exemplified by Marriott as 'Sanskritization in the broad sense'. That I do not do away with the word 'Sanskritization' in the latter sense is partly because this usage has already won considerable currency, but it is also due to the fact that it was already being used in this broader sense prior to Srinivas, namely, by G. Coedès in discussing the Indianization of the states of Southeast Asia. Although Coedès often uses the terms 'Indianization' and 'Brahmanization' in order to refer to the spread and acceptance of India's Brahmanical culture, he states that it may also be termed 'Sanskritization' (Coedès 1964: 37-38; 1968: 15-16). The spread of Indian culture outside of India was, in other words, denoted by the term 'Sanskritization' prior to Śrinivas, and so it should not be inappropriate to refer to this and to the 'Sanskritization' within India that is unrelated to the upward mobility of castes (as in the case of Marriott) as 'Sanskritization in the broad sense'. In this case too, of course, there will be a strong desire evident in this process to enhance one's prestige by absorbing elements from a higher culture. But this will not necessarily be connected with any rise in caste (or any such desire), especially when the recipients belong to a different ethnic group. The term 'over-Sanskritization' I earlier used meant to denote the process whereby this 'Sanskritization in a broad sense' has been advanced to excess in certain respects.

THE 'RITUAL COMPLEXES' OF ANNUAL RITES AND SOCIETY

The *pūjā* for gods, the *śrāddha* for ancestral spirits, and the propitiation of malignant spirits have an important point in common. In their dealing with the supernatural, they are all centred on the act of making offerings. This has been pointed out as a distinctive feature of the *pūjā*, but it is of importance not only in the *pūjā* but also in other ritual acts, and the majority of annual rites may be said to

be structured around the making of offerings. Numerous studies have already been made of the procedure, background and meaning of the *pūjā* (e.g., Babb 1975, Tachikawa 1983, Tanaka 1986, Einoo 1989). Here, instead of discussing these aspects, I wish to consider annual rites from the perspective of the 'ritual complex' encompassing the *pūjā* and, in accordance therewith, to point out differences in the social aspects concerning ritual in the three regions under consideration.

It is possible to look upon many of the annual rites as combinations of various ritual elements (or acts) with a focal act of oblation. The elements that are selected and combined vary greatly not only in accordance with the type of rite but also from one region to another. The main elements that may be considered to combine to form a rite are as follows: *vrata*, *jātrā*, feasts, giving meals to particular castes, *dāna* (donations), other exchanges of gifts, narratives, and artistic elements (music, dance, painting, etc.). Among these elements, *vrata* (worship accompanied by fasting) and *jātrā* (*yātrā* ['journey']); festivals accompanied by processions or parades with a portable shrine) may also be regarded as independent rites, but here I wish to consider them as constituent elements ancillary to acts of worship accompanied by the making of offerings. As may be gathered from the table, several of these elements will often appear in a single rite.

If we compare the constituent elements of the annual rites in the three regions with such a viewpoint as our starting point, we discover major differences in their connections with society in each region. Since there is not sufficient space here to describe each ritual complex in detail or to undertake an analysis of social structure, I shall restrict myself to pointing out regional differences relating to individual elements.

The performance of a *vrata* involves a strong element of personal choice, and in all three regions it is performed more by women than by men, being especially prevalent in Mithila (A6, A10, A26, A36, A42, A63, A66, A72, A81, A83, A85), less frequent among the Parbate Hindus (A11, A67, A78, A88), and still less frequent among the Newars (A26, A74). When a *vrata* is incorporated into an annual rite, people will fast and worship a particular deity on the same day as the rite in question, but this will often be done individually at the home of each, and even when they visit a temple to worship, they participate of their own accord either individually or together with fellow devotees.

By way of contrast, the *jātrā*, which must be conducted in an organized fashion, predominates among the Newars (A7, A22, A24, A27, [A39], A49, A74), is less frequent among the Parbate Hindus (A76), and is virtually nonexistent in the Mithila village studied ([A73]). In the case of the Newars, other rites too are often managed collectively by a permanent organization for the conduct of rites called '*guthi*'. Such permanent organizations are not, however, found in Mithila or among the Parbate Hindus, where the majority of rites are centred on the individual household and are performed in conjunction with relatives and neighbours; any larger organization, if found at all, is of a temporary nature and participation is voluntary.

Feasts are held on various occasions in all three districts. In the case of Mithila, each household extends an invitation (*hakār*) to 'the whole village' on important occasions such as the day of the *Vijāya dasamī* during the *Durgā pūjā*. In this case, 'the whole village' means households of the same caste within the village, but since they in fact end up inviting one another, hardly anyone actually takes up the invitation, and they instead send *prasāda* (offerings returned from the deity) to one another. Among the Parbate Hindus, there are hardly any communal feasts held in conjunction with annual rites, and even when the patrilineal kin did gather together to perform a *pūjā* on the occasion of the *Dasai* or the worship of the *kul-devtā* (A75), it was found that the feast was held at each household. A salient characteristic of the Newar *guthi* is that on the occasion of any event that it sponsors, it will invariably stage a communal feast in which all members must participate. In addition, communal feasts held by patrilineal kinship groups are also to be observed among the Newars.

Distinctive of Mithila are the *brāhmaṇ bhojan*, in which male Brahmans are invited to a meal, and *kumārī bhojan*, in which Brahman girls are similarly invited to a meal, both of which are performed on days of important rites (such as the *Dasamī* noted above); they are also performed among Brahmans themselves. Rites involving the offering of donations to Brahmans, which are prevalent in Mithila and, to a lesser extent, among the Parbate Hindus, may also be considered to be of a significance parallel to this giving of meals. Such exchange takes place also among members of the same caste. In the case of the Newars, although there are few rites involving donations in the case of S village, donative rites are more popular among Buddhists, especially in the towns and cities.

A striking characteristic of Mithila is the exchange of gifts on the occasion of various annual rites, and there are more than ten rites connected with this practice (A1, A8, A17, A18, A36, A42, A49, A50, A63, A72, A80, A86). The gifts, or prestations, are called '*bhār*' and consist mainly of various foodstuffs, but on occasions they may also include clothing, accessories and money, and they are transported by family members or carriers from another caste. This type of exchange will sometimes be related to marriage alliances, being performed between affines, and it may be performed by each party once during the first year after marriage or it may continue to be performed thereafter. In the latter case, if a married woman should die, then the affinal prestations for which she had served as the link cease. Moreover, the gifts do not move in one direction only, but may be exchanged by both parties or may be sent by either of the groom's family or the bride's family only, and it may further depend on where the newly-wed bride is living (if she is living with her parents, the gifts are sent from the groom's family, while if she is living with her husband, they are sent from her parents' family). This final point is related to the custom whereby the bride continues to live with her parents for a considerable period of time even after marriage and also to the custom of child marriage, which was formerly practised widely in this region. A detailed analysis taking into account marriage customs and social relations is

necessary in regard to this type of exchange, but I mention it here only as a feature distinctive of Mithila.³⁾

The exchange of gifts between affines is popular also among the Newars, but it is not generally found in annual rites; on the occasion of the *Swanti* in autumn (A58, A62) gifts are sent once by each party, but apart from this it is found only once in the annual rites (A77), and the majority of cases are found in life-cycle rites. In particular, it is common for gifts to be made after the birth of a child and until his or her coming-of-age by the family of the child's mother and also on the occasion of life-cycle rites in the wife's parents' family by the wife herself or by the husband's family. My investigations of corresponding exchanges of gifts among the Parbate Hindus are still inadequate, but it may at least be said that they are virtually nonexistent in annual rites.

