THE GURUNG PRIEST AS BARD

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I The Origins of Priestly Knowledge

Accounts of religious specialists in the Himalayan area have often pointed to the non-literate nature of many of the traditions concerned. Macdonald, for instance, has written that, "l'activité du *jhãkri* s'appuie entièrement sur la tradition orale, orale dans le double sens qu'elle est transmise oralement et qu'elle n'est pas couchée par écrit" (1962, p. 109). But such accounts have tended to concentrate on the importance of involuntary vocational crises or initiatory trances in the lives of such specialists, rather than on examining the implications of these and other factors for the character of the learning which is sustained through these techniques.

With this in mind, it is reasonable to discriminate three cases. Firstly, there are those in which knowledge claimed by the specialist is said to derive from spiritual experiences and dreams. Thus Gorer quotes a Lepcha *padem* saying, "There is no need of a teacher for the work of Padem; the spirit will instruct before each ceremony as to what is needed in the way of sacrifices by means of dreams in which the spirit will be represented by Europeans or Kings of Sikkim and other States" (1938/1967, pp. 218-19). The Sunuwar *puimbo* and *ngiami* are stated by Fournier to become possessed by an evil forest spirit (*banjhãkri*) which teaches them "formules propitiatoires, *mantrā* et les techniques pour façonner (leur) tambour chamanique (*dhyãnro*)" (1974, p. 72). With these two cases belong the instances recorded by Hitchcock for the Magars (1966, pp. 28-9). It is also appropriate to include those Tibetan bards of whom Stein notes, "ceux qui chantent le *Gesar* sans avoir eu de maître sont seuls à bien chanter; il faut entendre qu'ils l'ont appris en état de rêve ou de ravissement" (1959, p. 332).

Secondly, there are those cases in which the spiritual experience or crisis is treated as a sign of aptitude to be followed or accompanied by arduous learning from a human master. Into this category fall the Tamang *bombo* and *lambu* described by Höfer (1974 b, p. 169, 1971, p. 147, 1981, pp. 26, 32, 36), the Lepcha *mun* studied by Gorer (op. cit. p. 220) and Siiger (1967 I, p. 165), and the pan-Nepalese *jhãkri* as exemplified in Macdonald's essay (1962, pp. 116-18, 128).

Finally, and bearing in mind Allen's cautionary note on those Thulung priests who "can acquire the capacity (for possession) simply as a further technique in

their repertoire" (1976, p. 126), there is the category of those in which there is neither initiatory possession nor trance state, whether before or after starting to learn. Into this category fall the Gurung officiants termed *poju* and *hlewri*.[1] These priests learn arduously from their teachers the spells *(ngo)* and recited narratives *(pé)* which comprise the substance of their ritual activities.

The reason for stressing these distinctions is that they point to problems of assessing the extent to which individual creativity on the part of the specialist is essential or contingent to his tradition. Höfer, for example, has stated on the one hand that the Tamang *bombo* "has a répertoire of certain ritual texts which he

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[1] The transcription adopted is based on Burton-Page (1955, p. 112 note 2), although grave and acute accents are used to differentiate intermediate vowels not distinguished by him there. Pignède writes *pucu* and *klihbrī* (1966, p. 35), Messerschmidt *pajyu* and *khepre* (1976 a, glossary pp. 143, 140 s.v.), Glover and others *pujyu'* or *pajyu'* and *khlxyebri* or *lxebbri* (1977, pp. 90b, 46b). The orthography adopted is a simplified system used here purely for the mechanical exercise of comparing distinct performances by priests from the same village; and though conscious of the need to present such texts in a form suitable for more detailed linguistic study, the author has not yet been able to transcribe from the tape-recording with the aid of a knowledgable priest willing to pause over each word in order to get the closest reasonable phonemic representation. The reading conventions are therefore at best crude; but they will serve the limited purposes of this paper. Vocalic and consonantal analyses are presented by Burdon-Page (1955, p. 112, note 2) and by Glover *et al*, (1977, pp. v-vii). The present orthography uses the following rough equivalences; where different from these linguists' conventions: *ts* [c], *ds* [j], *t* [t], *sh* [s], *ng* [G]; aspiration is marked by h after stops, and where this aspiration contrasts with breathiness on the vowel the letter is marked by a postvocalic h. Accentual stress and tones are left unmarked, because of the difficulties involved in working with recorded recitations rather than with controlled spoken articulations. Nasality is marked by the superscript tilde ~ over vowels. Pignède recognized eight vowels according to the scheme: i [i], e [e], è [ɛ], á [a], á [a], o [o], o [ɔ], u [u], (1966, p. 18). In attempting a phonemic analysis the present author likewise heard these or closely similar distinctions which were significantly distinguished by local speakers, although neither of the linguists who have worked on Gurung noted these vocalic contrasts as meaningful. As a non-linguist the author has decided to mark these phonetic differences even though they may not be phonemically significant within the language of the chanted recitations of the priests. The diacritics used are the French grave and acute accents, and the scheme adopted as a follows: e [ɛ], è [e], á [a], a [a], o [ɔ], o [o]. It is with much hesitation, therefore, that the Gurung words used in this article are presented by the author; and it is clear that a great deal of work remains to be done to take the study of the priestly recitations beyond this linguistically elementary stage. The present author has chosen not to try to combine Devanagari and Roman scripts; and his orthography must be regarded as a provisional attempt to represent the Siklis dialect subject to further refinement. Tones and accentual stress are unmarked.

learnt by heart at the time of his initiation" (1974 b, p. 171); but he goes on to reveal, on the other hand, that "There is a saying which compares the lama's work with that of the shaman and which runs in free translation as follows: 'The lama proceeds step by step i.e. following a prescribed liturgy, the *bombo* proceeds by his voice i.e. following spontaneous inspiration" (idem, p. 172). Likewise, Gorer gives an account of the *mun* Gongyop who "very easily falls into the sing–song rhythm of a Mun's invocation, often saying the same thing twice or four times in different words, rather after the fashion of the Hebrew psalmist. He uses onomatopoetic words a great deal, many of his own invention" (op. cit., p. 217); but he goes on to tell of the *mun's* myth of the origin of marriage which "is always repeated *verbatim*, though not necessarily to an audience, by the Sacrificer on the second day of the marriage feast" (idem, pp. 224–25). Similarly, the Sunuwar *naso* "is trained to memorize a great variety of propitiatory formulas or chants by repetitive mnemonic procedures" (Fournier, 1978, p. 168); and this officiant contrasts with the *puimbo* and *ngiami* who learn through gaining the experience of various specialists, sometimes from different places (Fournier, 1976, pp. 103–105). Finally, Macdonald suggests that, "Le *jhãkri* greffe sur des croyances préexistantes son intepretation, fruit de son experience, de sa formation personnelle. L'integration du client dans ce novel ensemble peut être et est souvent purement provisoire. Elle n'est definitive que lorsque le *jhãkri* transmet intégralement son enseignement a un .éléve, ce qui est un fait exceptionnel pour l'ensemble de la société" (1962, p. 128)

The argument of this paper is that it is necessary to examine the nature of oral performances by 'priestly bards' of these kinds in order to show, and to account for, the degree of individual creative liberty which they are permitted or encouraged to demonstrate. This approach provides a guide to characteristics of ritual activity which have been ignored by ethnologists looking for circumstantial accounts. It also provides a perspective on the role of 'possession' and 'trance' as reasons and justifications for the creative freedom of the officiant as a bard. Where spiritual inspiration is present, there the specialist may be expected to show greater creative variability between performances than his non-ecstatic counterpart, when certain other features are correlated with each type of case.

II The Soul (*plah*) and the Demon (*mō*)

The Gurung *poju* and *hlewri* do not claim to learn from inspiration, nor do they generally become entranced by spiritual contact in rites. Both kinds of priest learn by accompanying their masters when the latter perform, trying to listen and pick up the rapid flow of phrases, joining in where confident, faltering when the way is unsure and it is necessary for the teacher to reiterate the appropriate words.

The fact that no spiritual encounter is involved in this process is, it may be argued, intimately connected with the characteristics of the particular cosmological notions with which these officiants are principally concerned.

The *plah*, rendered here 'soul', is composite in that men possess nine and women seven; and it is recognised to be in the image of its owner. One or more of the *plah* may leave the body so defining the states of illness, dreaming, and death. The twitch in sleep or startled surprise is *plah lūwa* 'soul jerking' as the *plah* departs, hence the custom among Gurungs of placing the hands to the head while saying *shya'i* 'caught' so to hold someone's soul back if he is temporarily shocked. In illness and before departure from home for a long stay away, when the soul is deemed to have left the body, a frequently held rite is the *plagu lawa* 'making tame the soul'. At this event, the absent *plah* is retrieved for the beneficiary who also receives a feast and gifts from relatives. At death, when some time after the disposal of the corpse is held the three-day long *pwe* funeral, a central part of the rite is the *plah wiwa* 'summoning the soul' to receive a feast from those gathered at the home of the deceased whose soul is called. A much emphasised part of the same rite is the building of the *bla*, an image (*murti*) of the deceased which is inhabited briefly by the *plah*.[2] Together, the *plah* and the *bla* constitute the personal identity of the deceased. There is also a connection between the soul and both material prosperity *(yõ)* and long life *(tshe)*. Particularly when death has afflicted a household, the loss of this soul entails great expense incurred on behalf of the dead at his *pwe*; hence at a later date it is sometimes thought necessary to have performed the rite 'telling prosperity to come' *(yõ khówa)*. Comparably, when the priest is making tame the soul, he also aims to bring back prosperity upon the household hurt through illness.

