

Rituals of the Warrior *khūnd*¹

William Sax

In the upper Tons River basin in the Western Himalayas, at the border of Uttaranchal and Himachal Pradesh, the landscape is divided into several tiny kingdoms. The kings of these territories are not, however, humans. They are gods, who have both civil and criminal authority, and who rule from their temples and make their decisions known by means of their oracles. Peter Sutherland puts it nicely when he writes (this issue) that

In personal matters, *deotās* diagnose misfortune, heal sickness, welcome brides, bless first-born males, settle legal disputes, or mete out punishment in the form of *dosh*. In communal matters, *deotās* select new temple officials, formulate group policy, distribute grazing and irrigation rights, define territory, fix dates for festivals, issue invitations to other gods, engage in diplomatic relations, and formerly waged war with their magic. In ecological and cosmic matters, moreover, *deotās* control the weather (Nags in particular have power over rain), ensure the fertility of crops and flocks, protect against demonic disorder, maintain the presence of life-giving *śakti* in their domains, and predict the course of the coming year.

Each of these divine kingdoms is centered on the god's temple, from where he rules as a divine king. Two of these divine kings are famous from Hindu mythology: Karna and Duryodhana, villains of the great Hindu epic *Mahābhārata*. Although they were friends and allies in the epic, here they are in relations of perpetual rivalry with each other, and also with the third local ruler, the god Mahasu. To what extent can these tiny territorial/political/cultic units really be understood as "kingdoms"? Is this anything more than just an exotic metaphor? Elsewhere (Sax 2000, 2002) I have shown in detail how the language and metaphors associated with Karna (called "king Karna" or *rājā karaṇ* by his subjects), are thoroughly royal, and that his kingship is no metaphor, but rather a literal translation of local cultural understandings. In this chapter, I would like to go further and use traditional Indian political theory to argue that in these three territories, other constituent elements of a traditional Hindu "kingdom" are present as well.

¹ This research was supported by the German Research Council under the auspices of the Special Research Area (*Sonderforschungsbereich*) 619, "The Dynamics of Rituals." I would like to thank Gabar Singh Chauhan, Rajmohan Singh Rangad, and Bhuli Das "Dhaki" for all their help.

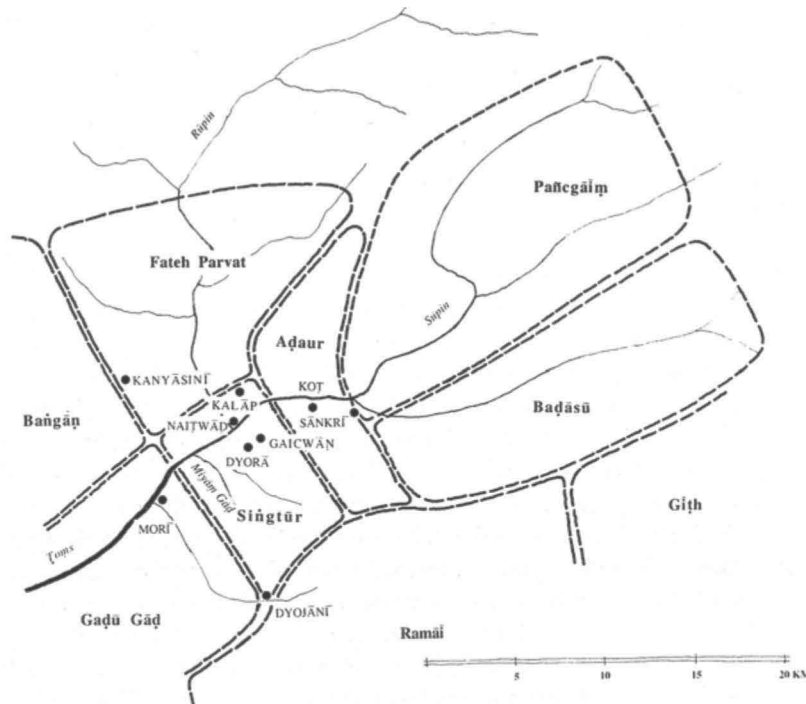


Fig. 1: Schematic map of the Upper Tons River basin.
(Drawing: N. Gutschow)

