

Role of the Bhaladmis in the Management of Local Affairs in Southern Mustang in the 19th and 20th Centuries

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1. Introduction

Bhaladmi, in a general sense, is a gentle person or a reputable man of good character. The term is sometimes used with a prefix, *bhadra*, as *bhadra-bhaladmi*, or with *pancha*, as *pancha-bhaladmi*, or with *panchayat*, as *panchayat-bhaladmi*. The *bhadra-bhaladmi* is used simply to denote a gentry-folk or a person of good moral character with special emphasis on the trait of being good and simple and full of integrity, the term *bhadra* itself, in a familiar sense, meaning no other than good, sound, virtuous etc. The term *pancha-bhaladmi*, on the other hand, is used to denote an arbitrator or a member of a body of arbitrators, while the *panchayat-bhaladmi* is done so to denote a mediator or a persuader working in a group or assembly to bring about a compromise or settlement of differences between two or more parties. The term *bhaladmi* is often found to have been used in the documents - government or otherwise - generally to denote a locally or nationally recognised person expected to formally

and frankly express his ideas or opinion in a matter of social or public importance so as to influence the decision or make an impact. In such a case the person, often called simply a *bhaladmi*, can be defined, in the absence of any particular attribute to specify it, as the one well-established and celebrated in the eyes of the general public, as a person of honour, dignity, reputation and firm standing in the society or community he lives in, and hence considered capable to contribute to the settlement of local or other problems or matters of significance. Usually, practice is, therefore, there to define a *bhaladmi* simply as a local prominent person.

2. Scope and Purpose

An attempt is made here in this short article to discuss the role of this very *bhaladmi* in the management of local affairs in Southern Mustang in the 19th and 20th centuries, based on some documents discovered recently in Marpha, Thini, Dzong, Jharkot and Ghasa now deposited in photo

prints at the Nepal German Project on High Mountain Archaeology, Kathmandu. These documents mention, in one or other way, the village communities having sought the participation or guidance of the *bhaladmis* in the management of local affairs, although, of course, they have nothing to say about the criteria or condition for a *bhaladmi* to be qualified or established as capable to play this role. No attempt will, therefore, be made here to dwell upon the subject excepting to note that a *bhaladmi*, to act as such, required to be picked up either by 'election' or (more appropriately) by selection, and that, for a specified period of time or a specified occasion as the case might be. According to one document, a person selected for the purpose was expected to be a well-fitted and honest person¹, and the selection was required to be valid only for a special meeting he was called for², while according to another document, a person deputed to act in such a capacity of a *bhaladmi* was either the one specifically named by a unit or agency seeking his participation or cooperation,³ or the one selected by casting a lot by a unit or agency deputing him.⁴ When an option is left to the deputing unit or agency to depute any one of its choice, any village functionary like a village worker, *gundul*, could also be deputed for the purpose.⁵ It will be interesting, in this context, to note that long before 1926, when the central Government at Kathmandu enforced an order to establish a judicial panchayat in Dang Deukhuri in Western Nepal, the local *bhaladmis* were authorized to look into the minor cases of local disputes and bring about their amicable settlement on their own discretion.⁶ That the *bhaladmis* were thus held in high esteem or attached importance even as a well established institution, if we may say so, also on the higher government level, is evident from their mention made in the government public notices of special importance in those days⁷ in contrast with its missing in the subsequent days after the political change in 1951.⁸ These are enough to show that in the Nepalese social or political life the *bhaladmis* were some privileged sort of persons who until

some time back had special role to play both in the locally and nationally managed affairs in the country. Why and for what purpose these *bhaladmis*, in spite of their being the members of the same community assembling to deliberate on the specific subjects, were accorded such a special status to play such a special role vis-a-vis the village elders, who in those days of feudalistic society, had dominant role to play, and to be dominated by whose sweet will the village itself was happy to vest in them the powers to exercise for implementing the decisions it itself had made, is indeed an interesting subject for study, and for which no answer is there with the afore-mentioned documents to offer. Further because we are thus limited in our scope and purpose, we would now concentrate ourselves in the study of the role the *bhaladmis* played some time back in the management of local affairs as evident from the documents noted above.

3. Documents in General

The above noted documents we are now basing our discussions are bonds or regulations drawn up with mutual consultation and consent by the communities on various occasions or circumstances in Jomsom, Thini, Marpha, Ghasa, Thak Satsae, Jharkot, Khimka, Purang, Dzong and Chhenkur - all in the southern region of the modern Mustang district in Western Nepal. As the exercise of the local people towards doing away with the local problems, these documents reflect the will of the concerned rural communities to put up their collective or joint efforts on their own to ward off the impending danger threatening their social, economic and cultural life more by way of apathy from the community members themselves rather than by any other outward force or Nature. The period covered by these documents extends about ten decades from as far back as 1868 to 1964, trailing all along about one decade after the establishment of democratic form of Government in the country that was committed naturally to introduce local self-government in the urban as

well as rural areas.

