

# A HISTORY OF THE THAK KHOLA VALLEY, NEPAL<sup>1</sup>

Michael Vinding  
*Copenhagen*

The caravan route which runs through the Thak Khola valley in Mustang district is one of the most important links connecting Nepal with Tibet. The Thak Khola valley is ecologically a transit zone between the arid Tibetan plateau in the north and the Nepalese hills in the south, and for centuries it has been an important entrepot in the exchange of Tibetan salt and Nepalese foodgrains.

The Thakalis are the indigenous people of the Thak Khola valley.<sup>2</sup> Through the history neighbouring powers have sought to become overlords over this strategically

---

<sup>1</sup> The material for the present article was collected during fieldwork in Nepal in 1972, 1975-78 and 1980-81. Some information was updated in 1981-86 while I was working in Nepal for the United Nations. I am grateful to the Danish Research Council for the Humanities which financed my fieldwork in Nepal and to His Majesty's Government of Nepal for permission to undertake research in Nepal. Thanks are due to K.L. Thakali and my wife Bina for their assistance in the field, and to Per K. Sorensen and David Jackson who reviewed and commented upon a draft of this article.

The following abbreviations are used in the present article: Tha. for Thakali language; Tib. for Tibetan language; and Nep. for Nepali language. Thakali words were initially written in Devanagari script by Thakali informants and later transcribed according to the system used by Turner 1931 (the diacritical marks used by Turner have, however, been deleted). Tibetan words are transcribed according to the system used by Jaschke 1881, while Nepali words follow Turner 1931.

The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not reflect or imply those of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Government of Denmark.

<sup>2</sup> For a bibliography on the Thakalis, see Vinding and Bhattachan 1985.

important area in order to control and exploit the lucrative trade. The Thakalis have thus for centuries been in direct contact with the Tibetan and Indian civilizations, and their society and culture are much influenced by these.

The recorded history of the present Mustang District dates back to the 7th century when the area came under the supremacy of the Tibetan Yarlung dynasty. In the following centuries the area was controlled mainly by Tibetan overlords, but also by the powerful kingdom of Jumla in Western Nepal. In the second half of the 18th century King Prithivi Narayan Shah of Gorkha conquered the numerous small kingdoms which then comprised the present Nepal, and since 1789 Thak Khola has been a part of the Nepalese State.

In the past decades Mustang District has been the subject of several historical studies, and the main features of the history of the district are now well known.<sup>3</sup>

### SOURCES ON ANCIENT MUSTANG

Until the 19th century, Mustang district was influenced mainly by Tibetan civilization, and the main source for historical studies of ancient Mustang is a variety of texts written in Tibetan script and language, including biographies, registers and pilgrim guides. In this period the kingdom of Lo (north of Thak Khola) was the political,

---

<sup>3</sup> The main contributions on the history of Mustang District include c. von Furer Haimendorf's *Himalayan Traders* (1975); O.P. Gaucan's *Hansa rajako thakma sasanthiyo bhanne ullekh bhayeko kagaj* (Document proving the Reign of Hansa raja in Thak) (1980); D. Jackson's *The Early History of Lo (Mustang) and Ngari* (1976), *Notes on the History of Serib and Nearby Places in the Upper Kali Gandaki* (1978), *A Genealogy of the Kings of Lo Mustang* (1980), and *The Mollas of Mustang* (1984); A.W. Macdonald's *A Tibetan Guide to Some Holy Places of the Dhaulagiri-Muktinath Area in Nepal* (1979); D.A. Messerschmidt's *Parallel Trade and Innovation in Central Nepal: The Case of the Gurung and Thakali Subbas Compared* (1974, with N.J. Gurung) and *The Thakali of Nepal: Historical Continuity and Socio-Cultural Change* (1982); C. Ramble's *The Foundation of a Tibetan Village: The Popular Transformation of History* (1983), *The Lamas of Lubra: Tibetan Bonpo Householders Priests in Western Nepal* (1984) and *The Bem chag Village Record and The Early History of Mustang District* (1987, with M. Vinding); T.B. Shrestha's *Parvataka Kehi tamrapatra* (Copper Letter from Parbat) (1976); D.L. Snellgrove's *Four Lamas of Dolpo* (1967), and *Places of Pilgrimage in Thag (Thak Khola)* (1979); G. Tucci's *Tra Giungle e Pagode* (1953) and *A Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal* (1956); and M. Vinding's *The History of the Thakaali according to the Thakaali Tradition* (1977, with S. Gauchan) and *The Local Oral Tradition about the Kingdom of Thin Garab Dzong* (1978).

cultural and religious center of the upper Kali Gandaki area, and consequently Tibetan sources deal especially with this kingdom, while there are few references to Thak Khola.

The most important local texts on ancient Thak Khola are the village records *bemchag*<sup>4</sup> (Tha.) of the five original villages of Pacgau (the northern part of Thak Khola), i. e. Thini, Syang, Marpha, Chairu and Cimang. Pacgau was once ruled by the king of Sum Garab Dzong<sup>5</sup> (near present-day Thini), and the *bemchag* deals mainly with the foundation and boundaries of that kingdom. To date, only the Cimang *bemchag* has been published and translated (Ramble and Vinding 1987).

The Thakalis do not have their own script, but Thakali texts have been written using Tibetan and Devanagari script. The most important example is the four clan histories (Tha., *rhab*<sup>6</sup>) of the Tamang Thakalis which deal with the origin of the clan ancestors and gods, and how they established themselves in Thak Khola. The *rhab* have not been published and translated, but Gauchan and Vinding 1977 contains a fairly accurate retelling of these texts.

The local oral tradition is also an important source for historical studies, especially in Thak Khola where textual material provides little information on the early history. Even where the oral tradition deals with events described in texts, it includes details which are not found in the written sources. Examples of the local oral tradition on the history of Pacgau are published in Vinding 1978.

There exist only a few Nepali documents on ancient Thak Khola.

## LO AND SERIB

The history of Tibet dates back to the 5th century AD when the first Tibetan state emerged in the Yarlung (Tib., *yar klungs*) valley, some 200 km southeast of Lhasa.<sup>7</sup> In

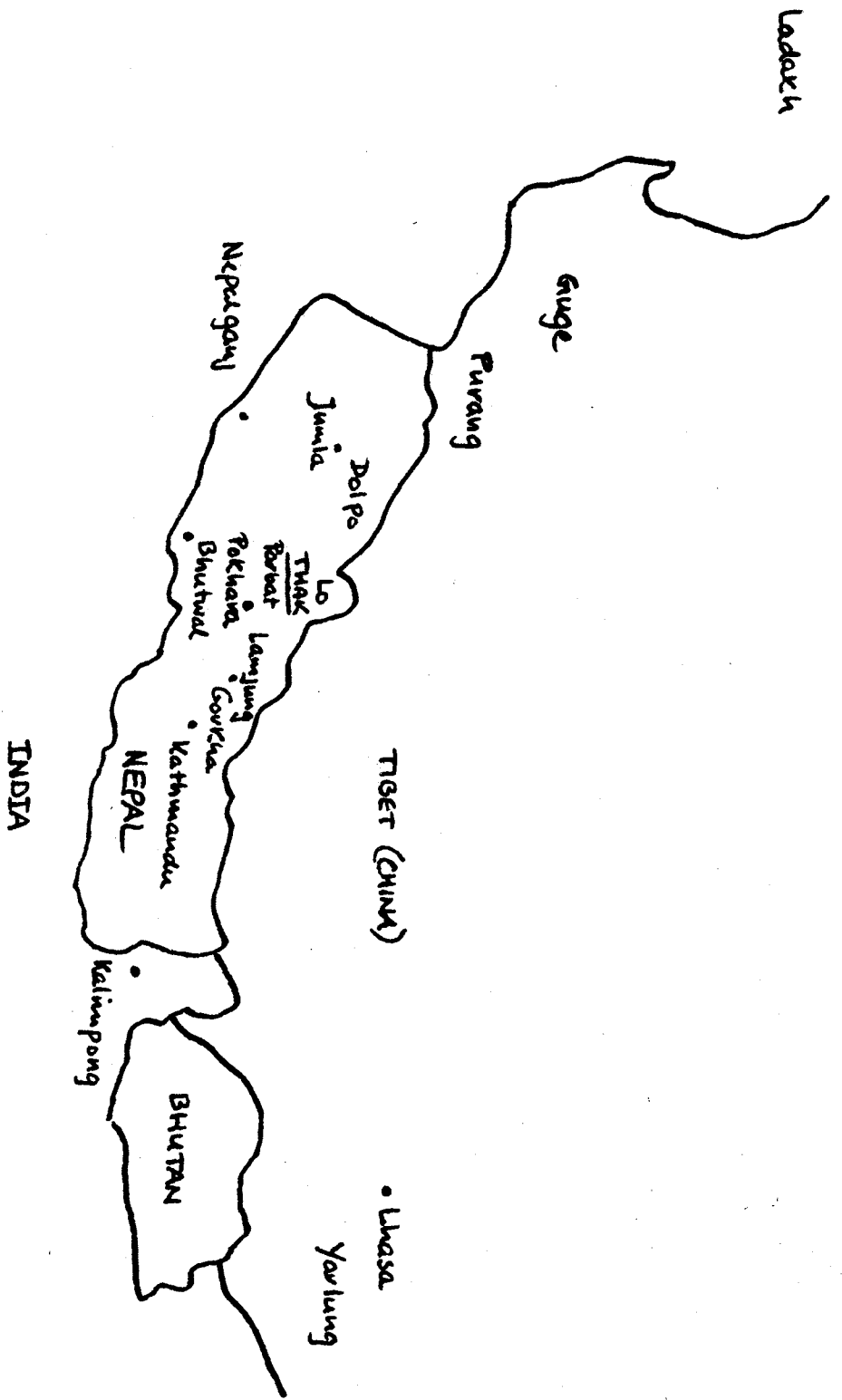
---

<sup>4</sup> Tha., *bemchag*, cf. Tib., *bem chag*. According to Das, *bem chag* is a synonym for *dkar chag* (Tib.), "list of contents" (1902, p. 876). In the Tibetan-speaking areas of Mustang district, however, *dkar chag* is the usual word for a historical record.