Narration and the recitation of the scriptures as part of ritual complexes are popular religious activities in certain parts of north India (Sharma 1970: 13), and in the three regions being dealt with here too narration and recitation by Brahmans are performed. But the occasions on which this takes place and the types of stories used are limited, and the stories used in narration and recitation vary from one region to another: in Mithila the story of Śiva on the occasion of the *Madhuśrāvaṇī* (A17) and the story of Jimutvāhan on the occasion of the *Jitīyā* (A42), among the Parbate Hindus the story of Durgā during the *Daśai* (A45), among the Parbate Hindus and Newars the reading of the *Svsthānī* (story of Śiva; A78), and among the Newars the story of Viṣṇu during the *cāturmāsa* (A11). In Mithila it is women who perform this narration, while among the Parbate Hindus and Newars it is men who perform the recitation. Moreover, in Mithila a woman of the same caste is invited to household rites to perform the narration, whereas in the case of the Parbate Hindus recitation is a household rite and is performed if possible by a member of the household. Among the Newars too the reading of the *Svsthānī* is a household rite, but the recitation and exposition (in Newari) that take place during the *cāturmāsa* are directed at the village as a whole, being performed in public by a Brahman in an open hut facing the village square, and the villagers come to listen and make donations as they please.

Artistic elements are an indispensable part of many rites, but they exhibit considerable regional differences in certain respects, such as the existence of particular elements and the people directly responsible for them. Music appears in all three regions, although there are differences in the types of music used. Common to all regions is the fact that the players of musical instruments are men. Characteristic of Mithila, is the singing of songs by women on various occasions. Among the Newars hymns in praise of the Buddha are sung by male and female groups during certain ritual periods (A16), but unlike in Mithila not many Newar rites are accompanied by songs. A further feature distinctive of Mithila, which has already been noted by other researchers (Konishi 1986a: 183–190; Vequaud 1977) is the depiction of divine images and other objects on the walls and floor of the home, especially on the occasion of life-cycle rites such as marriage ceremonies and coming-of-age

ceremonies, and an example of this may be seen also in annual rites in the auspicious patterns (*aripan*) drawn on the ground in front of a divine image. These are all drawn by women, but such drawings are hardly ever found in the homes of Parbate Hindus and Newars.

In this section I have considered from the perspective of the ritual complex the main elements that are combined with a *pūjā* or other types offerings to form a particular rite, and I compared which constituent elements are salient in each of the three regions. As regards the manner in which these elements are combined, I have had in this study space only to record brief details in the table, but even so considerable light has, I think, been shed on the differences between the three regions. Representative of these differences are the multifaceted participation in rites by women, the close connections between annual rites and affinal prestations, and the preservation of the ritual position of Brahmans (including young girls [*kumārī*]) in Mithila, the large number of ritual acts performed on a household basis among the Parbate Hindus, and the strength of collectivity in the performance of rites among the Newars.

CONCLUSIONS

The culture and society of Mithila, the Parbate Hindus and the Newars as seen through annual rites are marked by both similarities and considerable diversity in regard to time, supernatural entities and the treatment thereof. The similarities are due to the fact that these regions and peoples fall within the sphere of the so-called 'great tradition' of the Indic world. This great tradition is not, however, something uniform, but may be conceived of as a pool of various elements rooted in different times and different regions. It does not, moreover, consist of prestigious elements alone, but also embraces elements of a lower status that coexist with these more prestigious elements. Yet although enveloped by this great tradition, each region exhibits considerable diversity in regard to such aspects as the manner in which the rites are actually organized. The regionality of annual rites is closely connected to the natural conditions of the region, modes of subsistence, its links with myths, its relations with other cultural spheres, the nature of its substratal culture, 'over-Sanskritization' and differences in social structure.

The classical meaning of the rites is often left to specialists, with the general populace showing little interest in it, and in such cases there is no guarantee that the classical, specialist meaning has infiltrated among the general populace. In his study of the rites performed in a large temple in south India, Fuller states that the symbolic significance of the rites of initiation and purification is losing ground even among the temple priests who perform these rites, but he points out that in spite of this the rites themselves are growing in complexity, and he seeks the reason for this in the fact that the rites ensure the continuation of the exclusive privileges (including economic rights) enjoyed by the temple priests (Fuller 1985: 115-129). This means,

in other words, that with the weakening of symbolic significance, the significance of social aspects has come to the fore. This surfacing of social aspects may be said to be a quite general phenomenon in village areas, and in view of the fact that the situation among even the priests of large temples is such, it is only to be expected that the general populace, with its custom, deriving from notions of caste, of entrusting specific tasks to specialists in those tasks, should not preserve the classical meaning of the rites. The fact that it is therefore social aspects that matters more also tallies with the results of the analysis of the foregoing sections, for the various rites clearly reflect the social characteristics of each region, and the annual repetition of such rites serves to consolidate society in each region. When considered in this light, one finds that it is no longer possible to endorse Babb's assertion that "the textualized and untextualized forms of ceremonialism may be understood...as different ways of 'saying the same things'" (Babb 1975: 27), which restates in different terms what had been said earlier by Dumont and Pocock (1959: 45). When that which is being expressed is the nature of society itself (which it often is in the case of 'untextualized forms'), that which is being expressed will differ in accordance with the society in which the rite is being performed. And if this should represent the primary meaning of the rite, then Babb's above statement becomes an oversimplified premise. Advancing this line of criticism still further, one might suggest that the current of Indian studies in recent years, alluded to in the introduction to this study with reference to Burghart, may involve the danger of ignoring this diversity of meanings and of simplistically concluding that the whole can be understood by considering only the centre, where, to use Babb's expression, the 'textual complex' is most visible. In such a context it might be deemed necessary, even if circuitous and similar to stepping into a quagmire, to face this diversity head-on and continue the comparison of regions and villages.

NOTES

- 1) This is my own estimate based on, Davis 1984: vii and Koyama 1989: 59.
- 2) In a rite called *Ghar gosain pūjā*, performed in Mithila by the Harijan Dūsadhs of J village in Bihar, the officiant, who belongs to the same caste and is referred to as a *purohit*, smokes hashish and enters a trancelike state to the accompaniment of drums and other music, and the deities by whom he is possessed during this trance include both those belonging to the 'great tradition' and various local gods.
- 3) Studies dealing with this type of exchange of gifts in Mithila include Mishra 1984 and Koyama 1989. Koyama (1989: 185) points out that it is performed in a reciprocal manner between affines.

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Table Comparing the Rites of Mithila, the Parbate Hindus and the Newars

A. Annual Rites

[The letters preceding the names of the rites and some of the outlines denote Mithila (M), the Parbate Hindus (P), and the Newars (N).]

	Date (month and day)	Name of Rite (<i>j.</i> = <i>jātrā</i> [<i>festival</i>])	Outline	Social units concerned (H=household; G=group; ↯ K=kin; A=affine; V=voluntary)
A1	Vaiśākha 1 (solar calendar)	M: <i>Juḍsitāl</i>	<i>Rice, barley, molasses water, fans, etc.</i> , offered to Brahmins; <i>pūjā</i> for Bhagvatī at each home, with the elders giving blessing marks on the foreheads of all participants; children throw mud at one another; rice, fish, meat, vegetables, curds, sweetmeats, etc., prepared on the previous day (last day of month of Caitra) are eaten; fried sweetmeats sent to daughter-in-law. ('Start of farm work')	H A
A2	<i>badi</i> 30	P: <i>Mātātīrtha aūsi</i>	Married daughters return home and present their mother with cloth, food, etc.; if the mother is no longer alive, (in the vicinity of Kathmandu) they go to Mātātīrtha to bathe and make offerings to the deceased.	H K
		N: <i>Mārthi amai</i>	Women present their mothers at home with eggs, liquor, food, etc.; if the mother is no longer alive, they go to Mātātīrtha to bathe and make offerings to the deceased; the <i>Amai guthi</i> makes donations in front of Mahādev temple.	H G
A3	<i>sudi</i> 3	N: <i>Akṣaya tritiya</i>	<i>Palabi</i> (drink made of grass to ward off illness) is imbibed. (Many groups perform <i>Dya: pūjā</i> on and around this day.)	H G
A4	<i>ca. sudi</i> 3	N: <i>Dya: pūjā</i>	<i>Phuki</i> (agnates) perform <i>pūjā</i> for <i>digu dya:</i> (usually clan god enshrined outdoors) and hold a feast; at night they hold a large feast indoors.	H K
A5	<i>sudi</i> 5	M: <i>Ravipāvani samāpt</i>	Final day of the weekly Sunday <i>vrata</i> for Sūrya; offerings made to the goddess enshrined in the <i>bhagvatī ghar</i> ; string fastened to the wrist is removed; <i>khīr</i> (sweet rice gruel) is eaten and the evening meal is skipped. (Mainly women)	H
A6	<i>sudi</i> 9	M: <i>Jānakī navmī</i>	Fasting for one day (by some people); <i>pūjā</i> performed at temples dedicated to Rāma	V