Of the eight documents we are now going to take up for discussion, the Ghasa document is the one. Dated back from 1868 to 1954, this document makes up a set of rules seeking to regularise the traditional customs and manners including the duties of the community members towards maintaining and upkeeping the high lying and low lying grounds, pasturage, natives and aliens - all for the good of the community as a whole. Besides, the document shows how the community assembled time and often to review the progress and problems in the village and made with mutual consultation necessary amendments and enforced new regulations aimed at the well being of the community life.

The Marpha documents, one of 1933 and the other of 1960 through 1964, both are, similarly, the sets of customary rules and regulations made by the residents of the village of Marpha with mutual consultation among themselves. They deal on the management of local affairs in relation to the customs and manners and serve as guidelines for the village elders, *thalus* and their assistants, *chopas*, holding office for one year for giving full attention to the emergent government duties keeping the people all happy, and getting the works related to the religious worship and other obligations done regularly.

The Thini documents, on the other hand, are the agreements done in 1938 and 1951 between the two villages of Thini and Jomsom in relation to the traditional arrangements for sharing water for irrigation purposes, maintenance of the canal, and use of forest products and other miscellaneous matters of mutual interest. The one done in 1938 was so done in view of the frequent discords, disputes and differences resulting into exchange of words time and often specially over the use of the forests, bushes and pasture-lands together with the water channel owned and enjoyed by Thini. The agreement established rules and regulations for

both the parties to act accordingly. This 1938 document, in fact, was a review of the old customary regulation which was done in the Tibetan script. It was now done in the Nepalese script for everybody to be able to understand with necessary new clauses incorporated in it. So is the 1951 document which was done in review of the 1938 document in accordance with the clause providing for review in case of need.

The Jharkot document, on its part, is a reconciliation deed done by the villages of Jharkot and Khimka in 1953 as a settlement of dispute over the use for grazing purposes, of the neighbouring higher slopes, unenclosed waste land and cultivated lands left fallow after harvest. The settlement is seen to have been brought about with the support of the traditions according to which the three villages of Purang, Jharkot and Khimka used them as a common ground for grazing their cattle after the crops were reaped.

The Jhong document, similarly, is a reconciliation deed done by the representatives of the Jhong and the Chhenkur villages. It was done in 1952 over the use and enjoyment of a certain Tawa forest spreading border to border between the said two villages, for the purpose of grazing the cattle belonging to the people of the three villages including Purang. It also settled the long standing dispute over the use of the route through Chhenkur to Muktinath Ghara Gumba. This document thus appears to have sealed the disputes between the two villages existing since long before 1937 when a similar deed appears to have been done but to be left ignored some years afterwards.

The Thak Satsae document, on its part, is an organisation rule framed, obviously, after the local government pattern for the management of the common affairs of the thirteen different villages in the Thak Khola region including Ghasa village. Under these rules a body called Thak Satsae Dharma Panchayat was formed. The body, in the absence of any evidence in the contrary, seems to

have been formed voluntarily with the efforts of the participating 13 Mukhiyas, presumably before 1947 and some time after 1933 with a view to run the social system in the region according to the traditions, settle local disputes by themselves, awaken general national consciousness, promote culture, maintain communal harmony, spread education, improve health conditions and prevent epidemics, encourage art, craft and industry, and eradicate evil customs and manners. When viewed against the afore-mentioned Ghasa document, it can safely be said that it was so designed as to act as a sort of an upper body that, apart from bringing about co-ordination among the thirteen villages functioning independently as self-governing units so far as their local issues were concerned, worked in its own way in the larger interest of common concern. The document shows it was active until 1957, when a rule was passed banning the initiation of the Thakali girls under 21 years as nuns and depriving the nuns of their right to the parental property.

4. Problems in Particular

The problems the communities generally confronted related, to be more specific and to make a brief note of, to the danger of deforestation, undergrowth of pasturage, uneven distribution of irrigation facilities, overburdening of social customs in the context of the changes of time, undermining of cultural values, maintenance of roads and bridges, management of religious and cultural services, and inner human nature of being apathetic to the collective responsibility of managing local affairs.

To state in more detail and to refer to the particular cases, the problems the Ghasa village community identified as regards their life and society, required protection of standing crops from domesticated animals, arrangements for grazing cattle in and out of the season, arrangement for collection of pine leaves and needles for manure, protection of forests, control on cutting trees,

grasses, canes, bamboos etc. for domestic and other purposes, clearing of roads in appropriate seasons, regulating operation of grog-shops, control on sale of alcoholic drinks, providing incentives to the hunters killing wild beasts, arrangements for collecting animal dungs etc. for manure, collection of funds and providing expenses for religious services, provision of facilities and allotment of duties to the village functionaries, control of market and wages, management of labour, maintenance of customs and manners etc.

Similarly, the problems the Marpha document of 1933 related to the need for arrangement of irrigation facilities, arrangement of fixing auspicious dates for sowing seeds and reaping crops, keeping the fields barren, grazing cattle and collection of dues on them, collection of animal dungs and pine leaves and needles for manure, regularising cutting of trees and grasses and removing weeds, keeping the rest houses, office buildings and public thorough-fares sanitarly clean and healthy, regular observance of religious services and traditional festivals on fixed dates, planting every year willow and fig trees, maintaining intact the census of the people and the households, enforcing marriage rules and controlling adultery even among the monks and nuns in the *gumbas*, disposing of dead bodies in the community-forest and throwing them down the slope-hills, charging fees on the performance of the last rites on the death of a migratory worker from abroad, control on playing of drums and singing of songs in the particular part of the year, operating water-mill all the time, prohibiting gambling, protection of crops from animals, fixation of yaks' price, discouraging people to approach the law court in case of quarrels and disputes, holding the annual arrow shooting programme, care of official documents, review of the village rules every three years etc.