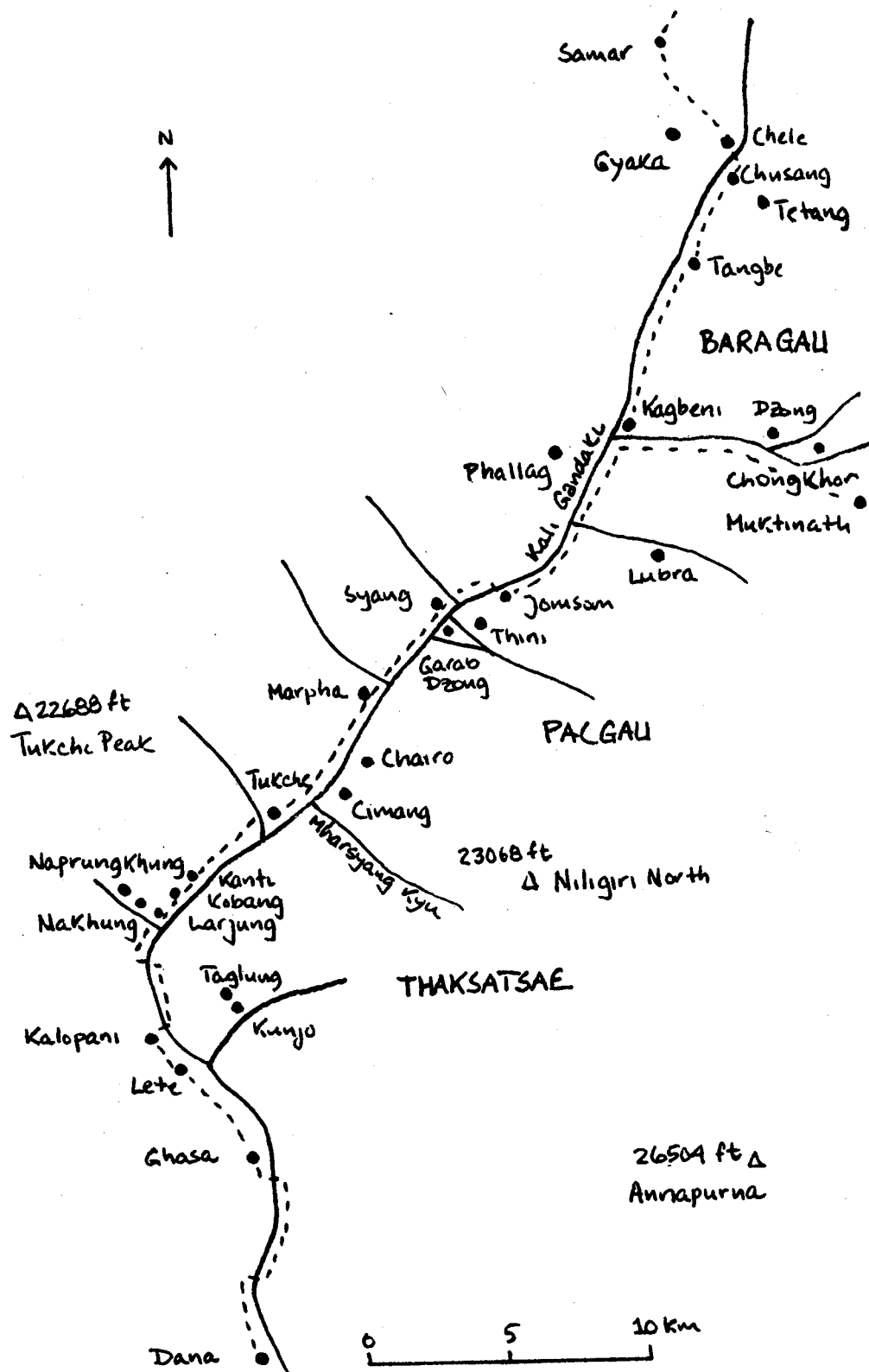
<sup>5</sup> Tib., *dga' rab rdzong*, "Joyous Fort", was the main fort and the capital of the Kingdom of Sum (Thini), and probably also of Serib (see below). The fort was situated on a summit half a mile southwest of the present Thini. There remain extensive ruins of the fort, but it is not known when the fort was destroyed.

<sup>6</sup> Tha., *rhab*, cf. Tib., *rabs*, "lineage, genealogy" (Das 1902, p. 1169).

<sup>7</sup> For the Yarlung dynasty, see Haahr 1969. Other sources on the ancient Tibetan monarchy include Bacot, et. al. 1940-1946, Richardson 1962, Snellgrove and Richardson 1968 and Stein 1972.



The Kathmandu Valley



The Thak Khola Area

the 7th century this kingdom became a major power under King Songtsen Gampo (Tib., *srong btsan sgam po*).

According to the Dunhuang Annals which are the earliest surviving Tibetan historical records, Songtsen Gampo conquered Shang Shung (Tib., *zhang zhung*) which was then a separate kingdom in West Tibet with its own language and culture.<sup>8</sup> This conquest also included Lo, and a nearby kingdom called Serib (Tib., *se rib*).<sup>9</sup> In 705 Serib revolted, but in 709 its king was captured, and Serib again came under Tibetan rule.<sup>10</sup>

Although there exists no concrete proof, several scholars have surmised that the Lo mentioned in the Dunhuang Annals is identical with the later Lo (Tib., *glo*) kingdom of the Upper Kali Gandaki area, and that Serib comprised the present Baragau (the area immediately north of Thak Khola) and Pacgau areas.<sup>11</sup> It is uncertain whether the southern part of Thak Khola (Thaksatsae) was a part of Serib.

Under Songtsen Gampo's descendants Tibet continued to be a dominant power in Central Asia, but in 842 the kingdom came to an end when King Lang Darma (Tib., *glang dar ma*) was murdered after rivalries between various political and religious factions in the country.<sup>12</sup>

Following the fall of the ancient Tibetan kingdom, the center of Tibetan civilization shifted to the old Shang Shung which by the 10th century had been Tibetanized.<sup>13</sup> The area was now known as Ngari (Tib., *mnga' ris*<sup>14</sup>) and consisted of two main kingdoms, Purang (Tib., *pu rangs*) and Guge (Tib., *gu ge*).<sup>15</sup> The kings of these kingdoms were strong supporters of Buddhism, and Indian Buddhist teachers were invited to Ngari in the 11th century.<sup>16</sup> Following these visits, Buddhism again flourished in Tibet, and Tibetan missionaries went to Lo and Serib to convert the local

---

<sup>8</sup> Bacot et. al. 1940-46, p. 29.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid*, p. 31. See also Francke 1926, p. 83.

<sup>10</sup> Bacot et. al., *op. cit.*, p. 41-42

<sup>11</sup> Jackson 1978, pp. 200 and 207-208.

<sup>12</sup> Richardson 1962, p. 32.

<sup>13</sup> Jackson 1976, p. 40.

<sup>14</sup> Tib., *mnga' ris*, "the sector under control".

<sup>15</sup> Jackson 1976, p. 39.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid*, pp. 40-42.

population to various Buddhist sects and the reformed Bon.<sup>17</sup> One of the Bon missionaries was Lubra Tashi Gyaltshan (Tib., *klu brag pa bkra shis rgyal mtshan*) who founded a monastery at Lubra (Tib., *klu brag*) in Baragau around 1160.<sup>18</sup>

In the following centuries Buddhism and Bon became well established in the area; for example, the biography of a 13th century Bon master mentions that he had as many as 198 disciples from Lo and 246 from Serib.<sup>19</sup> This spread of Buddhism and Bon extended down to the present Thaksatsae where the temple Meki Lhakhang<sup>20</sup> was founded no later than the early 15th century.<sup>21</sup>

In the 12th century three important powers emerged around Lo and Serib. One of these was Ladakh (Tib., *la dwags*) which in the early 12th century invaded Lo and Serib.<sup>22</sup> Another was Gungthang (Tib., *gung thang*) northeast of Lo.<sup>23</sup> Finally, around year 1200 a powerful kingdom was established in Jumla (Tib., *ya tshe*) in Western Nepal.<sup>24</sup> In the early 13th century the Jumla kings conquered parts of Ngari and Gungthang<sup>25</sup>, and its influence probably also included Lo and Serib.

In 1252 Gungthang (thanks to the political rise of their Sakyapa allies through Mongol recognition) had regained sufficient strength to send an army against Jumla<sup>26</sup> and to conquer Lo and Serib.<sup>27</sup> In connection with this conquest, Baragau was apparently separated from Serib, and it now became known as Lower Lo (Tib., *glo smad*). To

---

<sup>17</sup> Jackson 1978, p. 200.

The organized religion which existed in Tibet before the introduction of Buddhism under Songtsen Gampo is referred to as Bon (Tib., *bon*). This religion was reformed under influence of Buddhism, and Buddhists refer to the reformed Bon as White Bon (Tib., *bon dkar*), while the unreformed Bon is called Black Bon (Tib., *bong nag*). White Bon is in essence a Tibetan Buddhist sect.

<sup>18</sup> Jackson 1978, pp. 204-205. See also Ramble 1983.

<sup>19</sup> Jackson 1978, p. 207.

<sup>20</sup> Tib., *smad kyi lha khang*, "the lower temple" or "the temple of the lower region".

<sup>21</sup> Jackson 1978, p. 218.

<sup>22</sup> Jackson 1976, p. 42. For the kingdom of Ladakh, see Francke 1926, Petech 1939, and Snellgrove and Skorupski 1977 and 1980.

<sup>23</sup> For a short introduction to the history of Gungthang, see Jackson 1976.

<sup>24</sup> For the Jumla kingdom, see Tucci 1956, Sharma 1972 and Stiller 1973.