According to the most well-known ancient Indian political theorist, Kautilya the author of the Arthaśāstra, a kingdom has "seven limbs": king, country, minister, army, fortified town, treasure, and ally. If we look at the ritual-political structure of the upper Tons basin, we see that nearly all of these "limbs" are present. First is of course the king, who is the pivotal point of the system, as well as its conceptual centre and the source of sovereign authority. The three "divine kings" Karna, Duryodhana/Someshvara², and Mahasu each has his own territory or *deś*, the second of Kautilya's seven "limbs". These territories had (and still have) rather precise boundaries, and the god rules them from a central temple: the village of Dyora for King Karna, the village of Jakhol for Duryodhana/Someshvar, and the village of Hanol for Mahasu (see map).

² There is some controversy regarding the god's identity, even amongst his own subjects. It seems that he was formerly known as "Duryodhana," but is increasingly referred to as "Someshvara," a form of Shiva (Sax 2006).

These are analogous to the *pūrī* or "fortified town" in Kautilya's scheme; indeed, warfare and feuding were so endemic in this region that many temples, and most of the *bhaṇḍār* or storehouses regularly associated with them, were fortified (see fig. 2). They were built so that in times of war or feud, their defenders could lock the door and withdraw to the upper levels, where weapons were stored along with rocks that could be hurled on their enemies. The fourth of the seven limbs is the *mantrī* or minister, who clearly corresponds to the *vazīr* of these Western Himalayan divine kingdoms.³ Conzelmann and Berti show (this volume) that in the kingdoms of Mandi and Kullu, the human king acted as minister to the state god. In the upper Tons River Basin, as well as in the former kingdom of Bushahr discussed by Sutherland (this volume) the ruling god is also served by a *vazīr*, normally high-ranking Rajput, who has considerable authority. He manages the god's affairs, but is clearly subordinate to him.



Fig.2: Bhaṇḍār (Photo: W. Sax)

Vazīrs have often been politically powerful figures in the past – especially the *vazīrs* of Mahasu, the "divine king" with the largest territory – and they continue to hold important political office today. The current *vazīrs*

³ The Perso-Arabic word *vazīr* is equivalent to the Sanskrit term *mantri*, or advisor – the word used by Kautilya in his enumeration of the seven "limbs."

of Mahasu, Karna, and Duryodhana/Someshvara, are all involved in local electoral politics as well as temple administration, and much more could be said about them, but for reasons of space I focus instead on the fifth of Kautilya's seven "limbs" – the army (*senā*), and its rituals.

Traditionally, hostile relations between the tiny divine kingdoms of Karna, Duryodhana/Someshvara, and Mahasu were expressed primarily through sheep rustling and feuding. Parties of warriors from one god's territory would join together and steal the livestock of a rival's subjects, or capture their women, and such actions naturally provoked retaliation. Local ballads preserve the memory of such feuds, which often lasted for generations and were sometimes characterized by acts of great brutality, including the taking of enemy heads, which were then offered at the cult centre of the warrior clan (see below and Vidal, this volume).

The term for warrior is *khūnd*, which local persons normally derive from the Perso-Arabic word *khun*, or "blood." A *khūnd* is a warrior and a fighter, someone who is willing to spill blood – either his own, or that of his enemies – in defense of his divine king and territory. As a song from Bagan has it,

A *khūnd* has his teeth in his stomach

A *khūnd* steals sheep

a *khūnd* fights

and a *khūnd* abducts women (Zoller 1996)

Vidal, in his contribution to this volume, defines the *khūnd* as the "dominant caste" of the region, with a prominent martial ethic.⁴ Zoller has also emphasized the *khūnds'* identity as warriors (1996:3), and Sutherland stresses their function as defenders of territory, adding that the core meaning of the term *khūnd* is "warrior" (1998: 180-83).