	Date (month and day)	Name of Rite (<i>J.</i> = <i>jātrā</i> [festival])	Outline	Social units concerned (H=household; G=group; K=kin; A=affine; V=voluntary)
	Vaiśakha		and Sitā (Jānakī); feasting at night.	
A7	<i>sudi</i> 15	N: <i>Buddha punhi</i>	Buddha's birth is celebrated; people belonging to the <i>Bhagvan guthi</i> make offerings to the Buddha, a portable shrine containing an image of the Buddha is carried around the village, and villagers standing before the doors of their homes make offerings to the Buddha in the portable shrine.	G
A8	Jyeṣṭha <i>badi</i> 30	M: <i>Baṭṣāvitrī</i> (<i>Balsait</i>)	In the morning newly-wed women and women in the parental homes of these newly-wed women go to a <i>bar</i> tree (banyan; said to symbolize the husband) and, praying for a happy marriage, perform <i>pūjā</i> using rice, flowers, sandalwood, water, parched rice (<i>lava</i>), etc.; carrying a ripe mango, they circumambulate the <i>bar</i> three times and sprinkle it with water; they return home singing songs, eat <i>khīr</i> in the courtyard of their homes, and abstain from salt for the rest of the day; at night a small feast is held, and they walk around the village singing and distributing sweetmeats, <i>pān</i> and betel. (Other married women may also follow suit.) <i>Bhār</i> (consisting of clothing, food, cloth dolls in the form of a married couple, and parched rice in a jar) are placed in a basket and brought from the family of the newly-wed groom by members of a lower middle caste.	H A
A9	<i>sudi</i> 6	N: <i>Sithi nakha</i>	'Festival of the 6th lunar day'. Small feast in the morning with <i>wa</i> : (roasted rice cakes containing beans); during the morning women visit different temples to perform <i>pūjā</i> ; during the daytime the wells are cleaned; in the evening <i>Hari bhajan</i> .	H G
A10	<i>sudi</i> 10	M: <i>Gāṅgā daśaharā</i>	Devotees bathe in rivers or ponds and fast; donations made to Brahmins; in Janakpur a festival of medium scale is held. (Said to correspond to the birthday of Gāṅgājī.)	V
A11	Āṣāḍha <i>sudi</i> 11	M, P, N: <i>Hariśayani</i>	M: In the evening the head of the family performs the rite for putting Viṣṇu to sleep as	H

Date (month and day)	Name of Rite (<i>j.</i> = <i>jātrā</i> [<i>festival</i>])	Outline	Social units concerned (H=household; G=group; ↘ K=kin; A=affine; V=voluntary)
Āṣāḍha (for 4 months starting from this day)	<i>ekādaśī</i> (<i>Cāturmās</i> [<i>vratā</i>])	on the occasion of the <i>Devotthān ekādaśī</i> and with the gesture of putting a <i>śāligrām</i> or Brahman to sleep; <i>tulstī</i> is planted in the altar of each house and <i>pūjā</i> is performed; a fast is observed in the morning and at noon, and the evening meal consists mainly of fruit.	
		P: A fast is observed; in the morning the <i>tulstī</i> altar is adorned as on the occasion of the <i>Thūlo ekādaśī</i> , <i>tulstī</i> seedlings are planted, and <i>pūjā</i> is performed; every day for four months starting from this day clean water is offered to the <i>tulstī</i> in the morning, while lamps are offered in the evening, and Viṣṇu is worshipped.	H
		N: (At S village) for four months starting from this day (until <i>Haribodhinī ekādaśī</i>) Brahmans recite and explain the <i>Śrīmada Bhagavata</i> in the village square.	村
A12 <i>sudī</i> 15	M: <i>Guru pūrṇimā</i>	M: New clothes are given to one's <i>guru</i> (who initiated one into the teachings of the Vedas; often one's mother) and <i>pūjā</i> is performed at home; the <i>guru</i> is also given <i>dakṣiṇā</i> and treated to a meal.	H
		P: In the morning a (5- or 16-step) <i>pūjā</i> for one's <i>guru</i> is performed after <i>pūjā</i> for lamps, jar, Gaṇeś, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, Maheśvar, Mahākālī and Mahālakṣmī. (Often men or students will invite a <i>guru</i> , family priest or <i>paṇḍit</i> when performing this <i>pūjā</i> and give him gifts of fruit, etc.)	H
A13 Śrāvaṇa 1 (<i>solar calendar</i>)	P: <i>Luṭo phālne</i> (<i>Sāune</i> <i>saṅkrāntī</i>)	Rite in which the names of the gods are chanted and <i>luṭo</i> (supernatural entity causing an itching skin disease) is driven away. In the evening the men of the household beat bamboo winnows with sticks while calling out to one another "It has come, it has come," "What has come?," "Luto has come," etc., chant the names of the gods, and throw bundles of bamboo to one another.	H
A14 <i>badi</i> 5	M: <i>Maunā</i>	Pictures of the serpent god Nāg are drawn	H

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Śrāvaṇa	pañcamī	above the doors and around the house; a small mound of earth (<i>thum</i>) is made in the courtyard (<i>agā</i>) and <i>pūjā</i> is performed using rice flour, vermillion, grass and flowers (the mound is said to serve as a charm against snakes); <i>pūjā</i> for Bhagvatī (<i>kul-devtā</i>), etc.; for 15 days starting from this day newly-wed women pick flowers and perform <i>Nāg pūjā</i> .
A15 <i>badi</i> 14	N: <i>Gathāmuga</i>	In the morning effigies of evil spirits are hung from trees and bamboo at crossroads and burnt; children gather money at the crossroads; in the evening bundles of straw are set alight at each house and moved to the corners of rooms (warding off of evil spirits and insects).
A16 from <i>sudi</i> 1 for 1 month	N: <i>Gūlā dharmā</i>	'Service for the month of Gū'. Every morning <i>pūjā</i> is performed and music played (<i>Nāmsāṅgīti</i> , <i>Hari bhajan</i>) for the Buddha, and every evening hymns (<i>tuta</i>) in praise of the Buddha are sung and people circumambulate and worship a statue of Buddha in the village courtyard.
A17 <i>sudi</i> 3	M: <i>Madhuśrāvaṇī</i>	<i>Pūjā</i> marking the final day of the 13-day <i>Nāg pūjā</i> performed by newly-wed women; the stories about Śiva that other women have been relating to them for 13 days also terminate; (in cases when less than 1 year has elapsed since marriage) presents (<i>bhār</i>) are sent from the groom's family to the bride's family: clothes such as saris for all the women of the bride's family; clothes, accessories and a vanity box for the bride; <i>chura</i> , fruit, sweetmeats, curds, etc.
A18 <i>sudi</i> 5	M, P, N: <i>Nāg pañcamī</i>	M: Pictures of <i>Nāg</i> are attached above the doors; <i>pūjā</i> identical to the <i>Maunā pañcamī</i> is performed (primarily by women); <i>pūjā</i> for snakes made of clay; dish of sweet-sour soft rice (<i>gorjāu</i>) is prepared and eaten; (in cases when less than 1 year has elapsed since marriage) <i>bhār</i> is sent from the groom's family to the bride's family: 3 saris; parcel of unhulled