<sup>25</sup> Jackson 1976, p. 44.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>27</sup> Jackson 1978, p. 211.

consolidate its power in the southern part of the area, Gungthang established a fort near the present Dzong village in the Muktinath valley.<sup>28</sup>

In the 13th century the people of Lo spoke a Tibetan dialect while the population in the present Baragau and Thak Khola probably spoke Sekai (Tib., *se skad*), a language akin to the present day Thakali. In connection with the Gungthang expansion, Tibetan nobles were established as leaders in the newly built forts in Baragau. In the following centuries the Tibetan language was apparently adopted by sections of the local population, and while the people of the upper part of Baragau (Chusang, Tangbe, Tetang, Gyaka and Cheli villages) and Thak Khola have retained their original Sekai language, the people of the Kagbeni and Muktinath areas speak a West Tibetan dialect.<sup>29</sup>

In the middle 14th century the power of Gungthang weakened, and Lo was conquered by Jumla.<sup>30</sup> Towards the end of the 14th century, Gungthang once more became a dominant power, and the Gungthang general Sherab Lama (Tib., *shes rab bla ma*) conquered Lo.<sup>31</sup> Sherab Lama's descendants established themselves in Lo, and his grandson Ame Pal (Tib., *a ma dpal*) was the founder of the Lo royal house from whom the present Lo (Mustang) Maharaja descends.<sup>32</sup>

The 16th century was a difficult one for Lo. Gungthang, the protector of Lo, lost its power and never regained it. In addition, Lo was plagued by internal conflicts. The biography of a 16th— century lama from Lo mentions conflicts between leading families in the area, and that the harvest was lost to the southern people (Tib., *mon*) in 1544. In order to save his relatives from starvation, the lama went to the Meki Lhakhang temple in Thaksatsae to buy rice, barley and buckwheat.<sup>33</sup> In the late 16th century Jumla seems to have played a major role in the affairs of Lo, because the biography of another lama states that the Jumla king in 1580 requested him to travel to Lo to mediate in an internal conflict.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>28</sup> A 18th-century Tibetan text on the history of Gungthang mentions that "for the domination of the Tamang *se mon*, the Mukhun Demon Fort (Tib., *mu khun srin rdzong*) of Lower Lo was built." (Jackson 1978, p. 212). The Tamang *se mon* is probably a reference to the Tamang Thakalis.

<sup>29</sup> See also Jackson 1978, pp. 212-214 and Ramble 1984, pp. 103-105.

<sup>30</sup> Jackson 1976, p. 47.

<sup>31</sup> Jackson 1978, p. 214.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid*, p. 216.

<sup>33</sup> Snellgrove 1967, p. 91. See also Jackson 1978, p. 218.

<sup>34</sup> Snellgrove 1967, p. 153. See also Jackson 1978, pp. 219.



A new chapter in the history of Lo took shape at the end of the 16th century when the army of King Tshewang Namgyal (Tib., *tshe dbang rnam rgyal*) of Ladakh invaded Purang, Jumla and Lo.<sup>35</sup> Although Lo came under Ladakhi supremacy, affinal ties between the royal houses created a close relationship between the two kingdoms, and Ladakhi influence in Lo was limited to the payment of tribute against protection.<sup>36</sup>

While under Ladakhi supremacy, Lo held control over the Kagbeni and Muktinath areas in Baragau. The nobles in this area tried, however, to free themselves from Lo's influence, and in 1652 a fight broke out between the king of Lo and his minister in Dzong. The king had his minister beaten at Kagbeni, but Jumla intervened on the side of the minister and many people died in the following war between Jumla and Lo.<sup>37</sup> Even the clergy became involved in this conflict, and in 1682 monks from Lo and Serib fought at a monastery in Central Tibet.<sup>38</sup> This is the latest (presently available) reference to Serib.

The wars between Jumla and Lo continued. In 1719 the king of Lo married a Ladakh princess (whose own mother was from Lo). On her way to Lo the princess was captured and imprisoned at Kagbeni by the Jumla army, but she was later freed when help arrived from Ladakh and Parbat (a kingdom immediately south of Thak Khola).<sup>39</sup>

A few decades later Jumla again attacked Lo. At this time Ladakh had lost its former power (and later ceased to exist as an independent kingdom) and was unable to help Lo which subsequently came under Jumla supremacy.<sup>40</sup> While Jumla in the 18th century controlled Lo, Parbat must have had some influence in Thak Khola, because in 1774 King Kirthi Bam Malla of Parbat confirmed the rules for conduct of the monks and nuns of the Meki Lhaxhang temple at Kobang.<sup>41</sup>

In the second half of the 18th century King Prithivi Narayan Shah of Gorkha conquered the numerous small kingdoms comprising contemporary Nepal.<sup>42</sup> Parbat fell

---

<sup>35</sup> Jackson 1978, p. 219.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 219-220.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>38</sup> Snellgrove 1967, p. 250. See also Jackson 1978, p. 221.

<sup>39</sup> Jackson 1978, pp. 223. See also Shrestha 1976.

<sup>40</sup> Jackson 1978, p. 223.

<sup>41</sup> von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 141.

<sup>42</sup> For a study on the foundation of the modern Nepalese state, see Stiller 1973.

to Gorkha in 1786.<sup>43</sup> In 1788 the Gorkhas fought a war with Tibet, and Jumla used the occasion to invade Lo and some villages further south.<sup>44</sup> The war between the Gorkhas and Tibet, however, soon came to an end, and in 1789 Gorkha conquered Jumla.<sup>45</sup> Since that time the present Mustang District has been a part of the Nepal State.

## SUM

The above account on the history of ancient Upper Kali Gandaki area is based on Tibetan texts from Lo, Dolpo, Tibet and Dunhaung. Several of these sources mention a land called Serib which, as noted above, probably comprised the present Pacgau, but unfortunately they provide no detailed information on this land.

Surprisingly, available local sources (texts and oral tradition) contain no references to Serib. According to local sources, the present Pacgau was originally called Sum (Tib., *gsum*<sup>46</sup>). The center of Som was Garab Dzong which was situated on a summit about one kilometer southwest of the present Thini. There remain some ruins of the fort, but it is not known when the fort was destroyed. Although it is not possible to provide concrete proof, Garab Dzong was probably an important center in Serib.

The main source on the history of Sum is the Cimang *bemchag*. Unfortunately, the value of the *bemchag* as a historical document is limited. First, the text includes several obscure and difficult passages, and the meaning is therefore not always clear. Second, the text covers a period of at least some 700 years (11th—18th centuries). Third, besides the local oral tradition, most of the events and persons described in the *bemchag* are not mentioned in other sources, and it is, therefore, almost impossible to date these events and persons. And fourth, the text mentions only two kings of Garab Dzong, namely King Thokarchan<sup>47</sup> and King Tangmican.<sup>48</sup> It is not clear whether these

---

<sup>43</sup> Stiller 1973, p. 181.

<sup>44</sup> Rose 1971.

<sup>45</sup> Stiller 1973, p. 185.

<sup>46</sup> Tib., *gsum*, "three"

<sup>47</sup> Tib., *rgyal thod dkar can*, "the king with the white turban".

<sup>48</sup> The written form of the name of the kings vary tremendously in the different versions of the *bemchag*, and even within the same text. The meaning of the name of King Tangmican is a puzzle. Informants claim that this king had a third eye, and his name may therefore originally have been "the king with the uneven number of eyes" (Tib., *rgyal spyang mi bzang*), cf. Das 1902, p. 805.

kings actually are different persons, and to what extent the accounts about them are legendary.<sup>49</sup>

In spite of these shortcomings, the Cimang *bemchag* is the only available text which deals in detail with ancient Pacgau, and it is therefore a useful supplement to the external sources on which the above account is based.

According to the *bemchag*<sup>50</sup>, Garab Dzong was established by King Thokarcen who was born in Western Tibet.<sup>51</sup> King Thokarcen contemplated becoming king of Lhasa, Ladakh, Jumla, Lo and Dzong (in the Muktinath valley), but having realized that there were already kings in these places, he went to Sum where he was accepted as king by the six groups (clans?) which then comprised the local population.<sup>52</sup>

---

<sup>49</sup> The *bemchag* twice mentions an incident between the king of Sum Garab Dzong and a king called Punari, but in the first version the king of Sum Garab Dzong is Gyal Thokarcen, while in the second he is Gyal Tangmican. This could indicate that Gyal Thokarcen and Gyal Tangmican are one and same person. On the other hand, the text mentions that Lubra was founded during the reign of Gyal Tangmican, while Gyal Thokarcen wished to seize the Central Government of Tibet (Tib., *dga' ldan pho brang*). If these informations are correct, King Tangmican would have lived in the 12th century, while King Thokarcen could not have been earlier than the 17th century, unless, of course, the writer's reference to the Lhasa Government as Ganden Phodrag is an anachronistic usage. Besides the *bemchag* and the oral tradition, nothing is known about these kings, and their identity and dates remain unknown, as is strictly speaking their historicity.

<sup>50</sup> For a translation of the *bemchag*, see Ramble and Vinding 1987.

<sup>51</sup> The *bemchag* mentions that King Thokarcen was born in Mindroling (Tib., *smin 'grol gling*) in To (Tib., *stod*). To is Western Tibet, while Mindroling probably is an unknown location in that area. Alternatively, Mindroling may be a reference to the great Nyingmapa (Tib., *rnying ma pa*) monastery in Central Tibet, some 150 km southwest of Lhasa. According to the oral tradition, the king's birthplace was *khamsung* which may be a reference to Shang Shung (Western Tibet).

<sup>52</sup> The *bemchag* mentions that King Thokarcen was accepted as king by the *srane thing*, *drukor thing*, *tabor thing*, *tsagyu thing*, *drencen thing*, and *langlung thing*, but it does not explain about these groups. According to the local oral tradition the indigenous population of Thini was known as *Thin maktu* (Tha.) (cf. Tib., *rmang drug*, 'the six foundations?') and comprised the *srane thin*, *dho thin*, *mhathang thin*, *chaki thin*, *om thin* and *langlung thin* (Vinding 1978, p. 190). My informants cannot identify the *srane thin*, but one of the present clans in Thini-Jomsom is known as *srane phobe* (Vinding 1979/80, p. 214). *Dho thin* should be the inhabitants of *Dhothang*, a village which once was located in the eastern corner of the present Jomsom. The *mhathang thin* should be the ancestors of some of the present people of Thini. The *chaki thin* (cf. *tsagyu thing* above) are said to be the ancestors of the present *bom phobe* clan in Thini. The *om thin* are the ancestors of the

The local population included various religious specialists, and King Thokarcen asked his subjects to provide him with an astrologer, a specialist to worship the serpent-spirits (Tib., *klu*), and a specialist to perform rituals for his health and prosperity (Tib., *tshe sgrub*).