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[2] Pignède asserted for the Mohoriya dialect that, "Le même mot *plah* est employé pour désigner la construction . . . car elle est, pour les vivants, l' âme du mort sous une forme concrète, lorsque l' âme errante du mort a été retrouvée par le prêtre et est venue habiter le *plah*" (1966, p. 348). The Siklis dialect upholds a verbal distinction between *plah* 'soul' and *bla* 'image of the dead', though this does not of course mean that they are not cognates. Stein (1957) has many interesting and pertinent remarks on the notions and terminology of souls in the Sino-Tibetan-Mongolian area. Comparative material of relevance is in Lessing (1951), for example. The term *pwe* means 'interruption, pause'. Messerschmidt and Pignède write it *pai* and *pae* respectively (1976a glossary s.v., 1966 index s.v. respectively), presumably because they have transliterated from Devanagari spelling by villagers; this leads Messerschmidt into some unnecessary speculation about the philology of the word (1976b, p. 216 note 14). Macdonald provides interesting comparative material on funerary rites in the region as a whole (1976/ 1975, pp. 153-56 note 48), and Pignède's account (1966, pp. 346-56) is generally sound although obscure in places.

The *mõ*, rendered here 'demon', is an impersonal aspect of the soul parted from it during the *pwe* funeral. This parting or separating (*pihwàwa—pihwa* 'peeling' plus *wàwa* 'throwing away') of the soul and the demon is the principal purpose of the long funeral rite. The soul is taken by narrative chanting to the land of the souls of men (*mi plah'e nasa*), situated to the North of the mountains and across the Marsyandi River. The demon, in contrast, is introduced to all the villages throughout the area inhabited by Gurungs and others, stretching from Thak Kholā through Manang, down the Marsyandi River, and across to the West as far as Ghandrung village. Each village or place named possesses a *genius loci*; and the naming of each place identifies also the deity dwelling there. These deities are invoked to accept among them the *mõ* demon of the dead. They are termed *shin mru* 'kings of the dead' ; but they are also termed *shyolto nolto*.[3] Both demons and the local deities of places are classed together as *shyõrawa se* 'things in the rivers' ; as such, they are also termed *tsẽ*. These beings are the chief source of harm for people.[4]

The means of harming of which these beings are capable consists in the stealing of souls, but also in the drinking of the blood of children. Thus the *mõ* is on the one hand a derivative of the soul at death, and on the other tends to cause harm by stealing the souls of the living. It is consistent with this notion of harm that the priest, in a cure by making tame the soul, journeys in search of the demon possessing the soul of the patient, negotiates with the demon by displaying his wisdom to satisfy the demon's requests for a show of knowledge, and returns home bringing the soul and prosperity with him. This journey, like all other priestly activities, is performed without trance or spiritual possession of

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3   These are echoed by Pignède, who refers to "*sildo* ou *sildo-naldo*: nom d' une divinité" (1966, p. 307), by Allen writing on the Thulung *tosi* shrines (1978a, p. 160), and by Höfer on the Tamang *sipda neda* (1971, p. 147, and 1981, p. 13). On the *mõ*, comparison is made by Höfer for the Tamang (1981, p. 23). The distinct beings define different aims of rites, and they also play a part in discriminating the two kinds of priest: like the Tamang *lámbu*, described by Höfer (1981, pp. 35-6), the *hlewri* acts on behalf of the whole village in sacrifices to the local deities of places; and the syllable *hle* may link him with *hle* meaning 'king', consistently with Höfer's remarks (ibid. footnote) and those of Allen (1976b, p. 523). But both *poju* and *hlewri* honour the local deities frequently in their *pé*; and the contrast between these priests is vague. In the *pwe*, the *hlewri* is in some ways more dramatically involved with the *mõ* demon of the deceased, the *poju* with the *plah* soul, than either is with the other aspect of the human being; but both priests officiate cooperatively.

4   The term *tsẽ* recalls Tamang *cen* (Höfer, 1981, p. 15) and also Tibetan *btsan* (Tucci, 1970/1980, p. 164).

the priest. Two points thus need to be made: on the one hand, the patient is not possessed by a spirit which requires exorcism; rather he has lost his soul (his own 'spirit') which is to be returned to its rightful owner. Secondly, the priest is not possessed by any exogenous spirit; his own breath (*só*) or, according to the varied opinion on this subject, his soul (*plah*) goes in the narrative on the journey recited.

The question arises of whether, given such ideas of harm and cure, the concept of 'spirit possession' is superfluous or, more strongly phrased, logically inconsistent. Höfer has suggested that, "To a certain extent, possession may be considered a logical alternative to the shamanistic journey to the Other World. (Both, possession and journey aim at a direct contact with the superhuman. While, in a journey, man goes to the gods, in a state of possession, the gods come to man — to put it in the simplest terms.)" (1974a, p· 162). Certainly it is possible to argue that the coherence of each scheme may, hypothetically, suggest that the one excludes the other. The shaking which elsewhere characterises the possessed officiant or sufferer so to indicate the presence of the spiritual, is, crudely speaking, transposed in the Gurung context to the shaking of a chicken, goat or sheep which thereby indicates the arrival of a soul or demon summoned appropriately. The shaking of a person, on the other hand, indicates not the arival of a possessing demon but the jerking of a soul about to depart. The harmful demon possesses not the person but his soul; and given this view, the idea of possession of the person appears irrelevant in this context. For these reasons, therefore, it is arguable that the patient is not possessed, nor the officiating priest, because the cosmological notions with which they are concerned make such a possibility superfluous. This does not mean that spiritual possession may not occur in circumstances other than those of loss of the soul; it does assert that loss of the soul, as a conception of harm, will tend to exclude spirit possession also harmfully construed; and this is an empirical question.

On the part of the priest, there is one important exception to the lack of spiritually induced trance. Once annually in winter, but also at the *pwe* funeral of a *poju* priest, it is necessary for the *poju* to honour his Master Deity, the originator of all priestly knowledge not only for the *poju* but also for the *hlewri* and *lama*. This Master Deity is called *chop*, *pwhel*, or *guru rimerache*, and principally takes the form of a deer although capable of turning into and emerging from any thing or being. The deity is honoured by making a large rice effigy of roughly pyramidal form, substantially larger than that depicted by Pignède (1966, plate XXIII: 64) and made from nine gallons (*pāthi*) of rice; it is decked with a goat's leg. The *poju* priests attending chant in unison some twelve *pé* narratives and finish by drumming and playing cymbals in honour of the god. Sometimes, apparently not

always, one priest shakes in the course of the drumming episode at the end; he is said to be 'touched' (*tswiwa* 'touching') by the deity, where the same verb is used of the animal shaking from the presence of a soul or demon summoned to the spot.

It is important to note that this occurs in only one rite, that in honour of the Master Deity, and that it does not occur while the priests are chanting. In the many other kinds of rite conducted by *poju* and *hlewri*, this phenomenon does not occur. The nearest analogy appears to be the case of the Lepcha *mun* 'possessed, twice annually according to Gorer (1938/1967, p. 220); but to translate *tswiwa* 'touching' by 'possessing' would do serious injustice to the subtlety of the notion at stake. The contrast is considerable between this account and the descriptions given by Gorer for the *mun* (idem, pp. 220-22), and Hitchcock for a specialist near the Bhuji River in West Nepal (1967, p. 156). Nor do the priestly chants show any evidence which would compare them with the Tamang *bombo* who, as Höfer has put it, "is not acting 'in the person' of his divine helpers but as an ally of them" (1974b, p. 176). For the Gurung priests, the discrimination between a person and either a harmful or a benevolent being is sustained and not compromised through the use of 'possession'. On the other hand, the idea of the soul and the demon in varying relationships to each other is central to the person and to his identity; and this arrangement of notions does not favour the concept of an exogenous spirit possessing somebody. From this it follows that the priest cannot justify creative innovation in his performances by referring to exogenous spiritual encounters.

III The Priest as Poet

Goody has remarked that, "the distinction between the role of composer and reciter relates to the manner in which they acquire their knowledge naturally or supernaturally, be copying or by inspiration, and hence to the cosmology itself; the body-soul dichotomy lies close to the heart of ideas of creativity" (1977, p. 121). The *poju* and *hlewri* strive to copy and to recite rather than to compose creatively; and in the soul or demon they do not find spiritual justification for novelty in their performances, although hypothetically they might look elsewhere. On this argument, the body-soul contrast is less important than the special discrimination between soul and demon which makes spiritually inspired performance appear peculiarly inapt.