The *khūnd* are clearly distinguished from the Rawats, also known as *Khas* Rajput.⁵ Traditionally the groups did not intermarry, although this restriction appears to be breaking down in recent years. The *Khas* Rawats eat only male rams, while *khūnd* eat female goats, as well as male and

⁴ See also Vidal (1982: 46).

⁵ In most parts of the Central and Western Himalaya, the term *khas* or *khas* is thought to refer to low-ranking, indigenous (as opposed to immigrant) Brahmans and Rajputs, and is therefore a term of opprobrium or even abuse (Sax, 1991). In the upper Tons River Basin however, the *khas* are the highest-ranking members of the *kṣatriya varṇa*, often thought to be immigrants, and they are followed by the *khūnd*. In Nepal, the term acquired a derogatory meaning well after the 18th century, but originally applied to all Arya immigrants, including the ruling dynasties of the Karnali basin (see Adhikary, 1988).

female sheep.⁶ Distinctions between the two groups are most clearly expressed in their general cultural style, what Bourdieu would call their *habitus*. Rawats are more refined and aristocratic, serving for example as literate administrators. This is why, without exception, the *vazīrs* of the reigning deities are drawn from amongst their ranks. *Khūnds* on the other hand are warriors: rough, fierce, quick to anger, always ready to fight and drink.

The martial style of the *khūnd* is closely associated with pastoralism, which was the main economic activity in traditional times, and remains very important for the contemporary economy. Much of the feuding between the various territories centered on pastoral disputes. Typical causes of feuds were competition for the rich, high-altitude pastures, the charging of a tax or fee to outsiders for the use of one's own pastures; and the refusal of outsiders to pay such a fee. One can go so far as to say that in this part of the world, "treasure" – the sixth of Kautilya's seven limbs – is reckoned in heads of livestock, especially sheep and goats.

Even today, when so much of the old system has changed, the fierce loyalty that people feel toward their regional god is very strong. To live in a particular territory is to be the subject of its god, and the enemy of his rival. One of the ways these allegiances and rivalries were expressed was in terms of feuding, which had an important ritual dimension. According to the local historian Bijlawan (2003: 48-50), the god would inform villagers that their rivals were grazing on his land. They would then send a group of four or five youths to hide at place where the enemy's flocks were expected to arrive, and hide there. People from other villages who worshiped the same god would cooperate, believing that otherwise he would become angry with them. This secret group, called *khopī*, would spy on the rivals for some time, living without fire, and eating simple foods such as dry-fried flour (*sattū*). Eventually they would return with information about the size of the flock, the numbers of shepherds and dogs, etc. Men would then be sent to every local village to announce that a sheep-rustling (*dhārā*) was about to occur. This summoning or information-giving was called *jaul*. Men would assemble at the god's temple, and reach the site of the *dhārā* during the night, because this is the time the goats stay with the goatherds. They would take their weapons with them – swords, axes, and later, guns – and go to the site of the *dhārā*, singing war-songs. Sometimes they took the god's image with them, at other times they would only take his drums. After a successful *dhārā* they would take the shepherds' clothes, rations, cooking pots, and the *bhāṇḍ*, which Bijlawan refers to as the "symbol" (*cinh*) of the god, a ritual object

⁶ I have been quite struck, during my several years' research in the area, at the degree to which Rawats express nausea at the very thought of eating female goats.

that protects the animals and the shepherds, preserves their health, and increases the number of animals. It is usually a bell, or a pot, or (more rarely) a ram. They would take the sheep and goats too, of course, then return to their own temple where they would sacrifice a few of them as an "auspicious sign" (*sagun*), then divide their flesh amongst themselves.