The problems identified by the triennial meetings held accordingly related to the planting of barley

and corns in certain specified area, opening of farm-lands for grazing for a certain period after the crops are harvested, protection of the willow trees planted every year, cultivation of barren land, arrangement of irrigation facilities, protection of crops, ploughed lands and the barley seeds sown, reaping of naked barley crops, cutting fruit and other trees, setting up of the wooden bridge, blocking of the way through accumulation of water in the fields, providing grass to feed the ploughing animals, extending expenses to offer religious services, cultivation of lands belonging to the people living outside the territory, collection of animal dungs and pine-needles for manure, offering presents on the occasion of marriage, ill-treatments to the persons seeking to take back-home their estranged wives, settling local disputes with local efforts, the system of crying on the death or disappearance of a person, keeping the important places and official buildings clean, sharing of food with the returnees from travel abroad, bowing down to the feet for respect, the tradition of visiting the mourners with presents, the harassment caused by the begging, *damai* class of tailors, sale of yaks and wild beasts, meat, supply of meat to the *thalus* on the occasion of the Dasain festival, provision of extending *dhikuri* loan, killing of yaks belonging to the outsiders, grazing in the *bukyan* pastures inside the territory, sale of a water-mill by the Katuval, the Khampas staying inside the territory, setting up of shops and hotels, wages to be provided to the loom operators, sale of lands and houses, and feasting on the occasion of minor festivals.

Of the two Thini documents, the one of 1938 identified the problems related to the supply of water to the farm-lands, repair of the water course and the wooden bridge, the right to the grazing and practising religious worship, collection of pine-needles and leaves, provision of trees for household purposes, protection of standing crops, cremation of dead bodies on special days or in a special period, tilling of lands, cutting of wood, playing of instruments and firing of muskets,

control on sale and prices of milk, curd etc., and fixing of conditions on setting up an inn. The other document done in 1957, apart from reviewing the provisions made in connection with cleaning and repairing the water-course, supply of water to the fields, acquiring ropes for spanning across the water-course, failure to take water in to the concerned fields on announced dates, cremation of dead bodies, and damage of crops caused by domestic animals, enforced new rules restricting cutting green guava trees and carrying out guavas from the garden, grazing of animals at night on the lands not yet open for the same, rooting out grass grown in others' lands, and collection of pine-needles for manure.

Similarly, the problems identified in the Jhong document of 1952 related to the ownership of the Tawa forest as was claimed both by Jhong and Chhenkur villages resulting also into the dispute over its use entailing grazing of animals and collection of herbs, grass and animal dungs. The priestly services traditionally provided by Chhenkur to Jhong, use of the Chhenkur route to Muktinath Ghara Gumba as well as the tradition of grazing the cattle belonging to Putak village were also in dispute.

The problems identified in the Jharkot document of 1953 related to the cultivation of the plots of land the villages of Jharkot and Khimba had so long been cultivating in peaceful terms, grazing their cattle as well as the cattle of Purang village without any dispute, keeping the water flow from Khimka to Jharkot unhindered to let the water-mill there working all the time, the unrestricted movement of the authorised persons to check the flow of the canal, and collection of animal dungs and other waste materials.

The Thak Satsae document, on its part, identified the necessity of maintaining vital statistics and census, preventing infectious diseases, settling local disputes locally, collecting birth, death and marriage taxes, enforcing new marriage and

funeral rules, making new arrangements for disposal of dead bodies and playing of musical instruments on the occasion, registration of households against the number of *kuriyas*, banning gambling of all sorts, regularising sale of lands and transfer of land-ownership, controlling holding of lottery, collecting dues from the shepherd owners, registration of deeds of gift or legacy, putting into use the new volumetric units of measurements, revising the rule permitting the water-buffaloes to be kept in the region, providing expenses for religious services, bringing about reforms in the traditional customs relating to the festivals and the like occasions, formalising the *dhikuri* system of providing funds to those who needed, seeing the priestly duties performed without any hitch or hindrance, maintaining the wooden bridge in good condition, applying control on cutting of trees and bamboos, maintaining moral and sexual discipline among the people including the monks and the nuns in the *gumbas*, restricting the wearing of valuable ornaments like *khanlo* and amulets, controlling providing fees and making religious gifts to the religious specialists, and making arrangements for security of goods and property of the *gumbas*.

5. Role of the Bhaladmis

In course of solving the afore-mentioned problems the concerned village or villages seem to have sought the assistance and mediation of the *bhaladmis* in their own considered way, which does not, however, mean to say that their services were considered always necessary and that also in bringing about solutions of all these problems without any exception. Varied as were the cases of the management of local affairs, so was the role of the *bhaladmis* played on different occasions in different cases. The local problems being what they were, it can be presumed, the *bhaladmis* were requested, or asked in most cases, to play their role as considered necessary by the party or parties concerned. We have now to see how and in what way the *bhaladmis* were expected to play and they

played the role.