That having been said, it is clear that both kinds of priest are specialists in oral 'literature'. Their rites consist in the reciting of *pé* 'examples, principles', which are narratives in verse or parallel prose, and in the muttering of *ngo* 'spells'[5].

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5   For meanings which have been attributed to this term may be consulted Pignède (1966, pp. 323-24), and comparably the Tibetan *dpe* discussed by Snellgrove (1967/1980, p. 20), Stein (1971, p. 504), and Macdonald (1966/1975, p. 147 note 21). It is often linked with the term *lu*, for which may be consulted Das (1902/1976, p. 1215a-b, s.v. *lugs*) and Höfer (1981, p. 69). Pignède's understanding of this word as 'song' is probably unsound.

This paper is chiefly concerned with the former, of which it was possible to collect dictated versions of sixty-three amounting to about 11,000 lines, and roughly fifty hours' of tape-recorded performances which would have been extremely hard to understand without the aid of the dictated versions. These all come from *poju* priests; and the quantity of *pé* collected from the *hlewri* is somewhat limited in comparison. The remarks which follow are therefore based upon the *poju's* chants.

For any particular rite, the number of *pé* chanted is specific and distinct rites are defined, at least in large part, by the various *pé* in which they consist. For example, 'making tame the soul' comprises thirteen distinctly named chants, whereas the rite 'making meat for the demon' (*mõ she lawa*), in which the priest summons a demon to receive offerings and compels it to depart, consists of thirty three recitations. In the latter case, the priest recites in company with other priests for about ten hours; and collectively they chant in the region of 25-30,000 words or 5,000 'metrical phrases' ('lines').

Since this is so, the techniques for studying an oral tradition are appropriate to a study of Gurung priestly rites, the more so because the priests claim to learn by memory and to recite *pé* as much as possible invariably on different occasions. Although this is largely the case, it is recognised that, lacking books from which to chant, they will not necessarily achieve exact repetition in distinct performances. More generally, Finnegan has pointed out that "even when themes and basic forms are very stable, verbal variability and originality in oral performance are extremely common, and almost certainly more typical than unchanging transmission, even though the extent of memorisation as against originality cannot be predicted in advance from some universal theory" (1977, p. 153).

While this is no doubt so, it has been suggested that ritual chanting will tend to be more stable than other kinds of performance. Thus Lord contrasts those, like the Yugoslav *guslar*, who are specialists in "composition *during* oral performance" with those who recite "sacred texts which must be preserved word for word" (1960, p. 5 and note 9). Some support for this comes from Phillips who concludes a study of the West Sumatran (Minangkabau) *sijobang* narrative with the view that, of the two categories "according to which oral poetry having an important ritual function (such as the Vedic hymns and Finnish oral epics) tends to be fixed in form, while poems performed for entertainment are relatively unstable, *sijobang* clearly belongs to the second category" (1981, p. 170)[6].

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6 For this scheme Phillips refers to Kiparsky, P., 'Oral poetry: some linguistic and typological considerations' in B. Stolz and R. Shannon, editors, *Oral literature and the formula*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press 1976. The present author has been unable to consult this article.

The argument expounded earlier suggests, however, that those specialists who derive their knowledge from spiritual inspiration or who justify their words in terms of spirit encounters possess *eo ipso* a justification for creative originality in their rites, whereas the priest who lacks this kind of reason should be treated distinctly. The classification 'ritual chanting' or 'sacred text' may not be so uniform as Lord and Phillips appear to accept: the degree of creative variability between performances needs to be assessed for the distinct kinds of officiant, so testing the hypothesis that there will be greater originality in the work of the inspired than in that of the non-ecstatic performer. It is unfortunate that ethnologists of the Himālaya who refer to specialists have not taken the opportunity to provide transcribed texts compared for stability and variation since these are necessary for comparison with the material to be presented below. It is possible, however, to point out certain characteristics of the *poju's* chanting which are consistent with the thesis argued so far; and this is the purpose of the remainder of this paper.

IV The Language of *pé*.

Gurung priestly chants are linguistically complicated to the extent that the recitative is generally not understood by any other tha then performers themselves. This is an observation made by Pignède (1966 pp. 294, 297), noting that the language of the *poju's* chants was relatively more intelligible than that of the *hlewri's*[7]. The existence of ritual languages has been reported elsewhere, for the Tamang by Höfer (1971, p. 148, 1981, pp. 38-9), for the Thakali by Gauchan and Vinding (1977, p. 104) for the Thulung-Rai by Allen (1975, p. 168, 1978 b, pp. 248-49), for the Sunuwar by Fournier (1976, p. 116) and perhaps also for the *jhãkri* described by Macdonald (1962, p. 127). In all these cases, the utterances of the officiant are set apart from colloquial speech by varying degrees of intelligibility, either by the use of terms from different dialects and languages, or by the presence of archaisms and kinds of vocablary which may have been devised especially for the occasions concerned.

In the case of the Gurung priests, this complexity is connected with the characteristic parallelisms of the verse which they intone. Parallelisms are a feature of oral poetry noted in many parts of the world, for instance in Toda songs of South India discussed by Emeneau (1966, p. 331), in early Chinese 'parallel prose' examined by Hightower (1959, *passim*), and in some Tibetan songs recorded by Francke (1901, pp. 330-33); and Allen has pointed to their importance for Thulung

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7 Pignède's view is corroborated by the evidence from Siklis, though the language of the two priests' *pé* is certainly very closely involved and the contrast asserted should not be over-stated. There are more obscurities in the *hlewri's* than in the *poju's* chants; but they are syntactically comparable.

ritual language (1978b, pp. 251-52). More generally, and in view of the difficulties of vocabulary observed, Fox has stated that, "all elaborate forms of parallelism possess dialect variants in their repertoire of poetic words. Language diversification is a process that parallelism exploits" (1974, p. 83).

The reasons for the existence of parallelism and its accompanying linguistic complexity are not easily isolated for generalisation to all cases. Phillips suggests that "Parallelism in *sijobang* ensures that the story proceeds at a leisurely pace and that much of it is stated twice in different words. In this way it probably does serve to counteract somewhat both the transiency of the performance and the problems of noise and inattention" (1981, p. 115); and he concludes that the aesthetic appeal of this feature "seems to lie in the variety of expression which it demands, rather than in the repetition of sense or structure" (idem, p. 116). These aspects may be important for the few Gurungs who understand what the priests recite, less so for the majority who do not.

The language of *pé* is such that novice priests must learn the chants without understanding them, following a principle noted for Tibetan priests by Snellgrove (1961, p. 119). The meaning of *pé* so learned tends to be acquired haphazardly, unless the pupil specifically requests his master to explicate the words. From this it follows that the pupil cannot freely compose with the language of the *pé* as if it were his own, since he does not acquire the meanings to be manipulated until he has learned the words *verbatim*.

A second constraint on the priest lies in the fact that the laity, with few exceptions, do not understand the chants. This means that the priest cannot play to his audience when performing. Lord argued that, "the essential of the occasion of singing that influences the form of the poetry is the variability and instability of the audience" (1960, p. 16); and Phillips has noted the subtle ways in which bard and listeners may influence each other (1981, p.169) and so the performance of the singer. The language peculiarities of the *pé* are idiosyncratic in ways which hinder or very largely eliminate this as a variable to be taken into account in the examination of the priestly chants.

A third, and extremely important constraint on the priest is the demand that he chant in the company of, and in unison with, other priests of the same kind. Although minor rites are usually performed by one priest alone, he may yet be accompanied by a pupil; and in larger rites, such as 'making meat for the demon' or the *pwe* funeral, priests almost always recite in harmony with others. In his study *Heroic Poetry*, Bowra observes that, "This habit of singing songs with two bards is certainly not usual, but it shows that in certain circumstances improvisation may give place to more careful preparation" (1952, p. 442). The careful preparation of

the *poju* and *hlewri* consists in the more or less careful learning by memory of the *pé* to be recited, rather than the learning of the "techniques of composition" on which Lord placed great emphasis (1960, p. 24). Were each priest given free reign to improvise or to perform creatively, then confusion would result.

These three constraints, together with the nature of the soul and the demon outlined earlier, correlate with the abscence of spiritual inspiration of the priestly bard. There is a fair degree of coherence, if not of logical necessity, in this scheme; and it is appropriate to give added weight to the argument by presenting a transcribed text of one *pé* followed by a detailed comparison with performances by the same priests on different occasions and by different priests.

V The *pé* of Sirkulami, Leũrati, and Porulapwe

The text presented below was transcribed from a recording of the rite 'making meat for the demon' performed by P.S. and Y.B.B. in November 1980. The 'lines' correspond to metrical phrases defined by a falling cadence marking the end of such phrases or groups of phrases, and also by the rhythm and intonation which distinguish phrases before the final cadence and therefore internally. Although somewhat crude, this method shows clearly the various kinds of parallelism characteristic of *pé*. This version is version 'A'; and in the analysis following, it is compared with version 'B', performed by H.P. and M.P. during a different kind of rite some days earlier in the same village, and with version 'C' by P.S., M.P., and S.P.B. performing nearly one year before in 'making meat for the demon'.