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A19	Śrāvāṇa		rice, betel, vermilion powder, money, clay snake.	
			P, N: Pictures of Nāg are stuck above the doors and <i>pūjā</i> is performed. P: <i>Pūjā</i> is performed indoors with lamps, jar and Gaṇeś's symbol (betel nut).	H
A20	<i>sudi</i> 15 (full moon)	M: <i>Rakṣābandhan</i>	Sisters (or priests) tie amulets of red, yellow or green string to the right hand of their brothers (or patrons) to pray for their longevity; saris, accessories and money are given to sisters, while dhotis, raw food and money (<i>dakṣiṇā</i>) are given to priests.	K
A21		P: <i>Janai pūrṇimā</i> (<i>Rṣitarpan</i>)	A hearth for performing <i>homa</i> is constructed indoors, images of Brahmā, Viṣṇu and other gods, and also the sages (<i>ṛṣi</i>), are made and installed on the altar, and <i>pūjā</i> is performed with libations of water (<i>tarpan</i>) to the sages; then men change the position of their sacred thread, and both men and women tie a string to their wrist (at the home of the family priest or at their own home).	H
A21		N: <i>Gunhu punhi</i>	In the morning offerings of food to frogs are left at important places in the houses and fields (<i>byān jā nakegu</i>); during the day the Barmhu (Brāhmaṇ) fastens a string to the wrists of members of the middle and upper castes.	H
A22	Bhādra <i>badi</i> 1	N: <i>Sā pārhu</i> (<i>Gāt j.</i>)	'Cow festival'. In order to send the souls of the dead to the netherworld, those who have lost members of the immediate family during the past year march in procession dressed up as cows, cowherds and renunciants.	K
A23		N: <i>Pāsi dān</i> <i>bi:gu</i>	'Donation of fruit (<i>sidā dān</i>)'. Those who wish to do so make donations of fruit, grain, beans, salt, etc., to other villagers (for Bali Rājā or the dead).	V
A24	<i>badi</i> 3	N: <i>Matayā</i> (<i>Gaṇeś j.</i>)	Portable shrine of Gaṇeś is carried through the village; small feasts are held at each house and a communal feast is held for the village officials. (<i>Matayā</i> : 'festival of lamps')	G

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A25	Bhādra <i>badi</i> 4	N: <i>Wā pi:gu</i>	'Rice-planting dance'. Youths disguised as women parade through the village while performing antics in imitation of rice planting; later there is a simulated feast and a farce.	G
A26	<i>badi</i> 8	M, P, N: <i>Kṛṣṇa aṣṭamī</i>	M: At night earthen images or pictures of Kṛṣṇa (and his entourage) are placed under the front eaves of certain houses and a <i>purohit</i> is called to perform <i>pūjā</i> ; <i>vrata</i> is performed (primarily by women); singing, dancing and feasting (to which people from other <i>gotras</i> are invited) also take place.	H B
			P: At night images and pictures of Kṛṣṇa are installed in each house and <i>pūjā</i> is performed; stories such as <i>Kṛṣṇa-līlā</i> and <i>Kṛṣṇa-caritra</i> are related and music such as <i>Hari kīrtan</i> and <i>Hari bhajan</i> is played.	H
			N: At night members of the <i>Kṛṣṇa guthi</i> perform <i>pūjā</i> and observe <i>vrata</i> in front of Kṛṣṇa temple; a feast is held at the home of the members whose turn it is on the roster; music is played all night in front of the temple.	G
A27	<i>badi</i> 9	N: <i>Bhindya:j.</i>	'Festival of Bhīmsen'. Members of the <i>Bhindya: guthi</i> perform <i>pūjā</i> in front of Bhīmsen shrine; portable shrine is carried through the village; feasting.	G
A28	<i>badi</i> 13	N: <i>Juga (yuga)</i> <i>hi:gu</i>	Day of the 'change in eras'; according to one tradition, it corresponds to the day of Śākyamuni's subjugation of demons. Elders perform <i>pūjā</i> in front of image of Śākyamuni, conveying food to its mouth; small feasts with coconut dishes also held at the homes of the villagers.	H
A29	<i>badi</i> 30 (new moon)	M: <i>Kuṣṭ</i> <i>amāvasyā</i>	In the morning villagers go into the fields to gather <i>kuṣ</i> grass, which they wash in ponds and hang up in their homes (in order to use throughout the year in services for gods and ancestors); there is no <i>pūjā</i> or feast.	H
A30		P: <i>Kuṣe aūsi</i> Gokarṇa aūsi	Brahman family priests (<i>purohit</i>) gather <i>kuṣ</i> grass, keep some at their homes and take some to the homes of <i>jajmāns</i> (for which the	H

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A31	Bhādra		<i>jajmāns</i> give them <i>dakṣiṇā</i> , <i>ṭīkā</i> and uncooked food); people whose father is no longer alive go to Gokarṇa, where they bathe and offer up sacrificial rice cakes to their dead father.	
		N: <i>Gokarṇa amai</i>	'Gokarṇa new moon'. People whose father is no longer alive go to Gokarṇa, where they bathe and offer up sacrificial rice cakes to their dead father; those whose father is still alive make offerings to him at his home.	H
A32	<i>sudī</i> 1	N: <i>Gūlā pārhu</i>	'First day of the month of Gū'. Final day of services for the Buddha and musical performances during the month of Gū; each musical group performs <i>pūjā</i> for the Buddha, and after <i>pūjā</i> at the Nāsā dya: a feast is held.	G
A33	from <i>sudī</i> 2 for 1 month	N: <i>Ñālā dharmā</i>	'Service of the month of Ñā'. Every morning people go to the sacred confluence of rivers and bathe.	G
A34	<i>sudī</i> 3	M, P: <i>Tṭj</i> (<i>Haritalikā</i>)	M: <i>Pūjā</i> for Gaurisamkar (Śiva and his consort) is held in the <i>bhagvatī ghar</i> of the home of newly-wed brides.	H
A35			P: Women fast after having eaten sweetmeats and fruit (<i>dar</i>) the previous evening; in the morning they bathe, don clean clothes, fashion a <i>sivaliṅga</i> , etc., with sand and perform <i>pūjā</i> ; they then sing and dance.	H
		N: <i>Cathācā</i>	In the morning <i>pūjā</i> for Nārāyaṇ; during the day capsicum is hung in clothing; at night people refrain from going out of doors (for it is said that if one is seen by the moon on this night, one will be regarded as a thief).	H
A36	<i>sudī</i> 4	M: <i>Cauṭhcandra</i>	Women fast, prepare various sweetmeats, and place the sweetmeats, fruit, curds, etc., in new earthenware plates in the evening, offer them to the moon, and perform <i>pūjā</i> (it is said that if one looks at the moon on this night without doing so, one will be cursed); the offerings are eaten as <i>prasād</i> and (in the case of newly-weds) sent the following day to the groom's family as <i>bhār</i> .	H B

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A37	Bhādra <i>sudi</i> 5	P: <i>Rṣi pañcamī</i>	In the morning women go to rivers, etc., to bathe; during the day they make images of the 7 sages and one of their wives with <i>kuś</i> grass and perform <i>pūjā</i> so that their husbands will be immortal like the sages.	H
A38	<i>sudi</i> 14	M: <i>Anant caturdaśī</i>	Brahman men change the 14-knot string (symbolizing Viṣṇu) tied to their right elbow; sweetmeats and fruit are offered to Anant Bhagvān (Viṣṇu) and <i>pūjā</i> is performed.	H
A39	<i>sudi</i> 15	N: <i>Yānyā punhi</i> (<i>Indra j.</i>)	'Full moon of the month of Yā (Ñā)'. Each <i>guthi</i> adorns and worships image of Hāsā Dya: outdoors and holds a feast; donations are made by each household; performances are given by musical groups. (In Kathmandu rites dedicated to Indra, Bhairav, Kumārī, Viṣṇu, ancestral spirits, etc., and various forms of music and dance combine in a large festival which includes a procession with floats.)	G
A40	Āśvina on the <i>tithi</i> from <i>badi</i> 1 to <i>sudi</i> 1 corresponding to the <i>tithi</i> when death occurred	M: <i>Pitṛpakṣa</i>	People bathe (in ponds and at their homes), make human effigies with <i>kuś</i> grass, chant mantras, and make offerings of water, fruit, etc., to ancestors; priests are given donations and a meal.	H
A41		P, N: <i>Sorā śrāddha</i>	P: On the <i>tulst</i> altar in the garden in front of each house or indoors the household head offers sacrificial rice cakes to the ancestral spirits and prays to them under the direction of a priest; the priest is given a donation and a meal. N: The various <i>Sorā śrāddha guthi</i> (' <i>guthi</i> for the service for 16 days') perform a service for their members' common ancestors and hold a communal feast.	H G
A42	<i>badi</i> 8	M: <i>Jitīyā</i> (<i>Jimutvāhan</i>)	On the previous day women who have lost their mother, grandmother or mother-in-law are invited to a midnight feast for women at which they perform <i>pūjā</i> for Jimutvāhan (praying for the longevity and health of their children). On the actual day women with	