As seen in the Ghasa document, the *bhaladmis* were required to attend the panchayat court in connection with the suits filed in Thak Satsae (Dharma Panchayat) under the notice issued. They had to play this role without any hesitation and were paid per diem expenses for the same.⁹

The Thak Satsae document had some specific duties and functions for the *bhaladmis* to fulfill. They had to take part in the panchayat court meetings and give out their opinions, form a sub-committee as necessary with themselves and some member Mukhiyas as members to decide upon difficult and complicated cases placed before the Panchayat, and take action against any office-bearing Mukhiya if a group of at least seven other Mukhiyas lodged a complaint.¹⁰ They had to take part in any discussion related to the matters of great significance or of serious nature.¹¹ They were required to endorse in writing the decisions of the meetings,¹² and attend a Panchayat meeting convened to discuss a no-confidence proposal against a member.¹³ Besides, they had to act with the *talukdar* whenever any girl in the village was suspected to have become pregnant in the absence of her husband in which case they could even expel her from her water sharing caste until she could produce the boy who had caused her to conceive.¹⁴

The Thini document of 1938 is a proof of the *bhaladmis* having joined the *talukdar* and other residents of the village of Jomsom in bringing about a reconciliation with the village of Thini on the question of sharing water for irrigation as well as other matters of common concern.¹⁵ Again in 1951 the *bhaladmis* were instrumental in bringing about a fresh reconciliation deed by reviewing the former one and incorporating in it some other provisions for mutual interest.¹⁶ This document they handed over to the Mukhiya and the *bhaladmis* of Thini after it was duly endorsed.¹⁷

The *bhaladmis* in Marpha, according to the document of 1933, would sit together with the *thalus* and determine the quantity of the crops to be compensated to the land-owners whenever any damage was done by domesticated animals.¹⁸ One other document done in 1957 required the *bhaladmis* to look on request, into the family squabbles and settle the case,¹⁹ and also determine an area out of which the canal flowing along had to be drained out.²⁰

In case of a dispute between Jhong and Chhenkur the *bhaladmis* who were called *pancha bhaladmi*²¹ similarly as the *bhaladmis* in Ghasa invited to settle a dispute between a grain dealer and a land-owner,²² mediated on the question of use and enjoyment of a certain Tawa forest spreading border to border of the said two villages.²³

In relation to another dispute between Jharkot and Khimka, in which case according to a document of 1953, the *bhaladmis* were called *panchayat bhaladmis*, they were successful in persuading the two villages to come to terms on the question of cultivating a disputed plot of land grazing their cattle on it.²⁴

NOTES

1. Thak Satsae document (Dharma Panchayat Rules) :

Text (lines : 281 - 283)

281. 19. thāka 7 saya 13 mukhiyā sammelanamā bhalādami haru lāi bolāudā tala lekhieko

282. saṅkhyā mā viṣaya herī thapaghaṭa garna sakinecha bhalādami haru gāubaṭa

283. cunāva praṇālī bāṭa paṭhānuu parne hunāle niṣpakṣa rupabāṭa yogya ra imāndā ra mānisa
lāi cunnu parcha.

Translation

281 - 283. 19. When calling the *bhaladmis* to the meeting of 13 Mukhiyas of Thak Satsae, the number noted below may be increased or decreased according to the agenda. Since the *bhaladmis* are to be sent by the village concerned through the election system, able and sincere person(s) shall be sent in an impartial manner.

6. Conclusion

To sum up, the documents discussed above were thus witness to the fact that the role of the *bhaladmis*, all along the 19th and 20th centuries, in the context of the management of local affairs in Southern Mustang had been the role of arbitrators, mediators or persuaders assisting in maintaining local community discipline for peace and prosperity in the respective territories. As the locally established prominent persons well-recognised for their sincerity, integrity and intellectually enlightened attitude, enjoying, therefore, high esteem (as much as to be accorded special treatment on special occasions²⁵) not only in the local community level but also in the higher governmental level, they exerted somewhat significant influence in the decision making process, and hence, deserve careful and extensive study in the historical, political and social perspective against the prevailing low rate of literacy with the hero-worshipping like mass psychology of the age.

2. Ibid. :

Text (lines : 306 - 307)

306. 22. gāubāṭa cunī āeko bhalādami haru kā mānyatā kevala eṭṭai sammelanako

307. lāgi mātra rahanecha.

Translation

306 - 307. 22. The term of office (lit. validity) of the *bhaladmis* elected by the village shall be only for one meeting.