The *pé* tells of little sister Sirkulami, her brother Leũrati, and their father Pórulapwé. Leũrati is unruly and will not receive his father's bequest of priestly knowledge by learning from him and accepting the paraphernalia which rightfully belongs to a *poju*. Instead, he spends his time hunting, shooting and playing at sports. When Pórulapwé is about to die, Sirkulami sends a message to her brother telling him to return to inherit his due; but he returns only after Pórulapwé's demise. Leũrati demands his inheritance from Sirkulami, who has received it, and the two compete for the paraphernalia in a contest. Sirkulami defeats her brother whom she kills, taking the parts of his body up to Moon and Sun. Leaving them there, she journeys about the priestly livings and returns to the Moon and the Sun in the form of a cat. She retrieves the parts of Leũrati's body and, changing into a vulture or bird of prey, swoops down on medicine being prepared by certain priests for the specific purpose of bringing Leũrati back to life. Sirkulami then puts back the parts of Leũrati's body and revivifies him with the medicine. All is now back to normal.[8]

8   Local opinion stresses how the girl defeats not only Leũrati but also the other priests whose medicines she steals. The legend is widely present in Gurung

Notes to the Gurung text are listed separately from the footnotes. These textual notes are confined to obscurities of language which P.S., the principal *poju* and most knowledgeable informant, was unable to clarify. The dictionary of Gurung prepared by Glover and others (1977) is of little use in justifying the renderings given in English, and it is unfortunately not possible to attach a glossary here.

1   tso'iye hlemai péda luda sõji sheko sume[1]
tso'iye hlemai péda luda sõji shemaku
rime chyõ sirkulami myüme chyõ leürati póba pórula pwémai
péda luda sõji sheko sume
poba pwélurupwēlà[2]

1   Starting to tell the *péda-luda* of the kings of Tso
When telling the *péda-luda* of the kings of Tso
Starting to tell the *péda-luda* of little sister Sirkulami,
        little brother Leürati, and father Pórulapwé
Father Pórulapwé

5   rime chyõ sirkulami ri nariló
myüme chyõ leürati rinariló
tsa myüme chyõ leürati na
khi apa'i ade àkīna
apa'i bide àkīna

5   Looked after one little sister Sirkulami
Looked after one little brother Leürati
That little brother Leürati
Did not take his father's property
Did not take father's wealth

country, versions being recorded by Pignède in Mohoriya (1966, p. 296) and by Messerschmidt in Lamjung District (1976b, p. 202). It is used to justify the wearing by a young priest, at the *pwe thewa* 'great interruption' funeral of a *poju*, of a red gown usually worn by women; and it is mentioned to indicate that there was once a woman priest. Leürati is a recalcitrant son (*to bishi àngiwa* 'refusing whatever one says'), and the same name is applied in another *pé* to a similar character. The legend is clearly a case of 'dismemberment'; but it appears to have little to do with what Allen has seen as "the relationship between myths and concepts using the bodies of supernatural beings to express territorial unity and those using such bodies to express genetic or ethnic unity" (1978a, p. 163). The echoes of myths from the far North are extremely vivid here; any apparent similarity with Allen's material may lie more in the mind of the ethnologist than in the genesis of these narratives.

10 apa'i ngorulo màrulo siraludi àkina[3]
ta hyerayé pharadi yashi
oyela chyolo preme thurodi honashi
taladi honoshi
adedé honashi

10 Did not take father's spells, medicines and things
When (he) had gone up to the highlands for deer
When (he) had gone to play the shot-put with distant companions
When (he) had gone to play at archery
When (he) had gone to play in contests

15 rime chyã sirkulamime
ngi apa'i pwali prisõ apa'i to tõdè ki yulushi[4]
apa'i mru tõdè ki yulushi
apa'i ade ki riló
apa'i bide ki riló

15. Little sister Sirkulami (said)
When you have come down to our father's clans' lands
When you have come down to father's kings' lands
Ask for father's property !
Ask for father's wealth !

20 apa'i ngorulo màrulo siraludi ki riló
apa póba pórulopwéna ti shyõ shyõna shyokhadsé
mwai shyõ shyõna shyõkhadsé
nàyi rudsu kwoye ngyosho shima male sóme male sedsé tidsé
        nidsé sadsé nékhadsé
ngyo apa'i adedé kîyu ó

20. Ask for father's spells, medicines and things !
Father Pórulapwé has become old old old
Has become old old old
Has become ill deathly, lively, sickening, recovering
Come down to take our father's property !

25 apa'i bidedé kîyu o
apa'i ngorulo màrulo siraludi kîyu õ
e myûme chyõ leûrati ó
rime chyõ sirakulamidi thóye pritéya labridsé[5]
saraki rómeya labridsé

25. Come down to take father's wealth !
    Come down to take father's spells, medicines and things !
    O Little brother Leũrati !
    Little sister Sirkulami had (that) message sent for him
    Had (that) word taken for him

30 *apa póba pórupwéna ti shyõ shyõna shyõyadsé*
    mwai shyõ shyõna shyõyadsé
    nãyi rudsu kwoye ngyosho shima male sóma malé sedsé tidsé
            nidsé sadsé néyadsé
    rime chyõ sirakulamido sõyã puye kwaisõ mela karape nosõ
            yàbyõ tẽnadsé[6]
    hubyõ wànàdsé

30. Father Pórulapwé went old old old
    Went old old old
    Went ill deathly, lively, recovering, sickening
    Little sister Sirkulami cast him away in a coffin at the
            crossing of ways
    Cast him away

35 *rime chyõ sirakulamido sõyà puye kwaisõ mela karape nosõ*
            yàbyõ tẽnãbwe lisõ
    hubyõ wànàbwe lisõ
    tsa myũme chyõ leũratiya peyudsé
    ngi apa'i ade nga kĩmõ
    apa'i bide nga kĩmõ

35. After little sister Sirkulami had cast him away in a coffin—
            at the crossing of ways
    After (she) had cast him away
    That little brother Leũrati arrived down
    I shall take our father's property
    I shall take father's wealth

40 *apa'i ngorulo màrulo siraludi nga kĩmõ*
    e rime chyõ sirakulami ó
    ngyo apa póba pórulopwéna ti shyõ shyõna shyõkhamangyere
    mwai shyõ shyõna shyõkhamangyere
    nàyi rudsu kwoya ngyosho shima male soma màle sedsé tidsé
            nidsé sadsé nékhamangyere

40. I shall take father's spells, medicines and things
    O little sister Sirkulami !
    When our father Pórulapwé was becoming old old old
    When (he) was becoming old old old
    When (he) was becoming ill, deathly, lively, recovering, sickening

45 ngadi thóye pritẽya labrilama
    soroki rómeya labrilago
    e myũme chyõ leũrati õ
    ngi apa póba pórupwéna ti shyõ shyõna shyõyadsé
    mwai shyõ shyõna shyoyadsé

45. I had (that) message sent for (you)
    Had (that) word taken for (you)
    O little brother Leũrati !
    Our father Pórulapwé went old old old
    Went old old old

50 nàyi rudsu kwoye ngyosho shima male sóma mal sedsé tiedsé
            nidsé sadsé névadsé
    ngami sõyà puye kwaisõ mela karape nosõ yàbyõ tẽnàdsé
    hubyõ wànàdsé
    e myũme chyõ leũrati ó
    apa'i tsami nga ngyengye

50. Went ill deathly, lively, recovering, sickening
    It was I who cast him away in a coffin at the crossing of ways
    Cast him away
    O little brother Leũrati !
    It is I who am father's son

55 apa'i kradsepó-madsepó pana-tsana lade-tarawa yówa-lewa
            ngardõ-ngashi chivama ngagadi thóngye
    e rime chyõ sirakulami ó
    ama'i tsami ki ngyengye
    ama'i kwẽrasa thórisa rẽshisa nabi kyera póga-teshima
            kigadi thóngye
    e rime chyõ sirakulami ó

55. Father's feather head-dress, long-haired hat, leather belt of
   bells, drum and cymbals, I shall receive
O little sister Sirkulami !
It is you who are mother's daughter
Mother's loom, stout loom-holding poles, weave-setting poles,
   'ear'-rod, closing-bar and spreading-pin you will receive
O little sister Sirkulami !

60 *ngi apa'i kradsepó-madsepó pana-tsana lade-tarawa yówa-lewa*
   ngardõ-ngashi chivama tsuradi nóyu
 e rime chyõ sirakulami ó
 ngyo adedé hlõlé
 bidedé hlõlé
 ngorulo màrulo siraludi hlõlé

60. Bring down here our father's feather head-dress, long-haired hat—
   leather belt of bells, drum and cymbals:
O little sister Sirkulami !
Let us play for our property !
Let us play for the wealth !
Let us play for the spells, medicines and things !