King Thokarcen had three sons, namely Drensumpal who was born in a time of remembrance (Tib., *dran*); Lhasumpal who was born at a time his father was worshipping the gods (Tib., *lha*); and Kyisumpal who was born in a time of happiness (Tib., *skyid*). According to the local oral tradition, King Thokarcen also had an illegitimate son named Syasumpal.<sup>53</sup> Once some subjects planned to poison King Thokarcen, but Syasumpal warned his father about the plot. Lyasumpal was later sent to Cimang (near the southern border of Sum) to establish a border post.

The *bemchag* twice mentions an incident between the king of Sum and a king called Punari who (according to the oral tradition) was king of Sum before the arrival of King Thokarcen. In the first version of this story the king of Sum is King Thokarcen, but in the second he is King Tangmican. The King of Sum and King Punari agreed to establish marriage relations and, according to the oral tradition, King Punari's daughter later married King Thokarcen's son.

One of the stories in the *bemchag* deals with the death of King Tangmican. Once King Tangmican ordered his subjects to remove a hill that blocked the way of the sunrise. The subjects resented this, and "after five or six men had gone to the mountain and were felling trees, King Thangmican got his hands caught in the cleft of the trunk and he, the king, fell to his death from the crag. Such events comprise the story of Sum Garab Dzong."<sup>54</sup> The local oral tradition agrees that King Tangmican was murdered by his subjects.

According to the *bemchag*, Tsherog village in Pacgau was founded by Pempar Sonam<sup>55</sup> who came to Pacgau from Kagbeni. Pempar Sonam was given land in

---

people of Phallag village in Baragau. Finally, the *langlung thin* are said to have lived at *langlung thang* which is a small plateau above Jomsom airport.

<sup>53</sup> Vinding 1978, pp. 186-187.

<sup>54</sup> Ramble and Vinding 1987, p. 17.

<sup>55</sup> In Thakali language *pemper* (or *pompar*) means "king" (cf. Tib., *dpon po*, "lord"). Sonam (cf. Tib., *bsod nams*, "good fortune", "happiness") is a popular Thakali and Tibetan personal name. In Tsherog village there is a lineage (Tha., *gyupa*, cf. Tib., *brgyud pa*) of the Sercan clan called Pompar.

Tsherok on which he established some watermills. The *bemchag* mentions that the people of Pagau paid him a small tax, apparently for the use of these mills.

The *bemchag* deals in detail with the boundary between the present Pacgau and Thaksatsae. According to the *bemchag*, this border was originally at the Mharshang river and the Dotsam Hill, and it was first demarcated by King Thokarcen of Sum (Pacgau) and King Hansa of Thag (Thaksatsae). Later, the border was altered by the Grain King (Tib., 'bru rgyal po), which probably is a reference to the king of Parbat. The *bemchag* mentions that the 'Grain King' gave his daughter in marriage to the King of Jumla, and in this connection he ordered ritual specialists in Lubra to perform a ceremony for the health and prosperity of the King of Jumla. This episode, as well as the fact that the Grain King altered the border between Sum and Thag, indicated that Parbat in a former time controlled Thak Khola.

The first episodes in the *bemchag* imply that the present Thak Khola comprised two lands, namely Sum in the north and Thag in the south. Sum was the land of Sumpa Mapudrug while Thag was the land of Thagkubcan.<sup>56</sup> The latest sections of the *bemchag* refer to Pacgau by its present name Yhulkangha<sup>57</sup>, and the text indicates that Yhulkangha consisted of at least two separate political units, namely Sum and Pundri (i. e. Marpha).

## THAG

This account has so far included only a few reference to the present Thaksatsae. First, Tibetan sources indicate that the Meki Lhakhang temple was founded no later than the early 15th century, and that this area was a place where people from Lo bought foodgrains.<sup>58</sup> Secondly, the Cimang *bemchag* refers to the area south of the Mharsyang river as Thag, and mentions that this area was once ruled by a king called Hansa.

This is the only reference to King Hansa presently available in literacy sources. However, according to the oral tradition of the Tamang Thakalis, Hansa Raja was a prince from Jumla who married a princess from Thini called Nyima, and in connection with this

---

<sup>56</sup> For the meaning of Sumpa Mapudrug, see *thin maktu* in note 53. The meaning of Thagkubcan is not known.

<sup>57</sup> Tha., *yhulkangha*, cf. Tib., *yul gyi lnga*, "the five villages".

<sup>58</sup> Jackson 1978, p. 218.

marriage he got Thag as dowry from his father-in-law.<sup>59</sup> Tamang Thakalis maintain that they descend from king Hansa, but simultaneously they claim to descend from four ancestors who came to Thak Khola from Sinja near present Jumla.<sup>60</sup>

This later tradition is based on the *choki rhab* (Tha.) which is the clan history of the Gaucan clan.<sup>61</sup> According to this story, Ani Airam, the ancestor of the Gaucan clan, was born in the North-West (Tha., *nhub chan*), which probably is a reference to Western Tibet.<sup>62</sup> Ani Airam left the North-West and arrived at Sinja (in the present Jumla district). There Ani Airam felled a sandelwood tree. Subsequently, three birds flew from the tree. These birds were actually Lha Langha Nhurbu<sup>63</sup>, the god of the Gaucan clan; Lha Churing Gyalmo<sup>64</sup>, the goddess of the Tulacan clan; and Lha Gangla Sinki Karmo<sup>65</sup>, the goddess of the Sercan clan.<sup>66</sup>

Ani Airam left Sinja together with some travel companions, probably Samledhen Samlecyang and Dhakpa Gyalsang who are the ancestors of the Tulachan and Sercan

<sup>59</sup> According to the *bemchag* Thag comprised the area immediately south of the Mharsyang river, and this land probably extended down to the hill Kayang Ghang, a few kilometers south of the present Larjung village. *Thag* (Tib., "distant country") was the southernmost area under influence of Tibetan civilization, as indicated in the mane of the temple Meki Lhakhang (Tib., *smad kyi lha khang*, "the temple of the lower region").

<sup>60</sup> Tamang Thakali informants cannot explain this apparent contradiction. Some informants believe that the Tamang Thakalis descend from the four ancestors mentioned in their clan histories (*rhab*), and that only a section of them descend from Hansa Raja. See also Gauchan and Vinding 1977, p. 136-137.

<sup>61</sup> For a retelling of this text, see Gauchan and Vinding 1977.

<sup>62</sup> Gauchan and Vinding (1977, p. 110) propose that *nhub chan* may refer to the land in the west (Tha. *nhub*) belonging to the Chan, which is the name of a Thakuri clan. This interpretation was suggested by an informant who (I now realize) wanted to use this reference to prove that the Thakalis originally were high caste Thakuris. *Nhub chan* is, however, a Tibetan word (Tib., *nhub byang*) meaning "west north". In spite of this misinterpretation, we were probably right when we noted that *nhub chan* was situated in the present Humla District, or further northwest (Western Tibet).

<sup>63</sup> Tha., *lha langba nhurbu*, cf. Tib., *glang ba nor bu*, "the jewel elephant".

<sup>64</sup> Tha., *lha churing gyalmo*, cf. Tib., *chu srin rgyal mo*, "the sea monster queen".

<sup>65</sup> Tha., *lha gangla siinki karmo*, cf. Tib., *gangs la sen ge dkar mo*, "the white lioness in the mountains".

<sup>66</sup> The god of the fourth Tamang Thakali clan (Bhattacan) is called Lha Hyawa Rangjuing (tib., *gyak ba rang byung*, "the self-created male yak"). This god was created in the lake Manasarovar in Western Tibet and travelled to Thak Khola where he met the gods of the other Tamang Thakali clans. For the life history of Lha Hyawa Ranjuing, see the *bhurki rhab* in Gauchan and Vinding 1977.

clans, respectively. The party travelled eastwards to the present Dolpo district and crossed a pass into the present Mustang district. From Sangda (the first village in Mustang district when coming from Dolpo) they continued to Phallag village in Baragau, and then to Thini. From Thini they followed the Kali Gandaki river to Ghyatobra (opposite Tukche) where they met Pau Kuti, the ancestor of the Bhattacan clan.

Together they reached Tamo<sup>67</sup> in the northern part of Thaksatsae. Ani Airam refers to the inhabitants of this place as *thatan*<sup>68</sup> (T.). He asks about these people, and Pau Kuti cynically remarks that they eat "rice of gold and dhal of turquoise", that is porridge of bitter buckwheat and nettle soup.

Afterwards the clan-ancestors continued to Taglung. Ani Airam did not like this village and named the inhabitants *parang purung* (T.), apparently a reference to their strange language. The ancestors then left Thak Khola and continued on the trail to the Ghorapani pass. Below the pass the ancestors were stung by nettles and lost their way. When they asked their way of a man from Phalante village, he replied, "go along the way". This silly answer angered Ani Airam, and he therefore cursed the local people.

Following this experience the ancestors decided to return to Thak Khola. In Thak Khola the ancestors examined the water at Kalopani<sup>69</sup>, the soil at Nakhung, and the stones at Nariledhong.<sup>70</sup> The ancestors found these to be of excellent quality, and they consequently decided to settle in Thak Khola.

After the four ancestors had established themselves, the people were divided into four groups (clans), and it was decided that these groups should marry with each other. Afterwards Ani Airam said, "Although our birthplace is not the same, we should feel that we are born in the same place, so that we can have good feelings towards each other when

---

<sup>67</sup> As explained later, the Thakali, Gurung and Tamang originally formed a single tribe. The Gurung refer to themselves as *tamu* (Pignede 1966, p. 33), and Tamo which in the *choki rhab* apparently is a place name, may also be the name of the indigenous tribe of Thak Khola.

<sup>68</sup> T., *thatan*, "one from Tha (g)"

<sup>69</sup> The village Kalopani (Nep.) is in Thakali language called *mhläng kyu*, "black water".