3. Ghasa document (Regulations) :

Text (lines : 389 - 391)

389. thāka sātasyemā pareko

390. muddā mānīlā mā jo jasko nāmā purjī lekhi

391. āucha soī mānīsa bhalādami bhai jāne

Translation

389 - 391. in connection with the legal suits filed in Thak Satsae, whosoever is served a written order (specifically mentioning his name) shall go as a *bhaladmi*

4. Ibid. :

Text (lines : 307 - 315)

307. abaūprānta jaṅgi kāmmā ra thāka sātasaīmā

308. paṅca kacaharī garna jānemā ra thāka sātasaibāṭa hāmrā gā.ūma leṣāī deṣāī garī pa

309. ṭhāyekā bhalādmi harukā nāmā purjī sipāī sameṭa ṣati āyemā hāmrā gāukā

310. tasalla bāṭa gāi basī golhā hālī juṅjuṅkā nā ūnā golā pracha svaivai

311. mānīsa sāmelmā ra jaṅgi kāmmā sameta jānu parlā golāmā parekā

312. le ma jāṅna bhaṅna pāne chaina yesamā thāka sātasyebāṭa ṣara ṣicolā jhīgī jo ṣa
ṭāī

313. leṣī paṭhāyeko cha sva mānīsa ānuparnemā tīmī kena āyau bhani leṣāī garekā mā

314. nī salāī sa jāye sa jāye garemā sva lāgekā sa jāye gāūbāṭa bujāūlā golāmā parako

315. mānīsa nagayemā leṣīyekā sa jāye āphaibāṭa tīnu parlā --- 72

Translation

307 - 315. from now on, on the question (of persons) to go on military assignment or to attend a panchayat court of justice in Thaka Satsae and also in case a written order or a messenger is sent and arrives on deputation addressed to the *bhaladmi* in our village, introduced in person or writing (as such), our village shall, after consultation, caste a a lot, and the persons to whom it falls, shall go to join military duty or the (panchayat) meeting (according as the lot decides), and the person to whom the lot falls, shall not say, "I won't go." If in this case Thak Satsae, picking up the question, inflicts punishment upon the person deputed with writing, saying, "The person to whom the order was sent ought to have come, and (instead) why did you turn up?", the punishment so inflicted shall be borne by the village. In case the person to whom the lot falls, declines to go, he himself shall have to undergo the punishment as written.

5. Ibid. :

Text (lines : 395 - 397)

395. nāū natogī sāmelamā ā

396. unu bhaṇne mātra lekhī āyemā pālole pareko

397. ghundula jāne

Translation

395 - 397. in case a writing is received only with a call to attend the meeting without specifying the name, the *gundul* by virtue of his turn shall go

6. Gau Panchayat Ain, 2006 (Village Panchayat Act, 1949). HMG, Kathmandu :

Text (lines : 1 - 6)

1. jāgīrdāra birtāvārale jhagaḍā herdā ko 2 nambarako ainale 5 nam lekhioko

2. muddā bāheka aru muddā vādī prativādī nalie daṇḍa kuṇḍa nagarī gāu gharakā bhalā
3. damī rākhī basī mile milāī dine hunemā pani bhalādāmī kāhā nagaī milne milāī dine
4. nagarī sātānā mile hune kurāko jhagaḍā sameta adālatasamma nagaī nālesa diī
5. insāpha garāme bhayebāṭa ilama rojagāra ruju bhai garna na pāī daṇḍa sajāya hairānī
6. bhognuparne bhai raiti duniyālāī pīra parne bhairaheko sameta behorā jāhera bhayekobāṭa

Translation

- 1 - 6. Whereas it has been represented that even in case other than those mentioned in Section 5 of the Law of Judicial Authority of Jagirdars and Birta owners in which compromise can be effected by the *prominent persons* of the village without formal complaints and responses being filed or penalties being awarded, (the litigants) do not approach such *prominent persons*, and instead, take recourse to the court even in minor matters which could be settled amicably, so that they cannot attend to their occupations and are liable to undergo penalties, and are thus harassed,

(Translation : Regmi Research Series, Year 2, No. 9.

Kathmandu : September 1, 1970)

7. Public Notice on Abolition of Slavery. Chandra Samser, Prime Minister and Marshal,
Commander-in-Chief, Kathmandu : 1925 :

Text (lines : 1 - 5)

1. āge nepāla madhesa pahāḍa gorakhā rā jabhara mulukakā
2. jimidāra tālukadāra jimāvāla tharī mukhiyā mi-
3. jhāra gauruṅ bīrtāvāla jāgīradā ra sāhū mahājana sa-
4. nta mahanta bhalādmī kariyākā dhanī ra kariyā haru same-
5. ta raiti duniyā gairhake

Translation

- 1 - 5. To the landlords, landholders, revenue agents, village heads, head-men, revenue collectors, local agents, freehold land owners, service-men, traders, merchants,

hermits, monks, *bhaladmis*, slave owners, and slaves, tenants and subjects of the whole State of Gorkha comprising of Nepal, Tarai and Hills,
(The Kathmandu Valley was then called Nepal).

8. Royal Proclamation on February 18, 1951. His Majesty King Tribhuvan Bir Bikram Shah Deva. In Shri 5 Tribhuvan Smriti Grantha, Kathmandu : 1960. p. 651 :

Text (lines : 1 - 2)

1. āge hāmro mulukakā bhāi-bhāradāra, santa-mahanta, raiti-duniyā , sāhū
2. mahājana gairhake yathocit,

Translation

- 1 - 2 To the high ranking Government officers, hermits and monks, tenants and subjects, traders and merchants and everybody in our country, Greetings,

9. Ghasa document (Regulation) :

Text (lines : 201 - 203)

201. ... jaṅgi kāṁmā jāne ra gāu gāimā bhalādemī bhai paṁca kacarī garna
202. jāne bhalādmī 1 javānadeṣī jāti javāna gaye panī dīna 1 ko jīyā 1 ko pai ru
203. 75/-kā darle ṣarca dīnu ...