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Āśvina		newly-wed daughters fast and do not even break twigs; at night they dig a (model) pond, plant trees, fashion earthen images of jackals, etc., and perform <i>pūjā</i> for Jimutvāhan; the myth of Jimutvāhan is narrated in the courtyards of the homes of certain Brāhmanas (with the women giving <i>dakṣiṇā</i> , etc.). On this same day <i>bhār</i> (sarīs, <i>cyurā</i> and curds for the bride and her mother) is sent to the family of a newly-wed bride by the groom's family; these sarīs are worn during the meal after the <i>pūjā</i> and narration; the following day the Brahmanas are given a meal.	H
A43 badi 9	M: <i>Mātr navmī</i>	Those who have lost their mother invite a priest to the home and perform <i>brāhmaṇa bhojan</i> .	H
A44 badi 11	M: <i>Viśvakarmā pūjā</i>	Blacksmiths, carpenters, drivers, rickshaw men and people engaged in work related to machinery perform <i>pūjā</i> in front of images or photographs of the god Viśvakarmā riding an elephant and then hold a feast.	V
A45 sudi 1	M: <i>Kalaśsthāpanam</i> (start of <i>Durgā pūjā</i>)	A seedbed is constructed in the <i>bhagvatī ghar</i> , barley seeds are sown, an earthenware jar is placed in the centre, offerings of betel nut, coconut, etc., are made, and <i>pūjā</i> is performed; this is continued for 10 days together with the recitation of the <i>Durgā-saptaśatī</i> (<i>nava durgā pūjā</i>); there are also households that make images of Durgā and perform <i>pūjā</i> or <i>kumārī pūjā</i> .	H
Durgā pūjā (M)			
Daśai (P)	P: <i>Ghaṭasthāpnā</i> (start of <i>Daśai</i>)	A seedbed is constructed in a corner of the kitchen or other room in the house of the clan representative, barley seeds, etc., are sown, and an earthenware jar is placed in the centre, weapons and farming implements are placed in position, a goat is sacrificed, and the <i>Caṇḍī</i> is recited; <i>homa may</i> also be performed; for 10 days the household head bathes each morning, reads the <i>Caṇḍī</i> , and performs <i>pūjā</i> for Durgā (<i>navarātrī</i>); there are also women who bathe every morning in the river.	H
Mwah- nī (N)			

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A46	Aśvina Durgā pūjā (M)	N: <i>Nala swanegu</i> (start of <i>Mwahni</i> [<i>Daśaī</i>])	A seedbed is constructed in the shrine belonging to the <i>guthi</i> and in the sanctuary in the kitchen (top floor) of houses, barley (maize, wheat) seeds are sown, and <i>pūjā</i> is performed; each <i>guthi</i> holds a small feast; for 9 days hence devotees visit 9 different <i>tīrtha</i> (sanctuaries), where they bathe and perform <i>pūjā</i> ; on the <i>daśamī</i> they visit all 9 <i>tīrtha</i> (<i>nau rāt, nau rath</i>).	H G
A47	sudi 7 Daśaī (P)	M, P: <i>Phūlpātī</i>	<i>Phūlpātī</i> (flowers, leaves and fruit) are offered to Durgā; <i>pūjā</i> for books and Sarasvatī. (In Kathmandu <i>phūlpātī</i> is brought from the birthplace of the present dynasty, and high-ranking officials, soldiers, priests, etc., accompany it in a procession through the city; the king performs the <i>Phūlpātī</i> rite at the old palace, while there is a review of troops in Tūdikhel Square.)	H
A47	sudi 8	M: <i>Mahāṣṭamī</i>	<i>Pūjā</i> for Durgā with many offerings (goats, sheep, fowls, pigeons, etc., may also be sacrificed); at night <i>pūjā</i> for Bhagvatī (<i>nisār pūjā</i>).	H
		P: <i>Mahāṣṭamī</i>	A goat is sacrificed to Durgā symbolized by weapons or farming implements (<i>nava durgā bhavanī</i>); a goat is sacrificed even at houses without Daśaī barley (<i>jamarā</i>).	H
		N: <i>Mahāṣṭamī</i> (<i>Kuchī bhway</i>)	Weapons and farming implements are gathered together in one place (<i>āgā</i> , etc.) and a feast is held in the evening. (In Kathmandu a buffalo is sacrificed at the old palace late at night to the goddess Taleju and the <i>kumwa</i> dance is performed [<i>kālratrī</i>].)	H (G)
A48	Mwahnī (N)	sudi 9 M: <i>Mahānavmī</i>	<i>Homa</i> (<i>hāvan</i>) is performed using rice (<i>ārva cāvar</i>), barley, sesame, raw sugar, refined sugar, etc.; Brāhmaṇ girls are treated to <i>khīr</i> , etc. (<i>kumārī bhojan</i>).	H
		P: <i>Mahānavmī</i>	Final sacrifice of <i>nava rātrī</i> with <i>pūjā</i> and <i>kanyā pūjā</i> . (In Kathmandu large numbers of buffaloes and other animals are sacrificed in the morning in the army building [<i>koṭ</i>] beside	H (G)

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A49	Durgā pūjā (M)	Āśvina	the palace.)		
		N: <i>Mahānavmī</i> (<i>Syāku tyāku</i>)	Fowls, ducks and other animals are sacrificed to weapons and farming implements and <i>pūjā</i> is performed; <i>pūjā</i> is also performed for the gods Bhairav, Bhīmsen, Gaṇeś, etc., <i>āga dya:</i> and <i>digu dya:</i> .	H K	
	Daśai (P)	sudi 10	M: <i>Vijāya daśamī</i>	The barley seedlings (<i>jayantī</i>) are extracted, <i>pūjā</i> is performed for Durgā, and <i>kumārī bhojan</i> and <i>brāhmaṇ bhojan</i> are also performed; image of Durgā is immersed in a pond; invitations are sent out to the whole village (<i>hakār</i>).	H
		P: <i>Vijāya daśamī</i>	<i>Pūjā</i> and <i>hāvan</i> (<i>caru</i> [the ashes] are used for <i>ṭkā</i>) for Durgā; barley seedlings (<i>jamarā</i>) are attached to one's hair and one receives a <i>ṭkā</i> (auspicious sign on the forehead) from an elder; feasting.	H	
Mwah- nī (N)	N: <i>Vijāya daśamī</i> (<i>Calā, Pā: yā:</i>)	<i>Pūjā</i> for weapons and farming implements (which are then returned to their proper places); members of the immediate family attach barley seedlings (<i>nala swā</i>) and <i>śinha</i> (<i>ṭkā</i>) to their person and hold a feast; procession of <i>guthi</i> elders holding swords.	H G		
A50	sudi 15	M: <i>Kojāgarā</i>	<i>Bhār</i> (consisting of rice, <i>cyurā</i> , curds, butter, bananas, coconuts, <i>pān</i> , sweetmeats, spices, clothing, hats, umbrellas, mirrors, soap, etc.) is placed in a flat bamboo container approximately 1m in diameter and sent by the family of a newly-wed woman to the groom's family, with a woman from the bride's family handing it to the groom (in quantity the <i>bhār</i> on this occasion exceeds that sent by the bride's family on the day of <i>Madhuśrāvaṇī</i>); a Brahman chants mantras and gives the groom sacred grass (<i>dubī</i>), holy water and rice; the groom plays a game using cowries with his elder brothers' wives and his younger brothers-in-law (the loser is laughed at); many villagers are invited to a feast, and <i>pān</i> and butter are distributed.	H	