One of the richest sources for understanding such feuds is local folklore, and especially the *paṃwārā* ballads still sung on public occasions, many of which describe famous feuds from times past. These ballads are the very forms of collective memory. I recorded one such *paṃwārā*, called Tilotta, from the bard Daya Das of Kharsali Village near Jamnotri in September, 1997, and summarize it here. Of particular interest is the way the song describes the systematic destruction and desecration of ritual elements and spaces.

Two brothers named Nara and Biju went to the fair in Uttarkashi. They were very handsome, with blue eyes and "teeth that shone like birds' beaks". At the fair, they saw a beautiful young woman from the Sapatu clan of *khūnds*. They abducted her, in the process breaking her nosering, a symbol of marriage, and took her to the tiny "kingdom" (*rājya*) of Tilotta. When the girl's relatives found out about this, they gathered all the warriors (*sitalā*) from their clan, as well as those from all the neighboring land divisions. They prepared for war, and took the palanquin of their god Someshvar with them to their enemies' cult centre in Tilotta. (This cult centre is called a *thāt* - I discuss these *thāts* at length below). They played their war drums from across the valley in Gyamsu, and the people of Tilotta were terrified. They hid in nearby villages, and in the cattle sheds of their neighbors. When the avenging army reached Tilotta, they broke the chain on their temple storehouse, and they opened the secret chamber where the gods' treasures were stored. They destroyed the whole building and threw it in the river. They danced a victory dance, twirling their axes, and found the culprits, who confessed. They let their (low-caste) musicians stay in the temple in Tilotta, and even sacrificed a pig there! As the bard says, "there was so much destruction in the village that it was like mixing mustard seeds and millet!"

It is clear from this account, and many others, that feuding and inter-clan warfare involved numerous ritual elements. For example, sheep-rustling itself was ritualized, involving the warriors' assembly at the god's temple, the planning of the attack under the god's leadership (presumably speaking through his possessed oracle), a battle procession in which the god (or at least his drums) was brought on his palanquin, the desecration of the enemy's temple and other ritual objects, and a victory procession following a successful raid, culminating with the driving of the sheep around one's own temple. Just as the god's procession around or through his kingdom creates and reiterates his sovereignty, so the ritualized desecration of the enemy's temple confirms one's victory over him.

Next, I want to discuss in greater detail the rituals associated with the cult centres of these clans, which are called *thāt* (in the areas ruled by Karna and Duryodhana /Someshvar) or *jāgā* (in the areas ruled by Mahasu). Most large villages in Rawain have at least one *thāt*, which may be upwards of a meter high and fifteen meters long, and which normally take the form of a large platform made of hewn stones. Each *thāt* is associated with an aniconic goddess, the "mother of the *thāt*" (*thāt-mātā*) or "mother of the *jāgā*" (*jāgā-mātā*). These goddesses are extremely blood-thirsty and violent, and are thought of as the source of the warriors' martial power and energy. Formerly, the *khūnd* offered their enemies' heads there, thus performing a kind of ritual exchange: the sacrifice of an enemy's head in return for assistance in battle.

The *thāt*, their goddesses, and the associated rituals, can be compared with the territories, cult headquarters, and associated rituals of the "divine kingdoms". The processions of the divine king encompass the god's entire territory. The *thāts* however are specific to particular clans: the "mother-goddesses" of the clan cult centers (*thāt-mātā*) are worshiped by no one outside the clan, and are believed to be the ones who "make" the *khūnd* fight: they incite or inspire violence so that they may receive the bloody sacrifices of battle. This is clear from the *paṃwārā* entitled *Chandu*, which is remarkable for its similarity to the *Mahābhārata*. It tells the story of five brothers who successfully resisted the oppression of the neighboring, rival god Duryodhana after a long period of oppression. As the bard sings,

Call them the Kauravas and Pandavas:
they were defeated and died.
The two clans used to live peacefully
But now it's a war of the pastures!⁷

According to the ballad, an upland group associated with the Kauravas (the Bhungaratya clan in Duryodhan's territory) used to collect a "grazing tax" from a lowland group associated with the Pandavas (the Phandatya clan from Karna's territory). This went on for twelve years until one day, the Phandatya's clan goddess Nakuti⁸ inspired them to