65 *e rime chyõ sirakulami ó*
 rime chyõ sirakulami myũme chyõ leũratine
 kyemai adedé hlõwaka
 bidedé hlõwaka
 ngorulo màrulo siraludi hlõwaka

65. O little sister Sirkulami !
Little sister Sirkulami and little brother Leũrati
They play for the property
Play for the wealth
Play for the spells, medicines and things

70 *myũme chyõ leũratina kwodsé karata tsora tenuka tẽyudsé*
 rime chyõ sirakulamina thóri rẽshi tsora tenuka tẽyudsé
 myũme chyõ leũratina morogyõ puruba tsora tenuka tẽyudsé
 rime chyõ sirakulamina nabi kyera póga-teshi tsora tenuka
   tẽyudsé
 myũme chyõ leũratina tali ade tsora tenuka tẽyudsé

70. Little brother Leũrati set down and stood on the points of a
        broad knife and a small knife
   Little sister Sirkulami set down and stood on the points of a
        stout weave-holding pole and weave-setting pole
   Little brother Leũrati set down and stood on the points of a
        bamboo pole and a wooden stake
   Little sister Sirkulami set down and stood on the points of
        an 'ear'- rod, closing-bar and spreading-pin
   Little brother Leũrati set down and stood on the point of a bow

75 rime chyõ sirakulamina kodu chyudu tsora tenuka tẽyudsé
    myũme chyõ leũratina taye tsora tenuka tẽyudsé
    khina ta mi kyulono makana
    pri mi kyulono makana
    rime chyõ sirakulamina taye tsora tenuka tẽyudsé

75. Little sister Sirkulami set down and stood on the point of
        a water jug
   Little brother Leũrati set down and stood on the point of a
        needle
   He could not pass through the needle's eye
   Could not pass through the needle's eye
   Little sister Sirkulami set down and stood on the point of a
        needle

80 khina ta midi kyulushi
    pri midi kyulushi
    myũme chyõ leũratina rime chyõ sirakulamidi marasõ hlolo
        nónó lawàdsé[7]
    mrisó hlolo nónó lawàdsé
    tsa myũme chyõ leũratiye tĩdsu hlodsudi tiyeshi

80. When she had passed through the needle's eye
   Having passed through the needle's eye
   Little sister Sirkulami killed little brother Leũrati
   Killed
   Having extracted the heart and lungs of that little brother
        Leũrati

85 khaidsu ngidsudi tiyeshi
krodsu krõdsudi tiyeshi
ridsu shedsudi tiyeshi
tidsu mwaidsudi tiyeshi
alaye kwãida nora yelatsadi tsõshi

85. Having extracted the kidneys and liver
Having extracted the bowels
Having extracted the bones and flesh
Having extracted the skin and hair
Having put (them) inside her gown

90 yulutsadi tsõshi
ta murubwe tõne murubweyé shyõra
kãulo-kume marabaye tsõra
shili-ngɩme mribaye tsõra
ta mari piri nora tsõtẽdsé

90. Having put them (there)
Up in the village of the sky stream of the sky
In the nest of Moon-Nine
In the nest of Sun-Seven
Put them there inside a golden box

95 mwiye piri nora tsõtẽdsé
mrawa tõtẽdsé
liwa tẽnadsé
kawa utẽdsé
pelaka plitẽdsé

95. Put them inside a silver box
Set closed the door
Set down the ladder
Set over the lid
Set across the bar

100 tsu tsa àrabwe nóra sõpliru yashi[8]
myũ àrabwe rina õdara chiyéshi
khina shyàjó lojó nojõ chyójó yeda yeji korawara honudsé
na tiro takhadsé
na ngiro takhadsé

100. This woman without a son having gone away alone
     Girl without a man having left secretly
     She went to journey about the priestly livings East, South,
              West, North,
     One day passed
     Two days passed

105   na sõro takhadsé
     na pliro takhadsé
     na ngara takhadsé
     na ngiro takhadsé
     na kuro takhadsé

105. Three days passed
     Four days passed
     Five days passed
     Seven days passed
     Nine days passed

110   tala na ngi na kuro mangyere
     tsu tsa àrabwe nóra sõpliru yaléya[9]
     myũ àrabwe rina õdara chiléya
     khina kàyera yerany yatokhadsé
     chyayera yerana yatokhadsé

110 When it was seven and nine days
     This woman without a son going alone
     Girl without a man leaving secretly
     She set off coming back kàyera-yerana
     Set off coming back chyayera-yerana

115   ta murubwe tõne murubweyé shyõra
     tsa kãula-kume marabayé tsõra
     shili-ngime mribayé tsõra
     khina ngyaũ ngyaũga rakhadsé
     ngyaũ ngyaũga rakhadsé

115 Up in the village of the sky stream of the sky
     To the nest of that Moon-Nine
     To the nest of Sun-Seven
     She came miaowing *ngyaũ-ngyaũ*
     Came miaowing *ngyaũ-ngyaũ*

120 au she nóra khadsé kãuloye-kume ó
ru nóra khadsé shiliye-ngime ó
tsa myŭme chyõ leŭratiye tidsu hlodsu khaidsu ngidsu
        krodsu krõdsu yeshi tẽlo
yishi tẽlo
kye kãulu-ku shili-ngime sudamaga

120 Came to carry away the flesh O Moon-Nine
Came to carry away the bones O Sun-Seven
Where did (you) put that little brother Leŭrati's heart
        and lungs, kidneys and liver, bowels
Where did (you) put them
She asked Moon-Nine and Sun-Seven

125 ngidi mari piri nora tsõtẽshimu
mwiye piri nora tsõtẽshimu
mrako tótẽmó
liko plitẽmó
kago utẽmó

125 We have put (them) inside a golden box
Have put (them) inside a silver box
Have set closed the door
Have set down the ladder
Have set over the lid

130 pelaka plitẽmó
kãula-kume pyóhye towara yabwe lisõ
shili-ngime kwẽra towara yabwe lisõ
mra tõma khadsé tõkhadsé
li kréma tsẽdse krékhadsé

130 Have set across the bar
After Moon-Nine had gone to weave a mat
After Sun-Seven had gone to weave a cloth
Came opening the door opened the door
Pulled climbing the ladder climbed the ladder

135 ta mari piri ka tishi póshi
mwiye piri ka thódi póshi
tsa myũme chyõ leũratiye tĩdsu hlodsu khaidsu ngidsu krodsu
       krõdsu ridsu shedsu tĩdsu mwaidsudi tishi
ki kwãida nora yelatsadi tsõshi
yulutsadi tsõshi

135 Having removed and taken the lid of the golden box
    Having held and taken the lid of the silver box
    Having removed the heart and lungs, kidneys and liver, bowels,
        bones and flesh, skin and hair of that little brother
        Leũrati
    Having put them inside her gown
    Having put them (there)

140 ta murubwe tõne murubweyé shyõra
ta kãulo-kume marabayé tsõra
shili-ngime mribayé tsõra
khina chya puru nobe kade tsuridsé[10]
puru nobe pede tsuridsé

140 Up in the village of the sky stream of the sky
    In the nest of Moon-Nine
    In the nest of Sun-Seven
    She changed into a bird of prey
    Changed into a bird of prey

145 mara lama guru tso'iye guru pwéga guru urgyena guru gyà nowa
    guru tse tawa gurumai
kyemi mãiye mãina arule mãi kishi
mãiye mãina karule mãi kishi
mãiye mãina kukule mãi kishi
mãiye mãina tabu mãi kishi

145 Down below the Lama Master, Tsogi Master, Tibetan Master,
        Urgyena Master, Poju Master and Hlewri Master
    They having brought medicine medicine Arule medicine
    Having brought medicine medicine Karule medicine
    Having brought medicine medicine Kukule medicine
    Having brought medicine medicine Tabu medicine

150 somera tsõbwe mãi ngodi prulushi
romera tsõbwe mãi ngodi prulushi
kamera tsõbwe mãi ngòdi prulushi
ki murubwe tõne murubweyé shyõra
tsa kãulo-knme marabaye tsõra

150 Having concocted breath-giving bespelled medicine
Having concocted blood-giving bespelled medicine
Having concocted warmth-giving bespelled medicine
There in the village of the sky stream of the sky
In the nest of that Moon-Nine

155 shili-ngime mribaye tsõra
tara chya puru nobe àkwodsé takhashimu[11]
puru nobe àkwodsé takhashimu
kyo somera tsõbwe mãi ngodi chin ó
romera tsobwe mãi ngodi chin ó

155 In the nest of Sun-Seven
Up there (she) has mysteriously become a bird of prey
Has mysteriously become a bird of prey
O hide the breath-giving bespelled medicine !
O hide the blood-giving bespelled medicine !