Date (month and day)	Name of Rite (<i>j.</i> = <i>jātrā</i> [festival])	Outline Social units concerned (H=household; G=group; ▽ K=kin; A=affine; V=voluntary)		
Āśvina from <i>sudi</i> 15 for 1 month	P: <i>Dasai pūrṇimā</i>	(also <i>Kojāgrat pūrṇimā</i>) Invitations sent out to one another during the <i>Dasai</i> continue until this day; women fast and donations of fruit are made to the family priest; donations are also made to <i>jogī</i> (yogi, ascetics).	H	
	N: <i>Punhi</i>	The period of invitations to affines to attend <i>Mwahni</i> feasts terminates; on this day a pillar (<i>ya: sī dya:</i>) is raised in the village square.	H	
	N: (period not named specially)	Every evening a lamp is lit on the <i>ya: sī dya:</i> (said to be for Birenci Rājā or Indra); <i>Hari bhajan</i> is performed by musical groups (said to be for Nārāyaṇ).	G	
A51	Kārtika <i>badi</i> 13	P: <i>Kāg Tihār</i>	(If one manages to catch a crow [<i>kāg</i>]) one adorns it with a wreath and <i>ṭikā</i> and feeds it with rice, meat, unleavened bread, curds, milk, clarified butter, etc.	H
N: <i>Kwa: pūjā</i> (<i>Swanti</i>)		Unleavened bread, rice, etc., are offered to crows (<i>kwa:</i>) on windowsills, verandas, etc., and <i>pūjā</i> is performed. (Crows are said to be messengers of Yama.)	H	
A52	<i>badi</i> 14	P: <i>Kukur tihār</i>	One adorns a dog (<i>kukur</i>) with a wreath and <i>ṭikā</i> , rubs its body with oil, and feeds it with rice, meat, unleavened bread, curds, milk, clarified butter, etc.	H
N: <i>Khicā pūjā</i> (<i>Swanti</i>)		Wreaths are fastened to dogs, offerings of rice, beaten rice (<i>baji</i>), flowers, lampwicks, etc., are made, and <i>pūjā</i> is performed. (Dogs are also said to be messengers of Yama.)	H	
A53	<i>badi</i> 30 (new moon)	M: <i>Sukhrātri</i> (<i>Lakṣmī pūjā</i> , <i>Dīpāvali</i> , <i>Dīpāmalikā</i> , <i>Diyābati</i> [<i>dīpa</i> , <i>dīya</i> = 'lamp'])	<i>Images of Lakṣmī</i> are made of gold, silver, earth, etc., and <i>pūjā</i> for Lakṣmī, Gaṇeś and Gaurisaṃkar is performed, if possible by the family priest; following an evening meal consisting of rice, side dishes, and more than 10 different sweetmeats, lamps are lit around the house during the night; bundles of cogongrass, sugar cane, rice straw and sacred grass (<i>dubi</i>) are tied into bundles in the <i>bhagvatī ghar</i> and then set alight to illuminate the four corners of the room, after which they are thrown out the door; people chant	H

Date (month and day)	Name of Rite (<i>j.</i> = <i>jātrā</i> [<i>festival</i>])	Outline	Social units concerned (H=household; G=group; ↘ K=kin; A=affine; V=voluntary)
Kārtika		"Lakṣmī (wealth) inside, the god of poverty outside" while beating winnows (<i>sup</i>); children, carrying lamps, go around the village reciting words of felicitation. (The lamps are to guide Lakṣmī and also to guide the ancestral spirits, which have been in the house since the time of <i>Pitrpakṣa</i> , as they return to the netherworld. In addition, footprints are drawn from the alcove in which the <i>kul-devtā</i> [clan god] is enshrined to outside the house; this is in order to show the <i>kul-devtā</i> [Goṣaunī] the condition of the fields so that the people may be blessed with a rich harvest.)	
A54 <i>badi</i> 30 (new moon)	P: <i>Gāī pūjā</i> (<i>Gāī tihār,</i> <i>Lakṣmī pūjā</i>)	In the morning one washes the feet of a cow (<i>gāī</i>) and drinks the water and then washes its tail and sprinkles oneself with the water; <i>pūjā</i> using rice, water, etc.; the cow is rubbed with oil and then adorned with white and yellow auspicious patterns, a <i>ṭikā</i> on the forehead, and a wreath around the neck, and one passes under the cow two or three times; the cow is led outside the village and fed with <i>dau</i> (made of barley, maize and rice, which is parched, ground and flavoured with salt), rice straw, water, grass, etc.; in the evening a large pot is adorned with a wreath and an image of Lakṣmī is placed inside and adorned with accessories, money, etc.; <i>pūjā</i> with offerings of fruit, sweetmeats, etc.; lamps are lit around the house (so that Lakṣmī may find her way into the house).	H
A55	N: <i>Lakṣmī pūjā</i> (<i>Swantī</i>)	In the evening an image (or photograph) of Lakṣmī is installed in the closet and <i>pūjā</i> is performed; lamps are lit around the house; feasting by the whole family.	H
A56 Kārtika <i>sudi</i> 1	M: <i>Govardhan pūjā</i>	In the morning women of the Dhānuk caste fashion divine images (Govardhan Bhagvān = Kṛṣṇa) with cow dung in cow pens belonging to Brāhmaṇs, etc., and family members then perform <i>pūjā</i> (the images are discarded	

Date (month and day)	Name of Rite (<i>j.</i> = <i>jātrā</i> [<i>festival</i>])	Outline Social units concerned (H=household; G=group; ▽ K=kin; A=affine; V=voluntary)		
Kārtika		in the fields the following morning); the horns of cows and bulls are rubbed with oil, then wreaths, bells and strings are attached to their necks, and they are blessed with rice, <i>dubi</i> and water and treated to special food.	H	
A57	P: <i>Goru pūjā</i> (<i>Tihār</i>), <i>Govardhan</i> <i>pūjā</i>	In the morning bulls (<i>goru</i>) are adorned with wreaths, etc., and treated to <i>dau</i> and unleavened bread (so that they will live long and work well to bring good harvests); the bulls are allowed to rest the whole day.	H	
A58	N: <i>Mha pūjā</i> (<i>Swanti</i>)	'Body <i>pūjā</i> '. <i>Maṅḍalas</i> are drawn on the floor, fruit and other foodstuffs, flowers, incense, vermilion powder, <i>sinha</i> (<i>ṭkā</i>), etc., are placed around them, and family members sit in front of each <i>maṅḍala</i> ; the housewife gives them offerings in turn and prays for their longevity and health; gifts of food, liquor, wreaths, etc., are sent by the families of married women and the family holds a feast.	H A	
A59	<i>sudi 2</i>	M: <i>Bhār dutiyā</i> (<i>Bhrātr</i> <i>dwitiyā</i>)	Brothers bring <i>bhār</i> (cloth and money) to their sisters, who then place betel, <i>pān</i> , water, rice flour, vermilion powder, etc., for them within an <i>aripan</i> drawn in the courtyard, give them bananas to eat, and place an auspicious <i>ṭkā</i> on their forehead while chanting a mantra praying for their longevity; a feast is then held.	K
A60	M: <i>Citragupta</i> <i>pūjā</i>	Members of the Kāyastha caste have <i>pūjā</i> performed by the family priest for the god Citragupta, who holds a pen; <i>prasād</i> is distributed among the villagers; there is no feast, but there is singing and dancing.	H	
A61	P: <i>Bhāi ṭkā</i>	Sisters visit their brothers (or brothers may visit their sisters), place three rings each of water, curds, sesame oil, rice and ashes around their seated brothers, rub oil on their foreheads, place a hat on their heads, adorn them with seven-coloured <i>ṭkās</i> and wreaths, give them <i>pān</i> , sweetmeats, fruit, etc., and pray for their longevity.	K	