⁷ *kaurav na bolū paṃḍāūm*
hanikyek bhānulo joddhā
tāmu na paḍe bhungarāṭhyā phaṃḍātyā
silauṃ māner kī yoddh

⁸ In the eighth year of the reign of the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan, his troops led by Najabat Khan, the Faujdar of the Kangra Hills, suffered a "shameful defeat" by Rani Karnawati, Queen Mother (Regent) of Garhwal from 1635-1640. She was

resist. According to the bard Bhuli Das, who recited this ballad to me, she "showed her form" by changing the atmosphere of the village, encouraging everyone to unite and resist the Kauravas. The Phandatya's women teased them, calling them cowards etc., so the five brothers brought their animals to the Kauravas' pastures, and grazed them clean! They even cut down the Kauravas' sacred tree! When the Kauravas' god Duryodhana/Someshvar found out about this, he was furious! He had been humiliated, and by a mere five brothers! So he sent his "army" of *khūnds* to rustle their sheep, but they were protected by their *thāt-mātā*, Nakuti. (When Bhuli Das recited this epic and explained it to me, he identified the goddess very closely with the *thāt*, sometimes even saying that it was "the *thāt*" itself that protected them.) And how did she do so? Here the ballad invokes an idea that is central to the entire complex of sheep rustling: that the timing of the attack is decisive, and must be very exact. The Bhungaratyas have surrounded their enemies in the middle of the night, and are waiting for the right moment to attack.

My high Nakuti *thāt* is beautiful
with its fence of Moru trees.

Oh my heroes of the Phandatya clan
your fighting dogs bark in the night!⁹

But just as the god Duryodhana/Someshvara commands the Bhungaratyas to attack the five brothers, their *thāt*-mother Nakuti realizes that something is happening, and gives energy to the youngest brother, who leaps up and shouts out my favorite line in this *paṁwārā*:

When the goat is killed,
the guests gather.

Wait, you hunchbacked hillbilly pigs–
My elder brother Bidhi is smoking his pipe!¹⁰

subsequently called "Nak-Kati Rani," that is, the queen who shamed (the enemy)" (literally, the queen who "cut noses") (Khanduri and Nautiyal 1997: 276).

⁹ ūcī na meri nakuṭi
morūn sobali bāḍ
āgūvāgo laḍe phaṇḍātyā
terī kūkurū kī aḍ

¹⁰ mārīn jab bākuṭī

This puts the Bhungaratyas completely off their timing, and in the ensuing melee, the five brothers manage to defeat their entire "army" by stabbing them in their backsides with sharpened bamboo spikes!

Here we can see clearly that the clan goddess, the *thāt-mata*, is completely identified with a particular shrine, that she is female, and associated with blood sacrifice, and that she provides the martial energy of the warriors. But her energy must be renewed from time to time, and this is done by periodic rituals, as well as by the offering of enemy heads. In February 2004, I traveled to the Upper Tons Basin and to neighboring regions of Himachal Pradesh to find out about more about these rituals. I was particularly fortunate in that one such *thāt* had recently been rebuilt and re-consecrated, so that I was able to get reliable descriptions of the associated rituals, even though I was unable to observe them personally.

The *thāt* in question is located in the village of Thangad, not far from Tyuni at the border of Uttaranchal and Himachal Pradesh. In this region, the term *jāgā* is used instead of *thāt*. Local *jāgās* consist of stone platforms, just as in the Upper Tons Basin, but here they are surmounted by a stone dwelling (see plate 3). This is also the case with other local *jāgās*, including the one associated with Dalip Singh, the antagonist in another famous local *paṃwārā*. The ritual functions of these stone dwellings are relatively clear (see below), but their origin is not. I suspect that they have developed out of the residences of early, deified clan founders, and Galey provides some support for this hypothesis (1990: 162), however in the absence of historical confirmation it remains highly speculative. In Thangad village, the *jāgā* had burned down ten or fifteen years earlier, but the local people decided to rebuild it. Feuding was a thing of the past, and the population of the village was steadily decreasing as young men left to gain an education and become teachers, doctors, dentists, and other kinds of professional. However the villagers still considered themselves *khūnd*, and wished to assert and preserve this identity by, among other things, rebuilding and re-consecrating their *jāgā*. It took about two years' intermittent labour to do so, and when the building was finally ready, they brought the ritual book.