Translation

- 201 - 203. ... one who goes abroad on military assignment or to attend panchayat meetings in one or other village as a *bhaladmi* shall be paid at the rate of 75 paise per day per head no matter whatsoever be the number of the persons so going ...

10. Thak Satsae document (Dharma Panchayat Rules) :

Text (lines : 171 - 179)

171. 6. bhalādamī haruko kartavya ra adhikāra :-
172. ka. bhalādamī haru gāubāṭa cunī āne hudā kacahari
173. baiṭhakamā sāgai basī chalaphala garne hudā āphnu bicāra dine adhikāra

174. rahanecha.
 175. kha. mukhiyā haruko āpasamā amela bhai 7 janā mukhiyā haruko ekai rāyabāṭa
 176. padādhikārī mukhiyā haru māthī sikāyata garemā kārabāī garna sakincha.
 177. ga. māthī dhārā nam ī ko daphā nam 16 mā lekhiē bamojima alaga kameṭi
 178. banāī nirṇaya garne bhanī lekhiēkocha tāpani sva kameṭi banāune adhikāra
 179. bhalādami haruko rahane cha.

Translation

171. 6. Rights and Duties of the *Bhaladmis* :-
 172 - 174. a. The *bhaladmis* are entitled to give out their opinions as they have come through elections from their village, and take part in mutual discussions in court meetings.
 175 - 176. b. In case of discord among the Mukhiyas, if 7 Mukhiyas with one mind lodge a complaint against office-bearing Mukhiyas, action can be taken.
 177 - 179. c. Although it is written above that a decision is to be made by forming a committee as written in the sub-clause 16 No. D, the right to form the said committee shall be vested in the *bhaladmis*.

11. Ibid. :

Text (lines : 95 - 97)

95. 12. bandeja ra niyama bamojima kāma garne ra lāgu garne kartavya 13 mukhiyā ko ho tā
 96. pani ṭhulo yā gambhīra viṣayamā bhalādmī haru dhārā nam ū mā lekhiē
 97. bamojima thapaghaṭa garī bolāuna sakincha.

Translation

- 95 - 97. 12. Although it is the duty of the 13 Mukhiyas to carry out the work according to the rules and regulations and to implement them, the *bhaladmis* may be invited in greater or smaller number as per the clause No. 19 in connection with a matter of great significance or of serious nature.

12. Ibid. :

Text (lines : 102 - 105)

102. 14. kunai pani kâma kuro likhita bâta hunu pardacha meṭiga mâ pâsa bhaeko nayâ
bandheja
103. haru 1/1 prati mukhiyâ haru jimmâ bhaekâ nakala bahimâ lekhâi dī sakala
104. bandhejamâ dartâ garī jammâ bhaekâ 13 mukhiyâ ra bhalâdmīharuko paṭakai picche
105. sahī chāpa garnu parnecha.

Translation

- 102 - 105. 14. Everything should be done in writing. Each and every regulations passed at the meeting should, after having been copied in the copy-book in charge of the Mukhiyas and registered in the original one, be endorsed every time under the signature of the 13 Mukhiyas and the *bhaladmis*.

13. Ibid. :Text (lines : 160 - 163)

160. ga. lekhiako padâdhikârī haru le pakṣapâti ra niyama barkhilâpa garī mana mânī
161. tarikâle kâma garemâ kamase kama 7 janâ mukhiyâ haruko euṭai bicâra bâta
162. cuniâekâ bhalâdmī haru kâ sâmunnemâ avis'vâsa ko kurâ rākhi kârabâi
163. garna sakincha.

Translation

- 160 - 163. c. In case the afore-mentioned office-bearers act arbitrarily in contravention of the rules and in a partisan manner, (a group of) 7 Mukhiyas minimum may, with one mind, take action by proposing a vote of no-confidence in the presence of the *bhaladmis* who have come by election.

14. Ibid.Text (lines : 738 - 744)

738. 4. âphnâ â phnâ gâũ moujâ mâ
739. aba uprânta logne nabhaeko strī jâtiharu ko garbha raheko samkâ dekhie
740. kâ gâũ ko dârale bhalâdmi haru nija âimâi lâi pakrī garbha raheko

741. ho hoina khāra khera garī garbha raheko sābita bhaemā logne pattā lagāī
 742. dekhāeko logne lāī timro garbha ho hoina svadhī ho bhanemā aina bamo
 743. jima kāma garī rakhne ra hoina bhanemā logne pattā na lāge samma āja
 744. dekhi pānī haṭaka garī rākhnu parcha.

Translation

- 738 - 744. 4. from now on, in case any girl in any village or district is suspected of having been pregnant in the absence of her husband, the *talukdar* and the *bhaladmis* of the village shall hold and interrogate the girl whether she is truly pregnant and in case she admits and attests the boy finding him out, the boy (so attested) shall be questioned whether the conception was caused by him or not, and in case the boy admits, action shall be taken according to the law, and in case he denies, the girl shall forthright be put out of her right to share (drinking) water for the period till the concerned boy is not found out.