<sup>70</sup> An informant mentions that Nariledhong is a forest (Tha., *dhong*) which is situated above Sauru village (on the eastern side of the valley). However, Narsang above Khanti village (on the western side of the valley) is also called Nari, and I would not rule out that Nariledhong actually is located there.

we gather", and the people prayed, "Oh four gods, although our birthplace is different, let us live together, remembering that our meeting place is the same."<sup>71</sup>

It is not possible to date the events described in the *choki rhab*. Indeed, it is impossible to know which elements are historical and which are legendary though containing some kernel of historical fact. Although this reduces the value of the *choki rhab* as a historical document, the text does provide us with some important information on the origin of the Tamang Thakalis. First, at least one of the ancestors of the four clans was born in the 'Northwest', probably Western Tibet or Nepal. Secondly, the ancestors originated in different places, but they met and became one society in Thak Khola. And thirdly, Thak Khola was already inhabited when the four ancestors came to Thak Khola.

Based on these information, as well as other historical and linguistic studies, I would propose the following hypothesis on the origin of the Thakalis.

The first settlers in Thak Khola spoke a proto-language of the present Tamang, Gurung and Thakali languages and had mongoloid racial features.<sup>72</sup> This tribe may have been a part of the so-called Kirata people who moved into Nepal from the eastern Himalaya between the fourth and second millennium B.C.<sup>73</sup> Tucci has suggested that the aboriginal people of the Upper Kali Gandaki area, including Thak Khola, were troglodytes, but it is not possible to confirm or refute this conjecture.<sup>74</sup>

---

<sup>71</sup> Gauchan and Vinding 1977, p. 119

<sup>72</sup> Comparative linguistic studies show that Tamang, Gurung and Thakali languages are closely related. According to Glover 1970 these languages diverted into separate languages around 350 A. D. For a reconstruction of the proto-Tamang-Gurung-Thakali language, see Pittman and Glover 1970. See also Mazaudon 1978 for a comparative study of these languages.

<sup>73</sup> For the migration of these Kirata people, see Bista 1976.

<sup>74</sup> "From this place (Tukche) upwards many caves are excavated in the abrupt cliffs: the fact that on the rocks in the proximately small gompas either in ruins or still open to worship can occasionally be seen, does not mean, as one might at a first glance suppose, that these caves were retreats (*mgon k'ang, ri k' rod*) for hermits. The country was never inhabited to such an extent or so rich and productive as to maintain so big a community of ascetics as that which one may suppose to have taken shelter in these caves. There is hardly any doubt that the grottos were old settlements before the introduction of Buddhism and with it, of a higher culture. The aboriginal people were troglodytes, using the caves in winter and shifting to the plateaus in summer for grazing, just as was the case for a long time in Western Tibet also. But the fact that caves are excavated in cliffs of very difficult



Throughout its history, foreigners have arrived and settled in Thak Khola. Some of the immigrants (including, among others, the Rhongata Khampas, the Magars, and the Tangbetans<sup>75</sup> retained a separate ethnic identity, but others were accepted and included in the Thakali society, either as members of existing lineages, or as founders of new, separate ones.<sup>76</sup> Examples of immigrants who established new lineages within the local communities include King Thokarchan (the ancestor of the Gyalki clan in Thini), Bom phobe khe (the ancestor of the Bom clan in Thini), Namti Lama (the ancestor of the Namti lineage of the Kya clan in Thini), and Sonam (the ancestor of the Pempar lineage of the Sercan clan). Hansa Raja and the four ancestors of the Tamang Thakali clans (Ani Airman, Kakpa Gyalsang, Samleden Samlecyang, and Pau Kuti) were probably also immigrants who were accepted and included as members of existing local communities in Thak Khola.

The present-day Thakalis thus descend mainly from the proto Tamang-Gurung-Thakali tribe, but their ancestry also includes immigrants from Baragau, West Tibet and Western Nepal.

#### AS PART OF THE NEPALESE STATE

Thak Khola's inclusion in the Nepalese State in 1786 meant an end to the wars which had ravaged the area in the previous centuries. The Thakalis could now cultivate their fields, raise their animals and engage in trade in peace.

---

access might also suggest a certain insecurity and a standing danger of incursions. When the situation changed and civilization increased, villages grew and developed in the valley along the rivers; the old location of Tukucha also was not where the town is now built but on the plateau which over-towers it to the north east." (Tucci, 1956, p. 10).

Unfortunately, archaeological excavations have yet not been undertaken in the Upper Kali Gandaki area, and it is therefore not possible to confirm or refute Tucci's conjecture, but, as pointed out by von Furer Haimendorf (1975, p. 140), Thakali mythology does not indicate that the first settlers in Thak Khola were troglodytes. In connection with the construction of the small hydropower plant at Mharsyang river, a large quantity of beautiful clay pots were found in a nearby cave in 1980. The pots are now exhibited in Tukche, but no test has yet been made to determine their dates. For photographs of the pots, see Tiwari 1984/85.

Until the 1960's some of the caves were used by ritual specialists during periods of retreat (Tha., *tsam*, cf. Tib., *mtshams*).

<sup>75</sup> The Rhongta Khampa are descendants of Traders from Tibet. The Tangbetan form the single largest ethnic group in Jomsom and originate from Tangbe village a few hours walk further north.

<sup>76</sup> The adoption of foreign male immigrants into existing lineages is rare. However, one of the present members of the Tulacan clan is the grandson of a Tibetan immigrant.

The price the Thakalis paid for this peace was, however, high. The government's policy in rural areas was to maximize revenue and to maintain law and order with a minimum of interference in the affairs of local communities. The taxation of local communities varied a great deal in the different parts of the kingdom and was laid down in royal orders issued by the government in Kathmandu. Several of the orders on revenue collection and other administrative matters in Thak Khola in the 19th century have been translated and published by M.C. Regmi. These documents are our main source on the Thak Khola valley in this period.

The people of Thak Khola paid a variety of taxes to the government. The main tax was a homestead tax (Nep., *serma*) which was paid collectively by the local community, and it remained fixed regardless of changes in the number of households. To ensure a regular revenue, the government engaged non-local contractors (Nep., *ijaradar*) to collect taxes. This tax collection system (Nep., *ijara*) subjected the peasantry to harassment and extortion since there was little the government could do to prevent the contractor from collecting unauthorized taxes.<sup>77</sup>

In the 18th century the taxation in Thak Khola was very heavy. The poorest villagers were unable to pay their share of the homestead tax, and many therefore left Thak and settled elsewhere.<sup>78</sup> This increased the burden of the remaining villagers, but the only action the government took to ease their burden was (in 1798) to issue an appeal

---

<sup>77</sup> Regmi 1972, p. 138.

<sup>78</sup> Regmi 1972, p. 140. See also Regmi 1981, p. 11. The distribution of Tamang Thakalis was first limited to Thasang (the area of the present Kobang village panchayat). In the 18th and 19th century some of the families left Thasang and settled in Tukche in the north and Taglung, Kunjo, Lete and Ghasa in the south. The area between Tukche and Ghasa became later known as Thaksatsae.

According to Rahul 1971, King Prithivi Narayan Shah of Nepal presented the rulers of Bhutan with several estates in Nepal in order to win their friendship. Rahul notes that, "Bhutan's privileges increased particularly after the conflict between Nepal and Tibet in 1788, and Bhutan had estates even beyond the Kathmandu in Lower Mustang, in the Tamang country, and in Yolmo, the country of the Western Sherpas. In 1855, however, Jang Bahadur of Nepal annexed these Bhutanese estates in Nepal in retaliation for Bhutan's alleged support for Tibet and refusal to help Nepal in the war between Nepal and Tibet." (1971, p. 39)

Rahul does not give the exact location of Bhutan's estate in Lower Mustang. However, the monastery in Taglung belongs to the *bka' brgyud pa* (Tib.) school of Tibetan Buddhism. This school has several branches. One is called Taglung (Tib., *stag lung*) and it is after this branch Bhutan (Tib., *'brug yul*) is named. This may indicate that Taglung in Thak Khola once was a part of Bhutan's estates in Nepal.

to emigrants to return home.<sup>79</sup> This appeal had little effect, and in 1802 the government abolished the *ijara* system in Thak and entrusted revenue collection to the local village headmen against a payment of Rs 6,900 a year.<sup>80</sup> However, in order to increase revenue from Thak, the government reintroduced the *ijara* system in 1807, and in 1811 the royalty had increased to Rs 13,000.<sup>81</sup> The government was well aware that this increase in the tax burden would increase emigration from Thak, and it therefore instructed the tax collector not to "allow any Thakse to leave the kot and reside at Tukuche or Lete."<sup>82</sup>

In the 19th century the government's most important source of revenue in Thak Khola was not the homestead tax, but custom duties. The caravan route which runs through the Thak Khofa valley used to be one of the most important trade links between

---

<sup>79</sup> Regmi 1972, p. 140.

<sup>80</sup> Regmi 1972, p. 140. There are two kinds of revenue collection by the village headman, namely *thekbandi* (Nep.) and *thekthiti* (Nep.). According to Regmi, "nineteenth century official documents usually use the terms *thekbandi* and *thekthiti* as if these were interchangeable... (but) ...*thekbandi* may be defined as a settlement with *mukhiyas* (village headmen) in their individual capacity for the collection of revenue for a specific period. When the settlement was made on a long-term basis with the village community as a whole represented by the *mukhiya*, the system was known as *thekthiti*" (1978, p. 73).

<sup>81</sup> Regmi 1972, p. 140.

Regmi implies here that the *ijara* system was in force in Thak Khola in 1811. However, a few years later Regmi published the following document, "On Falgun Sudi 6, 1867 (February 1811), Muktirama Newar was granted authority to collect revenue in the Thak region. The appointment was effective Baisakh 1, 1868. He replaced Mahabir Karki. The same day, the following regulations were promulgated in the name of Muktirama Newar: (abstract translation) 1. Collect revenue from the *budhas* (headmen) of Thak according to the amount and in the installments stipulated by them in their *pattas* and transmit the proceeds to the central treasury (Tosakhana)... 7. Report to us if any *budha* causes any difficulty or obstruction in the collection of revenue according to these *thekbandi* arrangements." (Regmi 1981, pp. 10-11).

One month later (March 1811) the government issued a royal order to the headman (*budha*) Chhayaram Buddha of Thak-Thini which orders him to "collect such amounts, and transmit the proceeds to us, in addition to the payment stipulated earlier on *thekbandi* basis." (Regmi 1979, p. 53).