	Date (month and day)	Name of Rite (<i>j. = jātrā</i> [<i>festival</i>])	Outline	Social units concerned (H=household; G=group; ↴ K=kin; A=affine; V=voluntary)
A62	Kārtika	N: <i>Kijā pūjā</i>	'Pūjā for younger brothers'. Women who have married bring gifts of food, liquor, wreaths, etc., to their natal home and perform <i>pūjā</i> similar to the <i>Mha pūjā</i> for their younger brothers, who give their elder sisters cloth.	K
A63	<i>sudi 5</i> (or hereabouts)	M: <i>Chath,</i> <i>Chāṭhī</i> (<i>Pratihārṣaṣṭhī</i>)	<i>Vrata</i> for Sūrya; those who observe it (mainly women) abstain from meat and fish 3 days beforehand, bathe 2 days in advance, and on the previous day (<i>kharnā</i>) eat <i>khṛ</i> , prepare holy water (<i>argha</i>), and vow to observe the <i>vrata</i> ; on the day itself they fast, prepare <i>ṭhakuvā-bhusvā</i> (sweetmeats made of wheat or rice flour and molasses which are exchanged between affines), fruit, vegetables, coconuts, curds, etc., and in the evening make offerings and libations of holy water at a pond; singing takes place; the following morning similar offerings are made and a meal is given to Brahmins.	H A
A64	<i>sudi 8</i>	M: <i>Gopāṣṭamī</i>	Upper-caste households with cows make offerings of flowers, rice, fruit and choice food and perform <i>pūjā</i> for the cows.	H
A65	<i>sudi 9</i>	M: <i>Akṣayanavmī</i>	Rice is cooked under a <i>dhātṛī</i> tree and given to Brahmins (alternatively people may invite one another); this is said to be for ancestral spirits; some people perform <i>pūjā</i> for Durgā in the <i>bhagvatī ghar</i> .	H
A66	<i>sudi 11</i>	M: <i>Devotṭhān</i> <i>ekādaśī</i>	Day on which Viṣṇu awakes; people fast and in the evening perform <i>pūjā</i> for awakening Viṣṇu (while chanting mantras they lift up a <i>sāligṛām</i> placed on a plate, or they may touch a Brahman who has observed a <i>vrata</i> and perform the gesture of lifting him [i.e., Viṣṇu] up; this is said to mark the start of the farming season); feasting.	H
A67		P: <i>Ṭhūlo</i> <i>ekādaśī</i> (<i>Haribodhīnī</i> <i>ekādaśī</i>)	Day on which Viṣṇu awakes and day of the marriage of <i>tulṣī</i> . The <i>tulṣī</i> that was planted on the altar (<i>maṭh</i>) on the day of Hariśayani <i>ekādaśī</i> is plucked; the household head and his wife fast all day; in the morning leaf vessels containing flowers, rice, incense and	

Date (month and day)	Name of Rite (<i>j.</i> = <i>jātrā</i> [<i>festival</i>])	Outline	Social units concerned (H=household; G=group; ▽ K=kin; A=affine; V=voluntary)
Kārtika		lamps are set afloat on a river (Gaṅgā); as on the occasion of a marriage ceremony, the <i>tulsi</i> altar is enclosed with five bamboo sticks (<i>simaldhār</i>) and festooned with banners, wreaths, etc., many lamps are lit, <i>homa</i> and a 16-step <i>pūjā</i> (<i>ṣodaśopacār pūjā</i>) are performed, religious songs are sung, and music is played (<i>Hari kīrtan</i> , <i>bhajan</i>).	
A68	sudi 15 M: <i>Sāmā-Cakevā</i> (from <i>sudi</i> 7 to 15)	Praying for their brothers' longevity, women make (or buy from Kumhārs) images of Sāmā (Kṛṣṇa's daughter) and her husband Cakevā and place them in the courtyard of their homes; every evening the women gather and sing the song of Sāmā; they place the images of Sāmā and Cakevā in a basket and go through the village singing (disparaging their husbands and praising their brothers); on the final night (full moon) the brothers smash the images, place the pieces in a basket together with cooked rice, <i>dāl</i> , <i>cyurā</i> , salt, oil, cloth, etc., carry the basket into the fields to the accompaniment of singing, and discard it.	K V
A69	<i>Kārtik pūrṇimā</i>	Final day of monthlong <i>vrata</i> commencing on the day of the full moon in the month of Āsvina; <i>pūjā</i> for Kārtik (Kārtikes = Kārtikeya [Śiva's son]) and his consort (in order to obtain offspring).	H
A70	N: <i>Sakimalā punhi</i>	Conclusion of monthlong performance of <i>Hari bhajan</i> ; villagers give the groups of musicians (and also Nārāyaṇ) taros, yams, etc.	G
A71	Mārgaśīrṣa badi 14 P: <i>Bālā caturdaśī</i>	At night people visit Paśupati temple and light lamps (for their deceased parents); the next morning they bathe in the Bāgmatī River; on a hill (Kailāś) beside the temple they sow 7 kinds of seeds (rice, maize, barley, sesame, etc.); the crops are said to reach their parents in heaven).	個人
A72	1st <i>sudi</i> Sunday M: <i>Ravipāvanī ārambha</i>	Commencement of 6-month <i>vrata</i> for Sūrya performed on Sundays (Ravibār) once a month, preferably in the light fortnight;	

	Date (month and day)	Name of Rite (<i>j.</i> = <i>jātrā</i> [festival])	Outline	Social units concerned (H=household; G=group; K=kin; A=affine; V=voluntary)
	Mārgaśīrṣa		preparations for the <i>vrata</i> are made 2 or 3 days in advance; mainly women prepare <i>khīr</i> and <i>thakuwā</i> (long sweetmeats) as offerings and abstain from salt; they fast at night. Commencement of Maṅgalbār (Tuesday) <i>vrata</i> ; sweetmeats and fruit are exchanged between affines.	H
A73	<i>sudi</i> 5	M: <i>Vivāh pañcamī</i>	Day commemorating marriage of Rāma and Sītā (Jānakī); in towns such as Janakpur and Madhubani images of Sītā are made and there is a procession similar to that on the occasion of a wedding (this does not take place in villages).	V
A74	<i>sudi</i> 8	N: <i>Viṣṇudevī j.</i> (for 5 days ca. <i>sudi</i> 8)	Among the '7 village festivals' (<i>nhay gā yā [jātrā]</i>) held in several villages in the western part of the Kathmandu valley, this is the one held at S village; buffaloes, etc., are sacrificed to Viṣṇudevī and her mother (also called Viṣṇudevī and enshrined in a sacred site at the confluence of nearby rivers); <i>pūjā</i> with <i>homa</i> and a procession with portable shrines; feasting; women devotees observe <i>vrata</i> .	G
A75	<i>sudi</i> 15	P: <i>Dhanya purnī (mā)</i>	In the morning unhulled rice is given to the family priest and Brahmans who go from house to house; [B village] biennial <i>pūjā</i> for <i>kul-devtā</i> ; each household provides a goat and these are sacrificed.	H G
A76		<i>Bhairavī j.</i>	At B village, festival for Bhairavī (dwelling in a huge rock under a large tree) at the confluence (<i>Ghumatt</i>) of nearby rivers; devotees sacrifice goats, fowls, pigeons, etc.; those who have made special prayers to Bhairavī bring wreaths, etc., to the accompaniment of music played by members of the Damāi caste, festoon the rock with wreaths, light lamps, and sacrifice the animals; some people also perform <i>Satyanārāyaṇ pūjā</i> .	V
A77		N: <i>Ya: marhi punhi</i>	<i>Ya:marhi</i> (fig-shaped rice dumplings filled with sweet bean paste) are placed on top of the rice kept in the storehouse and people pray	H A