15. Thini document (Agreement) of 1938 :

Text (lines 1 and 11 - 17)

1. ... 5 gāū madhye jhumsamā gāūkā hāmī tapasīl bamojīm ko tālukdāra bhalādmī raiti gaira āgye tīmī ṭhīnī gāū gaira
 11. ... apa ūprānta deṣī 2 gāūko sanātanlāī tapsīlmā leṣīyeko daphā daphā ko thīṭī baṃdeḷ ba
 12. mojīm mā rahī 2 gāūnā jasle jāljhel baṣeḍā garī leṣīyekai rīṭī thīṭī nāgī kāmkā j garcha so mānīs
 13. lāī tapsīlko daphā daphā mā leṣīyekai nīṭ asul ūpara garī līnu bujhāulā bhani tapsīl bamojīm ko hāmī jhuṃ
 14. sammā gāūko tālukdāra bhalādmī raiti gairako cīṭta bujhī hāmī manomāna ṣusīrājīle tapsīlmā leṣīyeko ā
 15. phnā āphnā nāmā s-hīchā pa garī thīṭīrīṭī baṃdeḷko kā gaj leṣī ṭhīnī gāū jīmā dī tarpha yo thīṭī baṃdeḷbamo
 16. jīmko kāgaj 1 prati nakal sārī ṭhīnī gāūko tālukdāra muṣīyā ṭhālu chopā bhalādmī raiti

gairako s-hīchāpa ga

17. rī hāmī jhumsammā gāū jīṃmā bujhī lī tarpha sāchī pharke paṭṭī mā leṣīyeko sadara

Translation

1. We, the *talukdars*, *bhaladmis* and subjects as listed below of the village of Jomsom of the Panchagaun group of villages do hereby write that ...

11 - 17. from now on, as for the traditions of the two villages, the customary regulations having been fixed as recorded in the clauses noted below, any person of the two villages, who by fabricating things and causing troubles, acts in violation of the rules written down, shall pay or be caused to pay a fine prescribed in the clauses below. So saying, we, as follows, the *talukdars*, *bhaladmis* as well as the subjects of the village of Jomsom, having been satisfied and of our own will and accord, have, putting our signature against our respective names, done the deed of customary regulations and as for the responsibility to hand it over to the village of Thini, one duplicate copy has been made of the (said) customary regulations document and having got it endorsed by the *talukdar*, Mukhiya, *thalu*, *chopa*, *bhaladmis* as well as the subjects formally received by us, the village of Jomsom, and as for the witnesses hereof (those) noted on the margin are confirmed all right.

16. Thini document (Agreement) of 1951 :

Text (lines : 1 - 7)

1. lesitam thāka adālata ilākā jīllā 5 gāū madhye jhumsambā gāū basne hāmī tapa
2. sīlbamojīṃ ko mānī saharu āge 1995 sāl jyeṣṭha 17 gate roja 2 kā baṃdej
3. kā yeṃ rāṣī tesmā kehī kurā ratalbadal garnu parne deṣīyekā le tapasīlkā daphā
4. daphā mā lesīyeko kurā hāmī ṭhīnī jhumsambā ko tapsīlkā bhalādmī
5. haru ko sallā bāṭa bāṃdeja banā ūna maṃjura bhai doharā kāgaj ṭhīnīkā muṣīyā
6. bhalādmī harubāṭa hāmī jhumsambālā ī dīne ra hāmī jhumsambākā bhalādmī harubāṭa ṭhīnī gāūmā s-hī

7. chāpa garī diñuṃ

Translation

1 - 7. We, the residents, as follows, of one of the 5 villages under the jurisdiction of the Thak Court of Law, Jomsom, do hereby write that whereas some changes have to be made in the Regulations made on Monday, the 17th of Jyestha, 1995 (1938 A.D.), and whereas we, the following *bhaladmis* of Jomsom, consulting among ourselves, have agreed to do the same (lit. make the regulations), we, the *bhaladmis* of Jomsom, do hereby put our signature on the copy of the agreement forwarded to us by the Mukhiyas and *bhaladmis* of Jomsom.

17. Ibid :Text (lines : 14 - 16)

14. sohī baṃdejbamo

15. jīṃ garnu bhanī hānī haruko nāma nāmasimā s-hichā pa garī tapāī ṭhīnīkā mu : saṃga

16. prasād smetkā bhalādami harulāi diñuṃ

Translation

14 - 16. asking to act according to the said bond, we do hereby hand over (this deed), with our respective signatures put against our respective names to Mukhiya Sanga Prasad and other *bhaladmis*.