uttārī ghālītī bheya
 thāmathāmi paḍya ṭṭyā suṅgaḍa
 bīdhī dādā tamākū khāṇ deya



Fig. 3: Thangad jāgā (Photo: W. Sax)

This book comes from the so-called *sāñcā* tradition, most likely a form of Kashmiri tantra that was imported to the area in the late medieval period. The manual itself is regarded as a very powerful object: people fear it, and only the officiating priest is allowed to read it or to see it. The rituals of consecration performed on the *jāgā* are very complicated, and space does not permit a detailed description of them. They are extremely bloody and violent, as befits rituals of the warrior *khūnd*, with fourteen animals including a pig being sacrificed. The animal sacrifices are combined with a fire sacrifice (*yajñā*) lasting for seven days, the priests of which must undertake a total fast. Interviews with local persons revealed that due to contemporary sensibilities (according to which orthodox Hindus should not sacrifice animals) there was some reluctance to combine animal sacrifice with a *yajñā*, even though this is thoroughly consistent with local (and indeed pan-Indian) traditions. But since the ritual was ultimately about the re-vitalization or re-empowerment of the *jāgā*, local people felt that they had to sacrifice animals. As one priest said to me in conversation, "How can there be energy (*śakti*) without animal sacrifice (*bali*)?" A similar situation had occurred three years before, in the re-consecration of a *thāt* in the newly-created Govind Wildlife Sanctuary in neighbouring Uttaranchal. Local people were very concerned that they might be arrested for sacrificing buffalo within the wildlife preserve, but

they did so despite their fears, because of the strong belief that such a ritual would be ineffective without animal sacrifice.

In all, fourteen animals were sacrificed in Thangad: one on each of the first seven days, and seven on the final day. The ritual, which focused on the fire sacrifice performed inside the *jāgā*, was attended not only by the Brahman priests, but also by local Rajputs and village headmen, all of whom brought weapons – swords, knives, shields, iron daggers, spears, arrows, and guns – and left them on the *jāgā*, outside the dwelling. Every day, after the fire sacrifice was completed, they would dance with their weapons and shoot their rifles into the air. Each man would shoot his gun several times while the large *dhol* drums were played. It must have made quite a noise – one can imagine the tumult, the energy, the sheer martial ferocity that was manifest at this time!

Traditionally, one had to take an enemy's head and offer it to the clan goddess on the final day. But "such things are not done anymore," and this created problems for the re-consecration. During the course of the ritual, the *jāgā* manifests by possessing someone, who then confirms the authenticity of the possession by whispering her "secret name" to one of the officiating priests. But when, by the third day of the ritual, the *jāgā* had still not been "born", it was widely believed that this was because they had not offered a human head. What should they do now? They had to find a substitute, and according to their understanding of the ritual, this substitute had to be from another place with its own *jāgā* – that is, from a rival clan. So they decided to rustle a goat from the clan centre of their former enemies, a group with whom they had continuously feuded and whose heads they had once taken. Nowadays things have changed, and they even have marriage relations with these former enemies, nevertheless they had not invited any of them to the ritual, for fear that someone might intentionally defile the fire sacrifice. A group of men left late at night, after a priest had told them the precise time to depart (note the parallels with sheep rustling as described above). They stayed in the forest, watching their enemies, and on the second night, they went to steal the goat. As one participant put it (I have underlined the English words he used),