160 kamera tsõbwe mãi ngodi chin ó
kaye lama guru tso' iye guru pwéma guru urgyena guru
gyà nowa guru tse nowa gurumana
kyema somera tsõbwe mãi ngo chilodi makana
romera tsõbwe mãi ngo chilodi makana
kamera tsõbwe mãi ngo chilodi makana

160 O hide the warmth-giving bespelled medicine !
The Lama Master, Tsogi Master, Tibetan Master, Urgyena
Master, Poju Master and Hlewri Master
They could not hide the breath-giving bespelled medicine
Could not hide the blood-giving bespelled medicine
Could not hide the warmth-giving bespelled medicine

165   khina murubwe tõne murubweyé shyõra
kãulo-kume marabaye tsõdsé
shili-ngime mribaye tsõdsé
khina kàyera yerana yapuru yudsé[12]
chyayera yerana yapuru yushi

165   In the village of the sky stream of the sky
From the nest of Moon-Nine
From the nest of Sun-Seven
She swooped down kàyera-yerana
Swooped down chyayera-yerana

170   khina kàyera yerana yatopo' iyadsé
chyayera yerana yatopo' iyadsé
lama guru tso' iye guru pwéma guru urgyena guru gyà
*   nowa guru tse nowa gurumana*
kyema sabu pwbõwe krolu tsõridsé
mabu pwõbwe krolu tsõridsé

170   Swooping she snatched away (the medicines)
Swooping snatched away
The Lama Master, Tsogi Master, Tibetan Master, Urgyena
        Master, Poju Master and Hlewri Master
They wept speaking to the ground
Wept speaking to the sky

175   na ribwe ru labwe krolu tsõridsé
tsa tsambwe kri labwe krolu tsõridsé
gyà prebwe ne labwe krolu tsõridsé[13]
rime chyõ sirakulamime myûme chyõ leûratiye chyedele
*   tone shyo nane dhira tsukhadsé*
rime chyõ sirakulamidi mãiye mãina arule mãi kishi

175   Wept as dusk fell
Wept as darkness came
Wept as (they) walked the path
Little sister Sirkulami came back to the village and stream,
        dwelling and house of little brother Leûrati
Little sister Sirkulami having brought medicine medicine
        Arule medicine

180   mãiye mãina karule mãi kishi
mãiye mãina kukule mãi kishi
mãiye mãina tabu mãi kishi
samera tsõbwe mãi ngodi prulushi
romera tsõbwe mãi ngodi prulushi

180   Having brought medicine medicine Karule medicine
Having brought medicine medicine Kukule medicine
Having brought medicine medicine Tabu medicine
Having concocted the breath-giving bespelled medicine
Having concocted blood-giving bespelled medicine

185   kamera tsõbwe mãi ngodi prulushi
myũme chyõ leũratiye kwodaye nosõ
tĩdsu hlodsudi pyànimó
khaidsu ngidsudi pyànimó
krodsu krõdsudi pyànimó

185   Having concocted warmth-giving bespelled medicine
Inside the body of little brother Leũrati
(She) went to put the heart and lungs
Went to put the kidneys and liver
Went to put the bowels

190   ridsu shedsudi pyànimó
tidsu mwaidsudi pyànimó
mwaids' àyowa kõdsidi rulushi
kods' àyowa tĩdsu hlodsudi rulushi
hlods' àyowa khaidsu ngidsudi rulushi

190   Went to put the bones and flesh
Went to put the skin and hair
The hair insufficient, having added spleen
The spleen insufficient, having added heart and lungs
The lungs insufficient, having added kidneys and liver

195   ngids' a– . . . |TAPE END|
. . . |TAPE START| . . .   –adi sõshi[14]
koye nena tĩra hloradi sõshi
hloye nena khaira ngiradi sõshi
ngiye nena krora kroradi sõshi

195   The liver in– ... /TAPE END/
      ... /TAPE START/ ... having completed the ...
      From half the spleen having completed the heart and lungs
      From half the lungs having completed the kidneys and liver
      From half the liver having completed the bowels

200   kroye nena rira sheradi sõshi
      sheye nena tira mwairadi sõshi
      mwaiye nena shashera noye shado no àru
      ngishera none ngido to àru[15]
      tode po' i àru

200   From half the bowels having completed the bones and flesh
      From half the flesh having completed the skin and hair
      From half the hair the broken was made faultless
      The broken was made perfect
      There was noone missing from the clansmen

205   nodse po'i àru
      àdse po'i àsu
      tsedse po'i àru
      ngyebdse po'i àru
      tundse po'i àru[16]

205   There was no harmed person
      There was no man missing
      There was no long-life absent
      There was no neighbour absent
      There was no villager missing

210   rime chyõ sirakulami myũme chyõ leũrati póba pórulo
      pwémai péda luda sõji shebwe ridsé[17]

210   Finished telling the *pèda-luda* of little sister Sirkulami, little
      brother Leũrati and father Pórulapwé

VI   Stability and Variation in Performances

Although versions A and B differ in metre and in the fact that they were performed by different priests, the consistency of number, sequence and general sense of episodes in the narrative is impressive. Table 1 sets out a comparison between the two performances at this level, the difference in the number of lines resulting largely from the metrical change. Distinctions derive here principally

from the repeating in B of four short passages totalling twenty-six lines, which occur only once each in A; and there is a minor change in order where two points which occur in the same order on first expression in both chants, are repeated inversely in B. A small addition to A of four lines does not appear in B, since the corresponding passage in the latter performance is obscured by the priests chanting for a moment incoherently and it is not possible to discriminate their words against the background of drumming. Likewise, there are two brief additions to B, totalling seven lines, of which five may be important but which again are unfortunately obliterated by the conditions of reciting. Despite these difficulties, there is no sense in which B could be said to be the performance of a different *pé* from that of performance A: they are very clearly the same narrative. The version C, performed almost twelve months earlier, is almost completely identical with A, such differences as there are being at the verbal level rather than at the level of narrative events.

Comparison in more detail focuses on the quantity of those complete lines repeated *verbatim* in the different performances, and those which are unique to each (where 'unique' includes both the quite unrepresented lines and repetitions of common lines). Attempting to compare A and B by these criteria results in

TABLE I
Number, Sequence, & General Sense of Points in A & B

A		B	
No. Sense	Lines	No. Sense	Lines
1. Starting	1–3	1. Starting	1–3
2. Looked after	4–6	2. One little	4–5
3. Not taking	7–10	**3. Not a son	6–10
5. L. playing	11–14	**4. Ask for;	11–12
5. S's message	15–29	5. Not taking	13–15
6. P. dies	30–32	6. L. playing	16–18
7. P. buried	33–34	7. S's message	19–31
8. L. arrives	35–37	**8. L. playing	32–34
9. L. requests	38–41	**9. L. not taking	35–37
10. S. chides L.	42–53	10. P. dies	38–43
11. L. contests	54–65	11. P. buried	44–45
12. Contesting	66–69	12. L. arrives	46–50
13. The Contest	70–81	13. L. requests	51–54
14. S. Kills L.	82–83	14. S. chides L.	55–61
15. S. to sky box	84–95	15. L. Contests	62–77
**16. S. Shuts place	96–99	16. Contesting	78–80

17. S. Journeys	100–114	**17. Contesting	81–88
18. S. the cat	115–119	18. The contest	89–120
19. S. asks M. & S.	120–124	19. S. kills L.	121–124
20. M. & S. reply	125–130	20. S. to sky land	125–147
21. M. & S. leave cat	131–136	21. S. Journeys	148–169
22. S. takes organs	137–139	22. S. the cat	170–177
23. S. the bird	140–144	23. S. asks M. & S.	178–191
24. Masters	145–152	24. M. & S. reply	192–198
25. Warning	153–157	25. M. & S. leave cat	199–216
26. Hide !	158–160	26. S. takes organs	217–225
27. Impossible	161–164	27. S. the bird	226–235
28. Swooping	165–171	28. Masters	236–254
29. Weeping	172–177	29. Warning	255–270
30. S. returns	178	30. Hide !	271–276
31. S. concocts	179–185	31. Impossible	277–285
32. S. operates	186–201	32. Swooping	286–296
33. All well	202–209	**33. Impossible	297–308
34. Ending	210	34. Weeping	309–316
		35. S. returns	317–328
		36. S. concocts	329–342
		37. S. operates	343–365
		38. All well	366–374
		39. Ending	375–379

Note : the asterisks ** mark those points absent from the other version; these points include repetitions (B 11.32–37, 81–88, 297–308) of which the first instances are common to both A and B and therefore unmarked.

The abbreviations should be clear by reference to the translation: L—Leũrati, S—Sirkulami, P—Pórulapwé; M & S—Moon and Sun.

Table 2, which argues that about 20% of A are whole lines common to B, 11% of B common to A, while 15% of A are unique to itself and 18% of B likewise unique. These figures are complex for two reasons: firstly, they exclude lines which are comparable but modified through the substitution or addition of individual terms within the same grammatical structure; secondly, they exclude those lines which, in B, are distinct because they are recited to a metre demanding generally meaningless, 'filler syllables' and the dismemberment of what in A are whole lines.

To deal with the second point, it is necessary to devise a method of comparing 'line equivalents', that is to say lines which, excluding the largely meaningless filler

syllables and the apparent dismemberment, turn out to be identical to their correspondents in A. Although this is an artificial procedure, it is important to note that around a quarter of the lines in each version are in this sense equivalent, as presented in Table 3; and the percentages of 'whole line equivalents', derived from Tables 2 and 3, rise accordingly.