18. Marpha document (Regulations) of 1933 :Text (lines : 149 - 153)

149. bālī janavārale ṣāī aramala garī pāu bhanī bhaṃna āye thorā thorā ṣāye

150. ko bhaye aramala bharāī dīnu pardaina dherai ṣāyeko bhaye ṣetdhanī le /4 paisā

151. rāṣana āye bālī ūpajani māseko aṃjāna garāī ṭhālu bhalādmi basī

152. 3 golā banāī parames'vara pukāī 1 golā jhīkī golā bāṭa āyeko a

153. r mala jhīkī balīko dhanīlāī bharāī dīnu

15

Translation

149 - 153. In case a submission is made for compensation for the damage of crops done by any animal by eating, no action shall be taken for making the amends, if (the quantity) so eaten is negligible. In case a considerable quantity has been eaten up, and the owner of the field turns up to deposit 4 paisa, the *thalus* and the *bhaladmis* sitting together shall, after an estimation is made of the (total) damage caused of the crop-produce, devise three balls (with desired indications), pick up any one of them praying God for help, and then drawing (the equal quantity of) compensation as indicated by the ball so picked up, get the amends made to the owner of the field.

19. Marpha document (Regulations) of 1957 :

Text (lines : 54 - 56)

54. 11. kohī vyaktīgat gharamā kala jhagaḍā bhaī māīta arthāt

55. sahyam gaī hālcha. tesmā 2/4 janā bhalādmīlāī mī

56. lāpatra garī deu bhaṃḍā ...

Translation

54 - 56. 11. in case (any girl), because of a quarrel in a private family, leaves (her home) to stay in her mother's place, and in case a couple of *bhaladmis* are requested to bring about a compromise, ...

20. Ibid :

Text (lines : 34 - 37)

34. 7. kāgani maṃdir muniko ṣeta tarphako nhamghyora 4 janā

35. bhalādmīle ṭaharā ye saṃmako yeti yariyā bhītrako

36. nhamghyora arthāt bhītrī kulo jasle nīkāldaina teslā

37. ī ru 4 kā darabāta nit līnu.

Translation

34 - 37. 7. As regards the Nhamghyor, that is, the inner canal, on the side of the farm-land

below the Kagani temple, whoever does not drain out the part of as much area as determined by the 4 *bhaladmis*, shall be fined at the rate of Rs. 4/-.

21. Jhong document (Agreement) of 1952 :

Text (lines : 6 - 8)

6. gharāyasamā jhagaḍā pari

7. amela bhai raheko mā hāmī ī 12 gau kā thiti bamojiṃ tapāī tapasīlmā

lekhieko paṃca bhalādami haru

8. bāṭa

Translation

6 - 8. As dissension has prevailed owing to the dispute in the village you, the following *pancha bhaladmis*, are to ... in accordance with the tradition of these 12 villages (Barhagau) ...

22. Ghasa document (Regulations) :

Text (lines : 549 - 550)

549. paṃca bhalādmī rākhe aṃna bāli aru sametmā aramal garna gai go

550. lā ṭipne mānisle moharu 1 tirnu parlā ṭhekadāralāī nadinu gālāī dinu

Translation

549 - 550. A grain dealer who holds a place for trading on grains by disturbing the grain-crops and others, shall have to pay Mohar Re 1/- in the presence of the *pancha bhaladmi*. Do not give the amount to the contracting agent, give it to the village.

23. Jhong document (Agreement) of 1952 :

Text : (lines : 54 - 58)

54. aghiko kāgaja pramāṇaharu ra

55. so milāpatra bamojiṃmā milnu bhani tapāī 12 gāukā gāu gāubāṭa cuniekā bhalādmī haru

56. le samjhānuhūdā hāmīharuko cīta bujhyo yo milāpatra bamojīmā milna hāmīharuko
khusī rājī
57. bhayeko hūdā abaprānta milāpatramā lekhiyakai behorā kāyema rākhi ghaḍibaḍī napāri
hāmī 2 tharī
58. basnechu ...

Translation

- 54 - 58. As you, the *bhaladmis* nominated (lit. elected) by the (component)
villages of Barhagaun suggested us to come to a reconciliation acting in
accordance with the provisions of the previous deeds and documents as well as the
reconciliation deed done in the past, we are now satisfied. We, being willing now
to come to a compromise in accordance with the deed of reconciliation, we shall
from now on keep to the provisions of the reconciliation deed and live peacefully
strictly according to it ...

24. Jhong document of 1953 :

Text (lines : 12 - 14 and 30 - 31)

12. śīṃ
13. ka gāiko bhanāi bhai jhagaḍā parirahe(ko) mā tapāi tapsīlmā leṣīyā kā paṃcāyat bhalā
dmī
+++
30. mī
31. lnu bhanī samjhānu hudā hāmī duvā tharako cīta bujhyo

Translation

- 12 - 13. ... in connection with the dispute going on, as a result of such a point contended
for in argument by the Khimka village, as you, the *panchayat bhaladmis*, listed
below,
+++
- 30 - 31. persuaded to come to peaceful terms, we, both of the parties, are satisfied

25. Marpha document (Regulations) of 1933 :Text : (lines : 283 - 285)

283. jyestha asāra mahīnāmā uvābālīko bīcāra

284. garī temekymā pancabalī gardā gāukā bhale ādamī bolāī bhāt mā

285. su rakasī šuvāmu

Translation :

283 - 285. Taking into consideration (the state of) *uva* crops in the months of Jyeshtha and Ashadh when the *panchabali* (sacrifice of five different animals) is offered at Temeku, see that the *bhaladmis* in the village are invited and treated with cooked rice, meat and alcoholic drinks.

+++ June 11, 1995