They were re-building their *jāgā*, too. They had brought lots of wood for it – huge planks and beams. And they were all totally drunk! Completely down! It was our time, and we were looking down on all this confusion from above. And we thought, "How will we sneak in there when they are making so much noise?" Then something happened – it was the gift of god or whatever, but when the time comes then whatever must happen, happens. We went down, we were very afraid, and as soon as we opened the door, a huge goat came out! And we did as we were instructed – we grabbed it and put it on someone's back, but it was very big! One man carried it, and then a second, and then a third [...] It was late and

we were hungry. We hadn't eaten anything. Finally, with great difficulty, we brought it here to the square. And just as we arrived, the *jāgā* was born! She manifested herself in a young man. Then we sacrificed the goat. The first blow had to be struck by a man who had Rahu or Ketu in his horoscope; cruel planets (*krūḍ grahe*); hard planets (*sakt grahe*). Everyone got a portion of the goat – only a tiny portion, mind you – but everyone got something.

The consecration of the *jāgā* continued until the eve of the seventh and final day. Then they performed another secret ritual, in which three Brahmins and three *khūnd* left at midnight and went to a place at the top of the local mountain, from which the village of one of their traditional enemies could be seen. They took one of their own sacrificial goats and "hypnotized" it with mantras so that it could neither speak nor move. They then propped open its mouth with a stick of wood, cut off its head, and buried it with the open mouth facing the enemies' village. The significance of this was that the goat should "eat" or attack the enemies. I was told that "in the old days" they would have a different mantra for each place on the goat's body, and they would utter them all, and slice the goat with every mantra, so that the enemy would be wounded in those places. And the more the goat bleated, the more effective was the ritual. They performed a small fire sacrifice, and offered a number of extremely valuable things such as gold, silver, gems, precious herbs and coins, along with various poisons. All of these were buried at night, along with the goat. My informants told me that this was a kind of payment to the goat, for troubling the enemy.

At sunrise on the next day, the final day of the consecration ritual, they ritually "closed the road" to the burning ground by sacrificing a pig there. Next, the entire village was sealed with a ritual thread. First the *jāgā* itself was sealed by stringing the thread all around it, then an animal sacrifice was performed on the roof, so that the blood of the sacrificed goats poured down from the spouts on the corners. The thread was further strung from the central pit where the fire ritual is performed, in all the four directions. Bows, arrows, and other weapons were hung on it, along with particularly hard things such as pieces of millstone. Animal sacrifices were performed at each of the four "gates" to the village: like the sacrifices on the roof of the *jāgā*, these were intended to drive negative forces away from the village. According to one of the priests, the mantras that are recited at this time "say that no enemy or other harmful force should come from the direction where they are doing the *pūjā*." The sacrificed animals are buried with their mouths facing outward, again in order to defend the village. Everyone stays within the border made by the thread; no one may leave the village.

Conclusion

If we compare these rituals of the warrior *khūnd* with those of the divine rulers, we can see that they are quite different. Royal, kingly rituals such as those described by Conzelmann, Berti, Luchesi and Sutherland in this issue have to do with administration and diplomacy. They consist primarily of processions and of collective meetings. In the processions, the unity of the kingdom is represented and created, either by circumambulating it or by inviting the rulers of its constituent units to process to the "capital," thus showing their subordination to the divine ruler. The collective rituals – the *sānt* or *jāg* – are also performed for the welfare and prosperity of the kingdom as a whole. Here the gods travel from their various places to the center, and this is also a way of ritually defining and creating a unitary "kingdom".