These informations indicate that in 1811 the land tax in Thak was collected by local village headmen (Nep., *budha*) on a *thekbandi* (Nep.) basis. The village headmen handed over the tax to Muktiram Newar (a government official or a contractor ?) who in turn transmitted it to the central treasury.

<sup>82</sup> Regmi 1981, p. 11. This document is important because it shows that the inhabitants of Thak (i. e. the Tamang Thakali) in 1802 were referred to as *thakse* (Nep.), and that Thak did not include Lete and Tukche. A document from 1855 (Regmi 1977, p. 117) refers to the inhabitants of Thak as *thakali* (Nep., "one from Thak"), and this word seems therefore to have originated in the first half of the 19th century.

Tibet and Nepal. Trade was based on exchange of Nepalese foodgrains for Tibetan salt and wool. Tibetan nomads would collect salt from the lakes of Western Tibet and bring it to Likche, which is an important market place some 60 km north of the Nepalese-Tibetan border. In summer traders from Lo, Dolpo and Baragau would travel to Likche to exchange foodgrains (barley and rice) for salt and wool. The traders would then bring the salt and wool to Baragau and Thak Khola, using transport animals, such as yak, dzo<sup>83</sup>, donkey, sheep, and goat.<sup>84</sup> A dangerous section on the trail between Ghasa and Dana, as well as heavy monsoon rains and the summer heat, prevented the northern traders from taking their animals south of Thak Khola, and they therefore exchanged their goods in Thak Khola. The Thakalis paid for the salt with locally produced barely and imported rice.

In winter villagers and traders from the south (N. *dakre*) came to Thak Khola to exchange rice for salt. The *dakre* did not use animals to transport their goods, but instead used porters. Although exchange rates were more favourable further north, the *dakre* would seldom venture north of Thak Khola due to the cold and a general dislike of the local Tibetans whom they considered dirty and ritually impure.

Due to its location as a transit zone between the Tibetan plateau in the north and the Nepalese hills in the south, Thak Khola became a natural entrepot in the exchange of Tibetan salt and wool for Nepalese foodgrain.<sup>85</sup> Some Thakalis participated in the salt-grain exchange without leaving their home, but others travelled to Baragau to buy salt which they later exchanged for rice in Dana and Tatopani.<sup>86</sup>

---

<sup>83</sup> A dzo (Tib., *mdzo*) is the hybrid of a yak and a common cow.

<sup>84</sup> Tibetan speaking people of Western Nepal commonly use sheep and goat for carrying goods. A sheep can carry about 15-20 kg of salt.

<sup>85</sup> Hamilton who stayed in Nepal 1802-1803, mentions that "Thakakuti (i. e. Tukche), someway below Kagakoti (i. e. Kagbeni), is the chief mart for the trade with Tibet through Mastang (i. e. Mustang)." (1819, p. 274; notes added).

<sup>86</sup> A document from 1811 mentions that traders from Thak and Thini used to visit Chongkhor in Baragau for trade, and that this trade dates back to "when Thak and Than constituted a separate territory under the rule of Jumla" (Regmi 1979, p. 52). The document also mentions that the traders from Thak and Thini used to pay customs or transit duties (Nep., *jagat*) in Chongkhor, and that there was a *jagat* checkpoint in Kagbeni.

Another document from the same year (1811) mentions that traders from Thak and Thini used to trade in salt even south of Dan, "Pratiram Buddha and Chhayaram Budha of Thak-Thini have submitted the following petition: Formerly, the inhabitants and traders of Thak and Thini did not have to pay export duties on general merchandise (Kirana) wherever they visited beyond Dana. They only paid the following duties: 3 pathis of salt on each

Besides salt trade in the Kali Gandaki area, Thakalis also traded in Tibet, India and the Kathmandu valley in the 18th and 19th centuries.<sup>87</sup>

As mentioned earlier, the kings of Parbat (south of Thak Khola) were overlords in Thak Khola in the 18th century. In order to collect customs duties from the traders along the Kali Gandaki river, the kings of Parbat are said to have established a custom office (Nep., *bhansar*) at Dana, an hour's walk south of Thak Khola.<sup>88</sup> In 1786 Parbat fell to the Shah kings of Gorkha, and the collection of customs duties at Dana thus came under the administration of the newly founded Nepalese State.<sup>89</sup> According to one document,

---

load supplied to the south (*mades*). 6 or 7 pathis and 3 mana of salt from each *dhakre* trader". (Regmi 1979, p. 53).

It is not clear whether Thakali traders used pack animals in those days. As mentioned earlier, there is a difficult section on the trail between Ghasa and Dana, making it dangerous to take pack animals south of Ghasa. An early 19th century source indicates that pack animals were not used on this sector, "Danakoti (Dana)... is a place of some trade. There is there a bad hill, but except over that, oxen could, with some difficulty, carry loads all the way from Rerighat ( a mart some days walk further south) to Kaga Koti (Kagbeni)" (Hamilton 1819, p. 274; notes added). However, a Government order from 1862 mentions that, "Thakalis taking salt on *pack animals* must sell it at the Dana customs house at the current rate. They may then *take their animals further* down to bring up rice, and on this they must pay the usual duty". (von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 188; emphasis added).

Unfortunately, the above source does not mention the kind of pack animals the Thakalis used in the mid-19th century. Tibetan traders use yak, sheep and goat to transport goods down to Thak Khola, but although the Thakalis have herds of these animals, they are females raised for the production of milk, meat and wool. I would, therefore, guess that the ox was the Thakalis' most important pack animal in those days.

<sup>87</sup> Referring to a document from 1803, M. C. Regmi notes that the Thakalis "conducted trade not only with Tibet but also Kagbeni, Mustang and Chharka, and with Patan in Kathmandu Valley" (Regmi 1972, p. 140). And in a document from 1858 Thakali traders from Pacgau complain that they are not being allowed to visit Bhutaul, Nawalpur and Balampur (on the Indian border) for trade (Regmi 1980, p. 75). These documents (as well as some of those quoted earlier) show that the Thakalis had an extensive trade network already in the early 19th century. Consequently, I cannot accept Manzardo's proposal that in the early 1860's "the Thakalis, according to our account, were only minimally involved in trade at that time". (1978, p. 24).

<sup>88</sup> The king of Parbat probably also collected a homestead tax in Thak Khola. According to an informant there exists a copper plate issued by the last king of Parbat (Kirthi Bam Malla) which orders the inhabitants of Thasang (the present Kobang panchayat) to pay a yearly homestead tax of Rs. 500.

<sup>89</sup> Regmi 1983, p. 80.

customs duties at Dana were collected by a contractor (Nep., *ijaridar*) in 1853<sup>90</sup>, but this system (Nep., *ijari*) was probably introduced already in the late 18th century.

In 1854-56 Nepal and Tibet were at war. During the war the Nepalese government imposed a ban on export of foodgrains to Tibet, and consequently the salt-grain exchange between the two countries came to a halt.<sup>91</sup> To indemnify the customs contractor (who paid Rs 29,001 a year in royalty), the government cancelled the contract and posted government officials to collect customs duties at Dana. The *ijari* system was, however, reintroduced after the war.

For the war the Nepalese Government recruited troops and porters among villagers. Only members of the pure castes could become soldiers, while members of the unpure caste were taken in as porters and other auxiliaries.<sup>92</sup> In 1855 officials were sent to Thak Khola to recruit Thakalis as porters, but two Thakali leaders, namely Subba Dhansaram and Subba Balbir submitted a petition that in the time of the Malla kings (of Parbat) the Thakalis used to be recruited as soldiers, and that according to administrative arrangements made in 1813-14, the inhabitants of Thak were exempted from unpaid labour obligations during war and other occasions.<sup>93</sup> The government accepted this petition (and thus recognized the Thakalis as a pure caste), and subsequently the Thakalis were recruited only as soldiers for the war.

Balbir served as translator during the Nepal-Tibet War 1854-56. According to Thakali informants, Balbir performed his duties with much distinction, and after the war he was given copies of the 108 volume Tibetan canon (Tib., *bka' 'gyur*) and the 220 volume commentarial collection (Tib., *bstan 'gyur*)<sup>94</sup>. These scriptures are still in his family's possession.

In 1860 Balbir had a serious dispute with another Thakali leader named Chyalpa.<sup>95</sup> In early 1860 the contract for the collection of customs duties at Dana was initially given to Captain H.K. Chetri for Rs 44,501. Chyalpa Thakali then offered a

---

<sup>90</sup> Regmi 1984, p. 17-18.

<sup>91</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>92</sup> For an analysis of the Nepalese caste system, see Hofer 1979.

<sup>93</sup> Regmi 1977, pp. 117-118.

<sup>94</sup> It is generally believed that Balbir earned the name *balbir* (Nep., "strong (and ) brave") during the Tibet war 1854-56 (see, for example, von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 143). I doubt this, because Balbir is referred to by this name in a document from 1855 (Regmi 1977, p. 117).

<sup>95</sup> Regmi 1977a, pp. 161-163.

higher bid, but eventually the contract was given to Captain Chetri's son, Lt. C.S.K. Chetri who subsequently recruited some Thakalis to work for him, including Balbir Thakali.

Following this Chyalpa made up a plan to stop the flow of salt to Dana by imposing a ban on the sale of foodgrain from Thaksatsae, and he therefore called a meeting of all Thakalis to discuss the plan. At the meeting Chyalpa received some support, but eventually he had to drop his plan due to opposition from Balbir. Chyalpa then filed a complain against Balbir at the court in Baglung. The court sent constables along with Chyalpa to arrest Balbir who was beaten and put in fetters. Balbir managed, however, to escape from his captors and went to Kathmandu where he submitted a petition to Prime Minister Jung Bahadur Rana. The prime minister accepted Balbir's petition and ordered the arrest of Chyalpa Thakali and his fellow conspirators.