	Date (month and day)	Name of Rite (<i>j.</i> = <i>jātrā</i> [festival])	Outline	Social units concerned (H=household; G=group; ↯ K=kin; A=affine; V=voluntary)
	Mārgaśīrṣa		for a rich harvest; <i>ya:marhi</i> and food for a feast are sent by the bride's family to the groom's family.	
A78	<i>Paṣa</i> from <i>sudi</i> 15 for 1 month	P: <i>Svsthānī</i> <i>pūjā</i>	Mainly women bathe daily, make <i>śivaliṅgas</i> of sand, and perform <i>pūjā</i> ; they eat only 1 salt-free meal daily; at night they listen to recitals of the tale of Svsthānī; on the final day (full moon of the month of Māgh) they prepare various dishes, inscribe images of Svsthānī with mantras and set them afloat in a river, and prepare a meal for their husbands and themselves.	H
A79		N: <i>Mahādya:</i> <i>hālegu</i>	Every morning people chant the name of Mahādev, go to the river with banners and to the accompaniment of music, and bathe; every evening the tale of Svsthānī is read (<i>Bākhā kane</i>); on the final day they go to bathe together with the portable shrine.	V
A80	Māgha 1 (solar calendar)	M: <i>Makar-</i> <i>saṅkrānti</i> (<i>Tilā</i> <i>saṅkrānti</i>)	People bathe, scrub their houses both inside and outside, and make donations (of rice, dhotis, money, etc.) to any Brahmans who come visiting; <i>brāhmaṇ bhojan</i> at which sesame-flavoured <i>khicāḍī</i> (soft rice cooked with clarified butter, beans and sugar), bananas, curds, <i>tilvā</i> (sweetmeats made of raw sugar and sesame), etc., are served; many people bathe at sacred sites such as the confluences of rivers; festivals are also held at temples dedicated to Śiva and Lakṣmī; gifts of food are sent to daughters-in-law; commencement of the <i>Tusārī pūjā</i> by unmarried women.	H A
		P: <i>Māghe</i> <i>saṅkrānti</i>	Special dishes such as yams and <i>khīrco</i> (<i>khīcro</i> = <i>khicāḍī</i>) are eaten; at the confluence of rivers near B village people bathe and a festival is held with many people singing, dancing and playing music far into the night.	H A
A81	<i>badī</i> 14	M: <i>Narāknivaraṇ</i>	Vrata for Mahādev (Śiva); during the day people fast, perform <i>pūjā</i> for Mahādev, and sing; at night <i>brāhmaṇ bhojan</i> . (Observance of this	H

Date (month and day)	Name of Rite (<i>j.</i> = <i>jātrā</i> [festival])	Outline	Social units concerned (H=household; G=group; K=kin; A=affine; V=voluntary)
Māgha		<i>vrata</i> is said to ensure that one does not go to hell.)	
A82 <i>sudi 5</i>	M: <i>Sarasvatī pūjā</i> (<i>Śrī pañcamī</i>) (<i>Vasanta pañcamī</i>)	At households with students and at schools, etc., images of Sarasvatī (goddess of learning) are adorned and priests are summoned to perform <i>pūjā</i> ; offerings (<i>bhog</i>) consisting of various sweetmeats, curds, fruit, etc., are prepared, offered to Sarasvatī, and then eaten; singing by women; in the morning a labourer (<i>ja:n</i>) in the employ of the household is made to ritually plough the fields with a plough drawn by two cows and afterwards <i>pūjā</i> is performed for the plough with water, rice, incense and vermilion powder; <i>aripān</i> in the shape of a <i>ja:n</i> is drawn on the ground in the courtyard and the <i>ja:n</i> is made to stand on it, whereupon he is given rice, potatoes, clothing, etc.; he is also treated to a meal (rite whereby the relationship with the <i>ja:n</i> begins or is renewed [<i>halthāl</i>]). (Start of spring, farming season, <i>Holi</i> , etc.)	H
	P: <i>Vasanta pañcamī</i> (<i>Śrī pañcamī</i>)	Devotees give fruit, etc., to Brahmins at their homes; <i>pūjā</i> at temples and shrines of Sarasvatī during which books, notebooks, etc., are offered; some people also adorn image of Sarasvatī in their home with wreaths, etc. (when performed formally, a Brahmin priest is summoned). (People pray for learning and wealth.)	H
	N: <i>Śrī pañcamī</i>	(At S village) the <i>sanā guthi</i> (funeral organization; also known as <i>Śrī pañcamī guthi</i>) of each caste performs <i>pūjā</i> for Viṣṇudevī, the chief village deity, and holds a feast.	G
from <i>sudi 5</i> for 1½ months	<i>Sasa (Sarasvatī pūjā)</i>	(At S village) various groups go to the sacred site of Ba: khu at the nearby confluence of rivers, where they perform <i>pūjā</i> for Sarasvatī and hold an outdoor feast.	G
A83 <i>sudi 7</i>	M: <i>Acala saptamī</i>	In the morning people bathe in ponds and rivers; they abstain from salt for the whole day, and perform <i>pūjā</i> for Bhagvatī (<i>kul-</i>	H

Date (month and day)	Name of Rite (<i>j.</i> = <i>jātrā</i> [<i>festival</i>])	Outline	Social units concerned (H=household; G=group; K=kin; A=affine; V=voluntary)
Caitra		one another.	
A87	P, N: <i>Phāgu</i> (<i>Holi</i>)	Formerly people threw coloured water and powder at one another daily from <i>sudi</i> 8 until the day of the full moon, but now this is banned and rarely done.	V
<i>sudi</i> 8	P: <i>Cait Daśai</i>	Brothers gather, slaughter a goat, and hold a small feast. (<i>Daśai</i> , which is now performed in the month of Asoj [Āśvina] is said to have been formerly held on this day.)	K
A88	M, P: <i>Rām navmī</i>	M: <i>Pūjā</i> performed at Rām temple in honour of his birthday to the accompaniment of music; meals consisting mainly of fruit are partaken of at each household; some people also observe <i>vrata</i> ; the following morning <i>pūjā</i> and <i>brāhmaṇ bhojan</i> are performed.	H
		P: People either make an image of Rām at their own homes or go to a nearby Rām temple and perform <i>pūjā</i> ; song of Rām is sung; some people also observe <i>vrata</i> around this time.	H
A89	N: <i>Purā</i> Mwahni	'Old <i>Mwahni</i> '. Performance of <i>Hari bhajan</i> ; small feasts are held at individual households. (Also called <i>Cait Daśai</i> , while some people say that it is the same as <i>Rām navmī</i> .)	H G

Names of the Months

Sanskrit	Maithili	Nepali	Newari (Old ¹⁾)
Caitra	Caitr	Cait	Caulā
Vaiśākha	Baiśākh	Baiśākh	Bachalā
Jyeṣṭha	Jeṣṭh	Jeṭh	Tachalā
Āṣāḍha	Aṣāḍh	Aṣār	Dillā
Śrāvaṇa	Sāun	Sāun	Gūlā
Bhādra	Bhādab	Bhadau	Ñālā
Āśvina	Āsin	Asoj	Kaulā
Kārtika	Kātik	Kāttik	Kachalā
Mārgaśīrṣa	Agahan	Maṅsir	Thillā
Pauṣa	Pūs	Pūs	Pohelā
Māgha	Māgh	Māgh	Sillā
Phālguna	Phāgun	Phāgun	Cillā

1) The old Newari names of the months are not usually used, and the Newars normally use the Nepali names. It may also be noted that because they follow the *amānta* calendar, the Newari months start approximately half a month later, with Caulā for example starting at about mid-Caitra. In addition, Kachalā represents the first month of the year in this calendar.

Names of Tithi

[The Sanskrit names (unmarked) are used in all regions; M: Maithili, P: Nepali (Parbate Hindus), N: Newari.]

1 <i>pratipadā, parevā</i> (M, P), <i>pārhu</i> (N)	10 <i>daśamī</i>
2 <i>dviṭṭyā</i>	11 <i>ekādaśī</i>
3 <i>trīṭyā</i>	12 <i>dvādaśī</i>
4 <i>caturthī, cauṭh</i> (M)	13 <i>trayodaśī</i>
5 <i>pañcamī</i>	14 <i>caturdaśī</i>
6 <i>ṣaṣṭhī, khaṣṭhī</i> (P)	15 <i>pūrṇimā, purne</i> (P), <i>punhi</i> (N) [full moon]
7 <i>saptamī</i>	
8 <i>aṣṭamī</i>	
9 <i>navmī</i>	30 <i>amāvāsyā, aūsi</i> (P), <i>amai</i> (N) [new moon]