The rituals of the warrior *khūnd* that I have discussed are also of two sorts, but they are different. One ritual complex relates to the abduction of livestock and women, the other to the periodic re-consecration of the clan cult centers. In the first case, the rituals are oriented both inward, toward the clan and its welfare, and outward, toward the "divine kingdom" as a whole. The rituals are directed "inward" to the extent that they involve the maintenance or increase of one's own flock and/or the protection of one's own pastures. One restricts other groups' access to one's traditional pastures, or demands a fee from them, and if this is not paid, one attacks them. Or, from the opposite perspective, fees are unfairly extorted or unreasonable claims are made on traditional grazing lands, and these are resisted. In either case, aggression involves the ritual elements listed at the beginning of this article: the assembly of warriors at the temple, the battle procession accompanied by drums and music, the ritual desecration of the enemy's temple and other sacred objects, and the victory procession culminating with the driving of the sheep around one's own temple. Significant here is the centrality of one's own temple and "divine king," under whose leadership the raids are carried out. This is the "outward" dimension of the ritual, showing that it is concerned not only with the welfare of the *khūnd*, but also with the territorial integrity of the god's "kingdom." After all, the *khūnd* are subjects of the god, so that any encroachment upon their lands is also an encroachment on the god's territory. To defend the *khūnds'* land is therefore to defend the god's territory.

The rituals of the *thāt/jāgā* are rather more clan-directed. Only the *khūnd* have a direct relationship with their clan-goddess, and her cult centres are sub-parts of the "divine kingdom." Those from outside the clan – especially former enemies – are not invited to participate in her rituals. Certainly the rituals benefit the kingdom indirectly, inasmuch as

they strengthen its warriors, but still they are directed primarily toward the *khūnd* themselves. They contrast with the royal rituals of the divine king, who embodies, as it were, the entire territory. In this sense, the warrior rituals, and especially those related to the *thāt/jāgā*, are subordinate to the rituals of the divine king. They relate to a smaller, subordinate piece of territory, while the divine king's rituals create and define the entire territory. But all parts of the kingdom, and their corresponding rituals, are organic and interdependent – and together they constitute the "seven limbs" of the Divine Kingdoms of the Western Himalayas.

References

- Adhikary, Surya Mani, *The Khasa Kingdom : A trans-Himalayan empire of the Middle Age*. New Delhi: Nirala Publ., 1997 [1st ed. 1988].
- Bijlawan, Dr. Radheshyam. 2003. *Madhya Himalaya Riyasat mem Gramin Janasangharsom ka Itihas (Riyasat Tehri Garhwal - Dhara and Dandak) (1815-1949)* [History of Village Warfare in a Central Himalayan Princely State (Rustling and Ceremonial Protest in the Princely State of Tehri Garhwal)] (1815-1949). Purola: Bijlawan Prakashan.
- Galey, Jean-Claude. 1990. "Reconsidering Kingship in India: An Ethnological Perspective". pp. 123-87 In *Kingship and the Kings*, edited by Jean-Claude Galey. Chur: Harwood. (Originally published in *History and Anthropology* 4 (2)).
- Khanduri, B. M. and Vinod Nautiyal (eds.). 1997. *Him Kanti: Archaeology, Art and History*. (Prof. K. P. Nautiyal Felicitation Volume). Delhi: Book India Publishing Company.
- Sax, William S. 1991. *Mountain Goddess: gender and politics in a Himalayan pilgrimage*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- 2000. "In Karna's Realm: an ontology of action". *Journal of Indian Philosophy* 28 (3): 295-324.
- 2002. *Dancing the Self: personhood and performance in the pandav lila of Garhwal*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- 2006. "A Divine Identity-Crisis", In *Ritual and Identity: Performative Practices as Effective Transformations of Social Reality?* edited by Köpping, Klaus-Peter, Bernhard Leistle and Michael Rudolph. Hamburg / Münster: LIT.
- Sutherland, Peter. 1998. *Travelling Gods and Government by Deity: an Ethnohistory of Power, Representation and Agency in West Himalayan Polity*. PhD dissertation, Oxford University.
- Vidal, Denis. 1982. *Le culte des divinités locales dans une région de l'Himachal Pradesh*. Thèse de Doctorat. Université de Paris X.

Zoller, Claus-Peter. 1996. *Heroic Ballads and the Biography of a Woman: On Coping With Conflicts in the Western Garhwal Himalayas*. Pak-German Research Project, Culture Area Karakorum, Scientific Studies 3.