## THE PERIOD OF THE SALT MONOPOLY

Until 1862 the Thakalis were free to take salt south of Dana as long as they paid customs duties at the custom office in Dana. This situation changed, however, in 1862:

According to an order (*sanad*) issued by Jung Bahadur in 1862<sup>96</sup>, a deputation of Thakalis had requested a reduction in the land revenue of Rs 12,500 which until then had been paid by the 700 households of Thaksatsae. In support of their plea they argued that 216 families had left Thaksatsae and settled in Kaski, Lamjung and other parts of the middle ranges. The government did not grant the requested reduction of tax, but offered the Thakalis a choice between the status quo ante and the payment of land revenue and other taxes according to the rules then applying to the Humla region of Jumla district. The Thakalis decided, perhaps not fully realizing the implications, to opt for the latter course, and the government order of 1862 describes in twenty-six paragraphs the manner in which taxes should henceforth be collected. The greatest change brought about by the introduction of the Humla rules was the termination of free trade in salt and grain. A customs post was established at Dana, a village south of Thak Khola<sup>97</sup>; customs duty was

---

<sup>96</sup> Von Furer-Haimendorf mentions here that the order was issued in 1862, but later in the same book (page 188) he gives the year 1861.

<sup>97</sup> This information is not correct. The custom office in Dan is mentioned in documents from 1855 and, as mentioned above, it was probably established already in the 18th century.

charged on most commodities carried past that post in either direction, and-most important of all-a monopoly of the trade in salt was granted to the collector of customs. (Von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, pp. 142-143).

(The order) contained the following clause: "Thakalis taking salt on pack animals must sell it at the Dana customs house at the current rate. They may then take their animals further down to bring up rice, and on this they must pay the usual duty. Anyone who makes one journey carrying salt is allowed to make two journeys carrying rice. The Dana customs office will not allow anyone to make more journeys." In another clause it was stated explicitly that the Thakalis would not be allowed to take salt further south than Dana and would have to trade exclusively with the customs contractor and not make any trade deals with the people from the lower regions who came to Thaksatsae to buy salt... As the order was addressed to the "mukhiya (headman) and the people of Thak" it did not contain rules regarding the salt-trade of people from Dolpo, Lo, Baragaon and Panchagoan, but it would seem that any salt brought by such traders had to be sold to the customs contractor. (ibid, pp. 188-189).<sup>98</sup>

The introduction of this monopoly (Nep., *rakam*) in trade of salt in favour of the customs contractor had an adverse effect on the business of other traders in Thak Khola and Baragau, and they therefore requested the Government to abolish the monopoly and to reintroduce free trade. The government accepted their petition and the monopoly was abolished in 1863 and again in 1874.<sup>99</sup> However, in 1876 the government reintroduced the monopoly, probably in order to increase the royalty which it received from the customs contract.<sup>100</sup> Except for a brief period in 1886, the monopoly continued until 1927.

---

<sup>98</sup> These observations are important, but certain points are unclear, especially the linkage between the payment of taxes and the salt monopoly. Von Furer-Haimendorf notes that "until 1850 no customs duty was levied on the import of salt by the government of Nepal, but the people of Thaksatsae paid a consolidated tax of Rs 12,500 in return for which they were free to trade in salt without any restrictions" (1975, p. 188). It seems, however, that the tax of Rs 12,500 was the homestead tax which the Thakalis had been paying to the government since the late 18th century, and it is unlikely that this tax was linked with trade issues. Unfortunately, von Furer-Haimendorf does not mention whether the tax of Rs 12,500 actually was reduced or abolished after the introduction of the salt monopoly.

<sup>99</sup> Regmi 1978, p. 1.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*



In 1869 Balbir held the contract as custom collector in Dana.<sup>101</sup> It is not known when Balbir first got the contract and for how long he held it, but his son Kaviram held the contract in 1876 against an annual payment of Rs 82,000.<sup>102</sup>

Little is known about Kaviram Thakali except that he shifted his residence from Kobang to Tukche, and that he died young. At his death his widow voluntarily relinquished the contract.<sup>103</sup> The contract is then said to have gone to the family of Patiram of Larjung.

Patiram and Kaviram both belonged to the Sercan clan, but to different lineages.<sup>104</sup> Patiram is said to have held a mining contract in Baisa Khani<sup>105</sup> in Myagdi district. Informants mention that Patiram was extremely rich<sup>106</sup>, and that he once even boasted that his wealth could block the Kali Gandaki river.

Informants state that Patiram, his youngest son Krishna Prasad and his son-in-law Ram Prasad all were *subba* (Nep.). In 19th century Nepal a *subba* was a senior official in the civil administration, but this title was also given to the customs contractor in Dana. In connection with the award of the customs contract, the contractor was required to provide a guarantor who would pay the royalty to the government in case the contractor could not fulfill his obligations. The guarantor was known as *jamani subba*<sup>107</sup> (N.), while the contractor was called *thekka subba*<sup>108</sup> (N.). There is documentary evidence that Ram Prasad was customs contractor in Dana, but it is uncertain whether Pati Ram and

---

<sup>101</sup> von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 143. Balbir is usually referred to as Balbir Subba. Iijima mentions that Balbir got the title of *subba* (Nep.) as a reward for his services under the Nepal-Tibet war 1854-56 (1977, p. 75). However, the contractor of the Dana customs office was given the title of *subba*, and it is probably in this capacity that Balbir became *subba*. Most anthropologists agree that Balbir became customs collector in Dana and hence *subba* in 1869 (e. g. von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 143 and Manzardo and Sharma 1975, p. 26). However, Balbir is referred to as Balbir Subba in a document from 1855 (Regmi 1977, p. 117). This probably indicates that Balbir became customs contractor earlier than reported in the literature.

<sup>102</sup> Regmi 1978, p. 1.

<sup>103</sup> von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 144.

<sup>104</sup> The Sercan clan is in Thakali language called *dhimcan*. For a study of Thakali patrilineal descent groups, see Vinding 1981.

<sup>105</sup> Nep., *baisa khani*. "22 mine".

<sup>106</sup> Patiram is usually referred to as Patiram Sahu, "Patiram the Rich".

<sup>107</sup> Nep., *jamani*, "guarantor".

<sup>108</sup> Nep., *thekka*, "contractor".

Krishna Prasad held this contract. Pati Ram may, however, have got the title of *subba* in connection with the mining contract in Myagdi, or as guarantor to his son-in-law.

In 1886 the customs contract was held by Ram Prasad Thakali (Pati Ram's son-in-law) against a yearly payment of Rs. 97,000.<sup>109</sup> That year the government accepted a petition from traders in Thak Khola and Baragau that they be allowed to sell their salt anywhere they liked. The abolishment of the monopoly put Ram Prasad in a difficult position and he therefore pleaded to the Government that the monopoly in trade in salt be reconfirmed in his favour, "If I am not permitted to engage in the salt trade on a monopoly basis, how can I fulfill my contractual obligations to the government, which amounts to thousands of rupees?"<sup>110</sup> Fortunately for Ram Prasad, the Government accepted his petition and reconfirmed the monopoly in his favour.

In the late 19th century Balbir and Pati Ram's families competed for the customs contract, but at the turn of the century Balbir's descendants emerged as the most powerful Thakali family — a position which it has kept to today. Pati Ram's family was less fortunate. According to a local saying, Ram Prasad squandered away the wealth of his father-in-law.<sup>111</sup> For example, it is said that Ram Prasad had a servant to carry his waterpipe while riding. However, Krishna Prasad (Pati Ram's son) is also said to have lost much money.<sup>112</sup>

---

<sup>109</sup> Regmi 1978, p. 1.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> The saying goes, "*patiramko dhan, ram prasadko chilimili*" (Nep.), "Pati Ram's wealth, Ram Prasad's pleasure".

<sup>112</sup> Pati Ram's house plus two fields were sold in the 1940's by one of his descendants for a total of Rs 725.

**THE BALBIR LINEAGE**

Balbir\* -- Kaviram\* -- Harkaman\* -- Mohanman --- Lalitman\*\*  
 -- Nagindraman\*\*  
 -- Shankarman  
 -- Shamsherchand  
 -- Hitman\* -- Anangman\*\*\*  
 -- Krishnaman\*\*/\*\*  
 -- Indraman  
 -- Yogindraman  
 -- Bupendraman  
 --- Chetman\* --- Chandraman  
 --- Guptaman\* --- Gobindraman  
 -- Gujaman  
 -- Gujendraman  
 -- Ganesh B.\* --- Komal B.\* --- Iswariman

Symbols: \* Subba (Contractor in Dana)  
 \*\* Subba (Contractor in Butwal/Nepalganj/Rajapur)  
 \*\*\* Subba (Civil Servant)

In 1895 the customs contract was held by Kaviram Thakali's son Harkaman (1860-1903).<sup>113</sup> Harkaman also held the contract in 1899 when Kawaguchi (a Japanese monk) passed through Thak Khola.<sup>114</sup>

In 1902 the situation in Thak Khola took a dramatic turn when the customs contract was awarded to Man Lal Gurung from Ghanpokhari in Lumjung district.<sup>115</sup> The circumstances for this are unclear, but they may relate to political changes in Kathmandu.<sup>116</sup> Initially, Man Lal held the contract only to 1903, and in the following

<sup>113</sup> Upreti 1980, p. 169. Harkaman Thakali was probably awarded the contract some years earlier, because it is said that he was very young when he first got the contract, and that his mother's brother (Harka Bahadur) stood as his guarantor. For Harkaman's dates, see von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 144.

<sup>114</sup> Kawaguchi mentions a "local Governor, named Harkaman Suppa". (1909, p. 45).

<sup>115</sup> Messerschmidt and Gurung 1974, p. 208.

<sup>116</sup> In the 1846 Jung Bahadur Kunwar (later Rana) and his six brothers took the power in Nepal in a coup. Jung Bahadur died in 1877 and was replaced by his brother Ranaudip. In

years the contract was back in the hands of the members of the Balbir lineage.<sup>117</sup> However, Man Lal and his sons got the contract back, once from 1905 to 1910, and again from 1918 to 1920.<sup>118</sup>

Harkaman died in 1903<sup>119</sup>, but his younger brother Ganeshman took up the challenge against the Gurung *subba*, assisted by Hitman's sons (Mohanman, Hitman, Chetman and Guptaman), and his own (Komal Bahadur, alias 'Sete'). Informants mention that these persons all became *subba* before the salt monopoly was abolished in 1927.