The change from A to B in metrical terms is a change from greater to less metrical freedom. Gurung verse of these kinds is characterised by accentual stress rather than number or quantity of syllables. The former is a feature noted for some Tibetan poetry according to Tucci (1949/1966, p. 16), Poucha (1950, p. 235) and

TABLE 2
Whole Lines

Common			Unique	
A	B		A	B
1–3	1–3		4	6–12
9–11	14–16		13	32–37**
14	18		15	42–43
18–23	21–27		28–29	46–47
25–27	29–31		42–44	57–58
34	45		47–50	62–65
36	49		95–99	81–88**
38–41	51–54		106	126
46	56		110	135
52	60		127–128	142–145
53	61		149	147
54–56	68–70		152	187
57	71		167	196
59	73		182	211–212
61	77		196	248–250
63–65	75–77		198–200	255–260
66–69	78–80		208–209	284–285
85–88	128–131		31/210	303–308**
42/210	42/379		=c. 15%	318–319
=c. 20%	=c. 11%			335–336
				357–359
				362–363
				68/397
				=c.18%

NB Asterisks ** = 'repeated lines'.

Vekerdi (1952, p. 229), though in a context of relatively fixed numbers of syllables per line. The change between A and B is, however, one in which the number of syllables per line in A, varying from five to twenty-five, becomes in B constrained to between six and eight by the need to chant to the rhythm of a drum. The 'filler syllables' or 'carrier sounds' permit this change to occur without any necessary variation in the vocabulary and syntax of the phrases recited. In this way, the need for

TABLE 3

A			Line Equivalents	B		
70–75	=	6	—	18	=	89–106
76–78	=	3	—	7	=	110–116
79–81	=	3	—	4	=	117–120
**(79	=	1)	—	3	=	107–109
83	=	1	—	2	=	123–124
89–90	=	2	—	3	=	132–134
92–93	=	2	—	4	=	138–141
100–101	=	2	—	4	=	148–151
103–105	=	3	—	3	=	156–158
107–109	=	3	—	3	=	159–161
113	=	1	—	2	=	166–167
117	=	1	—	2	=	174–175
120–121	=	2	—	4	=	178–181
131–132	=	2	—	6	=	199–204
138–139	=	2	—	3	=	223–225
140	=	1	—	2	=	226–227
142	=	1	—	2	=	230–231
147–148	=	2	—	4	=	244–247
150–151	=	2	—	4	=	251–254
155	=	1	—	2	=	265–266
159	=	1	—	2	=	273–274
173–174	=	2	—	4	=	309–312
180–181	=	2	—	4	=	331–334
183–185	=	3	—	6	=	337–342
205	=	1	—	1	=	372

49/210
=c. 23%

99/379
=c. 26%

NB The Asterisks ** denote a line repeated in B but not repeated in A; it is excluded from the arithmetic of A, included in that of B.

'formulae' of various kinds to fit varying constraints is avoided by the singer "with an essential idea to express under different metrical conditions" (Lord, 1960, p. 35); and in spite of the metrical change, the chants remain relatively very stable.

To address the first point stated above, it is necessary to examine the character of lines classed as 'modified' by substitution of distinct individual terms or their addition within a consistent grammatical structure, even where this structure is dismembered by the metrical peculiarities of B. The notion of a 'line equivalent' is therefore again useful, and the resulting comparisons are set out in Table 4. This compares individual lines of B with corresponding lines and part-lines of A, and concludes that about 42% of A are lines modified in terms of B, and 45% of B are modified in terms of the lines and part-lines of A.

The kinds of substitution concerned may be qualified as 'weak' and 'strong', depending on whether the sense of the terms differs so changing the sense of the phrase. There are very few instances of 'strong' changes of this kind: the full name of a character is replaced by a pronoun, or the onomatopoeic miaowing *ngyaŭ ngyaŭ* of 1.119 is replaced by *yema yeku;* and there are some changes in the suffixes of verbs which yet do not alter the tense or mood of the phrase. These changes might not even be regarded as 'strong' at all.

The kinds of additional term present in A compared with B (which is more economical) are also limited. Particles giving emphasis (*–ga*), pronouns (*tsa* 'that', *khina* 'he, she'), or minor qualifiers (*ta* 'up above') form a large proportion of these extra items. More pertinent to the narrative are the inserting of the verb *sudamaga* 'asked' and the phrase *gyà prebwe* 'path walking'; but these are very few, and certain

TABLE 4
Comparison of Modified Lines

B	A	B	A	B	A
4	– 5(S)	205	– 133(S)	294	– 170(X)
5	– 6(S)	206	– 133(S)	295	– 171(S)
13	– 7–8(+)	207	– 134(S)	296	– 171(X)
17	– 12(S)	208	– 134(S)	297	– 172(+)
19	– 16(+?)	209	– 135(+)	298	– 172(+)
20	– 17(+?)	210	– 135(S)	299	– 172(S)
28	– 24(+?)	213	– 135(+)	300	– 172(+)
38	– 30(S)	214	– 135(S)	301	– 172(S)
39	– 30(S)	215	– 136(X)	302	– 172(+)
40	– 31(S)	216	– 136(S)	313	– 175(+)
41	– 32(S)	217	– 137(+)	314	– 177(S, +)

44	–	33(+)	218 – 137(X)	315 – 176(+)
48	–	35(S)	219 – 137(X)	316 – 175(S, +)
50	–	37(+)	220 – 137(X)	317 – 178(+)
55	–	45(+)	221 – 137(X)	320 – 178(X)
59	–	51(+)	222 – 137(+)	321 – 178(X)
66	–	66(S)	228 – 141(+)	322 – 178(S)
72	–	58(+)	229 – 141(X)	323 – 178(S)
75	–	62(+)	232 – 143(X)	324 – 178(X)
121	–	82(+)	233 – 143(S)	325 – 178(S)
122	–	82(S)	234 – 144(X)	326 – 178(S)
125	–	84(+)	235 – 144(S)	327 – 178(S)
127	–	84(X)	236 – 145(X)	328 – 178(S)
136	–	91(+)	237 – 145(X)	329 – 179(S)
137	–	91(X)	238 – 145(S)	330 – 179(X)
146	–	94(S)	239 – 145(X)	343 – 186(+)
152	–	102(+)	240 – 145(S)	344 – 186(S)
153	–	102(X)	241 – 145(S)	345 – 187(S)
154	–	102(S)	242 – 146(+)	346 – 188(+)
155	–	102(S)	243 – 146(X)	347 – 189(+)
162	–	111(+)	261 – 153(+)	348 – 190(+)
163	–	111(S)	262 – 153(X)	349 – 191(+)
164	–	112(X)	263 – 154(+)	350 – 192(X)
165	–	112(S)	264 – 154(X)	351 – 192(S)
168	–	114(S)	267 – 156(X)	352 – 193(X)
169	–	114(X)	268 – 156(S)	353 – 193(S)
170	–	115(+)	269 – 157(X)	354 – 194(X)
171	–	115(X)	270 – 157(S)	355 – 194(S)
172	–	116(+)	271 – 158(S)	356 – 195(X)
173	–	116(X)	272 – 158(X)	360 – 197(X)
176	–	118(+)	275 – 160(S)	361 – 197(S)
177	–	119(S)	276 – 160(X)	364 – 201(S)
182	–	122(S)	277 – 161(S)	365 – 201(S)
183	–	122(S)	278 – 162(+)	366 – 202(S)
184	–	122(X)	279 – 162(+)	367 – 202(S)
185	–	122(X)	280 – 163(X)	368 – 202(S)
186	–	122(S)	281 – 163(+)	369 – 203(S)
188	–	122(S)	282 – 164(X)	370 – 203(S)

189 – 124(+)		283 – 164(+)		371 – 204(S)	
190 – 123(S)		286 – 165(+)		373 – 206(S)	
191 – 124(X)		287 – 165(X)		374 – 207(S)	
192 – 125(X)		288 – 166(S)		375 – 210(+)	
193 – 125(S)		289 – 168(X)		376 – 210(+)	
194 – 126(X)		290 – 168(S)		377 – 210(X)	
195 – 126(S)		291 – 169(S)		378 – 210(S)	
197 – 129(S)		292 – 169(S)		379 – 210(S)	
198 – 130(S)		293 – 170(+)		170 88	
				379 210=c.42%	
				=c.45%	

Key: S = a term or phrase in A replaces its substitute in B

+ = a term or phrase in A is added to opposite line in B

X = line in B is part of a longer modified line in A but itself contains no distinguishing features. 'Filler Syllables' are not counted as distinctive.

(1.106) are the unpractised 'errors' of the inexperienced assistant pupil, subsequently corrected by the principal priest, his master.

In his study of the Sumatran *tukang sijobang*, Phillips found that, "about 40 per cent of the lines in the first performance recurred in the second, whether in full, or as regards grammatical structure (with substitution of vocabulary), or as regards vocabulary (recombined in a different construction), (1981, pp. 167–68). Applying the same criteria to the *pé*, it may be observed that A and B are close to the extent that about 85% of A recur in B, and 82% of B recur in A, where there are no clear cases of recombination in Phillips's sense and where 'recur' includes the repetition of whole line equivalents and the presence of 'modified' lines according to the analysis given above.

If the two versions A and B are so close, then it is to be expected that different performances by the same priest will be still closer. This is the case. Table 5 enumerates the only distinctions at the verbal level between A and C, performed nearly twelve months apart; and Table 6 summarizes the comparisons between A and B and A and C in percentage terms. The stability is undoubtedly impressive.

Bowra argued that, "A poem of a hundred or so lines is more easily composed and retained in the head than a poem of several thousand" (1952, p. 232), with the implication that greater variability could be expected in the performances of longer poems. A comparison between two performances of a different *pé*, roughly for times as long as A and C but performed shortly before these and on the same occasions, showed percentage similarities and differences which are almost exactly the same.

If the same average degree of variability occurs between performances of the same *pé* by the same experienced priest in a rite like 'making meat for the demon', then

TABLE 5
Differences between A and C

A	C
1.97 *tēnadsé* 'having set down'	*plitēdsé* 'have undone' *
1.106 chanted by pupil alone	Absent**
1.122 terms absent	*ridsu shedsu tidsu mwaidsu* 'bones flesh skin and hair' **
1.135 *ka tishi* 'having removed the lid'	*ka di—ka ti'i* 'removed** the lid (and then)' ?
1.136 *ka thódi* 'having held the lid' Insert between 11.157 & 158	*ka tho'i—ka thódi* *kya lama guru tso'iye— guru pwéma guru urgyena— guru gyà nowa guru tsi— nowa gurumana* 'those Lama Tibetan Masters, Urgyena Masters, Tsogi Masters, Masters, Hlewri Masters Poju Masters'*
1.178 *tsukhadsè* 'come back'	*nadsa pura ngaidsa yudsé/ nedsa pura ngaidsa yudsé*** 'came down back to the place/ came down back to the spot'

Note : One asterisk * = 'modification absent from B'
Two Asterisks ** = 'modification identical or very close to B'

TABLE 6
Similarities between A and B, and A and C

A	B		A	C
91	141	Identical	205	204
—	—		—	—
210	379		210	211
=43%	=37%		=97%	=97%
88	170	Substitutes	4	5
—	—		—	—
210	379	&	210	211
=42%	=45%	Additions	=2%	=2%
31	68	Unique	1	2
—	—		—	—
210	379		210	211
=15%	=18%		=1%	=1%

Note : the percentage have been rounded.

the Gurung *poju* as a bard can perform approaching 5,000 lines of verse with remarkable consistency.

VII Concluding Remarks

To the extent that it is possible to generalise on the basis of the foregoing material, it may be asserted that the experienced Gurung priest comes very close indeed to achieving his aim of exact repetition in the ritual chanting of *pé*. In contrast, the Sumatran bard Munin "seems to have acquired, over the years, an ability to vary expression by substituting alternative words within the same grammatical framework and recombining the same vocabulary in various patterns, and he relies more on these resources than on straight forward repetition. The comparative novice as appears not yet to have developed this faculty to the same degree, and instead depends more on memory and repetition" (Phillips, 1981, p. 168). The experienced bard is not the same as the novice; and the extent to which the long practised *poju* differs from his pupil has yet to be assessed. But the contrast between the two kinds of bard, the reciter and the composer, appears to be an important contrast.

This paper has suggested certain characteristics of the Gurung priest which elucidate how his poetic performances differ from those of the Sumatran bard: the highly obscure language of *pé*, the method of learning which stressess retention in the memory before understanding of the words, and the need to be able coherently to chant in the company of other priests. It has also argued that these three factors may be connected with the absence of spirit possession or trance and the spiritual justification for individual creativity which these experiences provide.

It will be observed that the Sumatran bard does not require such spiritual justification for his creativity, although credited with certain powers and mystical knowledge for learning and improving his performances (Phillips, 1981, pp. 16-17); and it will be concluded that there is no necessary connection between the absence of spirit encounters of trance and the conservatism characteristic of the *poju*. But it is of interest to know how far the ecstatic, 'possessed' or spiritually inspired officiant fares by the criteria of originality adopted above, since he will be expected to resemble more the Sumatran than the Gurung. This hypothesis, when tested, will fill a gap noted with some despair by A. T. Hatto complaining justly that, "it may never be possible for Westerners closely to compare shamanistic with bardic utterance, either at the level of voice-production, intonation and metre, or in details of style, diction and content" (1970, p. 2). It is certainly possible to do so in Nepal; and there is every reason to hope that more will be achieved in this field.

Notes to the text of the pé of Sirkulami

1   ll-1-2 *tso* ~ unnasalised *tsõ*, the land to the North from where Gurungs are said to have come down, may be an unsound opinion. *sjõi* ~ *sõshi* 'having made' cf. ll 196ff; *sheko* and *shemaku* ~ *shewa* 'informing, telling, knowing.' The priest P.S. was often unable to specify more than the general sense of a phrase.

2   1.4 *pwélurupwẽla* substitutes for *pórulapwé*; *pwẽmai* denotes the *sora jãt* clans, *pwémai* refers to 'Tibetans', but the substitution here seems to carry no weight.

3   *ngorulo màrulo siraludi* in 1.10 was glossed 'property' *(sampati)*; *ngo* 'spell' ? *mà maĩ* 'medicine' ? *si* ~ *sẽ* ~ 'things' ? There is clearly some assonance intended.

4   1.16 *pwali prisõ* is obscure; *ki yulushi* was heard as *kyulushi* 'having passed through' (cf. 181) which appears difficult here. *to* is a linked kingly *((car jãt)* subclan with its *pwẽmai* serving clans, to which priests belong through clanship. Note *mru*' king' in parallel 1.17; *tõ* 'village, place, forest clearing'.

5   1.28 chanting sometimes adds or blurs vowels, hence *sirakula*. Generally, word variants have been transcribed since they may be linguistically important; but nasality on vowels has been standardised although rather irregular on the recordings.

6   1.33 *mela karape* 'coffin' ~ *karapih* 'bed, shelf' ? *yà* and *hu* are obscure; *byõ* ~ *byõwa* 'throwing away' ? The word boundaries here are hard to sustain: *yàbyõtẽnàdsé/hubyõwānàdsé* would be defensible as a transcription of compound verbs.

7   ll.82-3 *marasõ hlolo nónó/mrisõ hlolo nónó* always carries the meaning 'dead' with a suitable verb accompanying it; the distinct terms are obscure. Colloquially, *sewa* 'killing' is used also to mean 'defeating'; so the idiom is doubly apt here.

8   1.100 *nóra* is obscure, though paired with *rina* 'girl, sister' in 1.101. *sõpliru* 'three and four days' ? *õdara* ~ *odal yawa* 'going off secretly, eloping' ?

9   ll.111-12 verbs ending in *-léya* here are presumably adverbial rather than first person imperative.

10   ll.143-44 *chya puru nobe kade/puru nobe pede* was glossed as *kre* 'bird of prey'; but the phrase is certainly more complex and contains terms which P.S. did not understand.

11   ll.156-57 *àkwodsé* 'did not understand'; if the colloquial equivalent *(àkwo'i)* occurred in this position, the phrase would mean that Sirkulami did not understand that she was becoming a bird of prey: P.S. argued that the verb referred to the priests who were unaware that Sirkulami was changing into a bird. The preferred rendering here is 'mysteriously'.

12   ll.168-69 *yapuru* is obscure but compares with *ya-pówara* 'to go to bring' as a plausible reconstruction; the participle suffix *-wa* '-ing' is often lost when completed with the locative and purposive *-ra* 'to, in order to'.

13   ll.175-77 *ru labwe* 'thread making' ? *kri labwe* is unclear.

14 The full lines missing while the tape was replaced were present in version C as follows: *ngids' àyowa krõdsu krodsudi rulushi/krods' àyowa ridsu shedsudi rulushi/sheds' àyowa tidsu mwaidsudi rulushi/mwai àyowa mwaiye nena kõradi sõshi* 'liver insufficient, having added bowels/bowels insufficient, having added bones and flesh/flesh insufficient, having added skin and hair/hair insufficient, having completed the spleen with half a hair.

15 11.202–03 are obscure in all details except for the final term *àru* 'there being not present'. The general sense was glossed by P.S.; and the renderings given in the translation are loose guesses.

16 11.204–09 are obscure, like the preceding couplet. The rendering offered assumes that the first terms in 11.205–06 are verbs in *–dsé* qualifying *pó* as 'somebody'. But the syntax is difficult; and the subsequent lines still more obscure: *tsedsé* is only crudely and superficially similar to *tshe* 'long life'; but P.S. could not suggest detailed explications of this passage.

17 1.210 *sõji shebwe ridsé* was glossed as 'finished telling' (*shelkha'i*). The infix *–ri–* for verbs introduces a declarative and continuitive sense to the action stated; but it is not clear whether the same term is represented in *ridsé*.

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