The relationship between the Thakali and Gurung *subba* is not clear. Shortly after Man Lal Gurung obtained the customs contract in Thak Khola, he became bond brother with Harkaman Thakali, and also their sons established such a relationship.<sup>120</sup> In spite of this, the Thakali *subba* and their supporters are said to have secretly opposed the Gurung *subba*. To avoid this opposition, Nar Jung Gurung (Man Lal's eldest son) shifted the customs office from Tukche (where the Thakali *subba* had their home) to a plain opposite Chairu, outside the control of the Thakali *subba*.<sup>121</sup> The Thakalis stood,

---

1885 the sons of the youngest brother (Dhir Shamsher) killed Ranaudip, and the eldest of the 17 Shamsher brothers (Bir) was declared prime minister. Bir Shamsher died in March 1901 and was succeeded by another brother Deb Shemsher, but only three months later (June 1901) a third brother, Chandra Shamsher, made a successful coup d'etat. Chandra Shamsher was a powerful ruler and held the post of prime minister until his death in 1929. He was succeeded by a fourth brother, Bhim Shamsher who died in 1932. Bhim Shamsher was succeeded by a fifth brother, Juddha Shamsher who ruled Nepal until 1945. The prime ministership was then given to Padma Shamsher (a son of Bhim) who retired in 1948 and was replaced by Mohan Shamsher (a son of Chandra Shamsher). The Rana family's monopoly on the prime ministership in Nepal was abolished in 1951. For a study of Rana period (1846-1951), see Rana 1978.

<sup>117</sup> Meserschmidt and Gurung 1974, p. 210. Informants mention that the customs contract was awarded for a period of three years (see also von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 143). It is not clear why Man Lal Gurung held the contract for two years only.

<sup>118</sup> Meserschmidt and Gurung 1974, p. 210. But according to von Furer-Haimendorf (1975, p. 145) the Gurung *subba* last held the contract from 1917-19.

<sup>119</sup> von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, pp. 144.

<sup>120</sup> Messerschmidt and Gurung 1974, p. 210. Since Harkaman died in 1903, the formal relationship must have been established shortly after Man Lal got the customs contract for the first time in 1902.

<sup>121</sup> In the 1870's Kaviram moved his residence, and, according to von Furer-Haimendorf (1975, p. 144) also the customs office to Tukche. There is, however, documentary evidence (Regmi 1978, p.1) that the customs office was in Dana in 1886, and, according to my informants, it remained there until 1928. However, the Thakali *subba* established a branch

however, not united in the opposition against the Gurung *subba*, and several Thakalis cooperated with the Gurungs, including Dham Narayan Gauchan and Cham Narayan Gauchan who are said to have been guarantors for Man Lal and his sons.<sup>122</sup>

The competition between the Thakali and Gurung *subbas* increased the price of the customs contract, and in the early 20th century the royalty reached Rs 150,000 a year.<sup>123</sup> This was a fortune, equal to about 56 kg of gold.<sup>124</sup> In order to pay this sum of money<sup>125</sup>, the customs contractor obviously had to trade very large quantities of salt and grain at high profit margins.<sup>126</sup> Moreover, an interruption in the flow of commodities, fluctuations in exchange rates, changes in the monopoly status, decreasing demand for salt in the Nepalese hills, etc. could turn the contractor's projected profit into a loss.

---

office in Tukche for use in summer, and it was this office which Nar Jung shifted to Chairi. Informants mention that Nar Jung made this move after he had been threatened to be thrown in the Kali Gandaki (where he is said to have taken a daily bath regardless of the season) if he remained in Tukche.

<sup>122</sup> As mentioned above, the introduction of the salt monopoly in favour of the customs contractor had an adverse effect on the business of other Thakali traders, and some of these were probably pleased when Harkaman's family lost the contract to Man Lal Gurung.

<sup>123</sup> von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 145.

<sup>124</sup> In 1910 gold cost Rs 31 per total (11.66 gm) in Kathmandu. (Regmi 1981b, p. 116).

<sup>125</sup> The royalty payable to the government was Rs 150,000 in *cash*. It is not clear how the customs contractor got this sum of cash, because the trade is reported to have taken place on a barter basis, "people from Lo and Baragaun brought the salt to Tukche and received grain in exchange, while people as far as Lamjung, Kunsu, Baglung and Gulmi came to Thaksatsae to exchange grain for salt". (von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 190; see also Bista 1971, p. 52, and Manzardo 1978, p. 10). However, the Thakalis used not only imported rice to pay for the salt, but also (mainly?) locally produced barley. Moreover, considering the limited demand for rice in Thak Khola and Tibet (rice was then a luxury), it is likely that some of the salt was sold to southern traders for cash.

<sup>126</sup> von Furer-Haimendorf mentions that in Tukche the contractor would buy salt from northern traders at the rate of 32 lbs per rupee, and later sell it to traders from the south at the rate of 10 lbs per rupee (1975, p. 189). Even with this high profit the contractor would have to buy and sell 990 tons of salt a year to cover the cost of the contract (Rs 150,000). This is 2.7 t a day, and it would require about 60 porters to transport it out of Thak Khola. It is hard to imagine that the customs contractor really traded this big quantity of salt.

In the 1920's the royalty was reduced first to Rs 110,000 and later to Rs 90,000.<sup>127</sup> Von Furer-Haimendorf relates this to a decline in the salt trade:

The reason for this decline of the salt-trade was not a fall in the demand for Tibetan salt-the competition of Indian salt being not yet effective-but a sharp drop in the amount of salt exported by Tibet from the area north of Thak Khola. (1975, p.145)

In a footnote von Furer-Haimendorf adds:

According to a personal communication of Mr. Don Messerschmidt, the temporary decline of the flow of salt into Mustang and Thak Khola was probably due to the successful efforts of Gurung customs contractors to divert the Tibetan salt-trade to the Marsyangdi route over which they had control. (pp. 145-146)

Manzardo (1978) rejects this explanation. According to him there was no decline in the salt trade, and the reduction in the royalty was the result of a successful scheme by the Thakali *subba* to increase their own profit.<sup>128</sup>

Neither von Furer-Haimendorf nor Manzardo support their propositions with documentary evidence. However, there exists documentary evidence that in 1895 the Tibetans who traditionally supplied salt to Thak Khola began to send their salt to other destinations, and the flow of salt was only resumed after a meeting at the border between the contractor (Harkaman Thakali) and the Tibetans.<sup>129</sup> Man Lal Gurung had the same

---

<sup>127</sup> von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 145.

<sup>128</sup> "A still more plausible explanation, however, is that the Thakali *subba*, when he was in power, and his agents, when the Gurungs were in power, were not accurately assessing the amount of salt which was being imported. It is quite possible that the difference between revenues collected and revenues said to have been collected was merely a source of increased income for certain Thakalis. Thak Khola being a remote district at that time, it is unlikely that there would have been an inquiry (Nep: *daudaha*) unless the discrepancy was very large.

In the text we noted that Man Lal's bid for the contract was excessively high and that the Ranas' were allowing him credit to pay off his debt. If the Thakalis were shortweighing the Thak Khola customs records, then the Gurung's own income was being lowered. By bidding up the price of the contract and shortchanging the contract holder, it is likely that the Thakalis were soon able to make short work of their Gurung rivals. There is no reason to assume that the Thakalis would then discontinue the shortage once the Gurungs had been defeated." (Manzardo 1978, p. 55).

<sup>129</sup> Uprety 1980, p. 169.

problem in 1905.<sup>130</sup> These episodes support von Furer-Haimendorf's proposition that the reduction in the royalty payable to the government relate to a decline in the supply of salt. However, this explanation does not rule out that due to their competition, the Gurung and Thakali *subba* had in the 1910's given unrealistic high bids, and that the bids (and the royalty) later were reduced to accord with the market situation.<sup>131</sup>

Informants mention that in the 1920's the Thakali *subba* made little or no profit from the customs contract, and consequently they began to work for the abolishment of the contract system and the reintroduction of free trade.<sup>132</sup> Although this would mean an end to their monopoly in the trade of salt, they would no longer have to pay about Rs 90,000 a year as royalty to the government. As mentioned above, other traders in Thak Khola and Baragau had been against the monopoly ever since it was first introduced, and, for the first time since 1862, the Thakali community stood united in their plea to get the monopoly abolished. The abolishment of the monopoly would, of course, result in a loss of revenue to the government, but the Thakali *subba* were close to the Rana rulers, and in 1927 the government abolished the old customs collecting system, including the customs contractor's monopoly in trade of salt.

---

130 Ibid.

As suggested by von Furer-Haimendorf and Messerschmidt, the Gurung *subba* may have tried to divert the supply of salt from Thak Khola to the Mharsyangdi after they had given up the customs contract in Thak Khola. However, considering that Man Lal had problems with the supply of salt to Thak Khola when he was customs contractor in 1905, it is unlikely that the decline of the flow of salt to Thak Khola in the 1920's was due to the successful efforts of his son. An alternative guess is that the Tibetan suppliers sent their salt to areas where prices were higher than in Thak Khola, that salt supplies were interrupted by bandits along the supply route, or that the Tibetan government temporarily stopped the supply of salt due to a dispute with the Nepalese government.

<sup>131</sup> There could be other explanations for the reduction in the royalty. For example, the Thakali and Gurung *subba* could have agreed not to compete against each other and to share the profit arisen from the reduction in the royalty. The lower bids could be explained to the government as a result of a decline in the salt trade. And Manzardo (note 129 above) suggests that the Thakali *subba* forced the Gurung *subba* out of the contest, and subsequently reduced their bid and thus achieved a reduction in the royalty payable to the government. None of these explanations make, however, sense, because the *subba* are said to have made little or no profit during the final years of the monopoly (see also note 133 below). Moreover, informants mention that it was the Thakali *subba* who approached the government to get the old custom collection system abolished.

<sup>132</sup> See also von Furer-Haimendorf (1975) who mentions that "during the final years of the monopoly, the customs contractors' accounts are said to have shown a loss of about Rs 40,000 per year". (p. 145). Von Furer-Haimendorf doubts, however, whether this actually was the case, "We may doubt whether the Thakali *subba* really suffered in any year a loss of Rs 40,000". (pp. 146).

Instead of the old system, the government established in 1928 a customs office in Jomsom and entrusted the collection of customs duties to government officials. This system did, however, not function satisfactorily, and in 1930 the government appointed some members of the Balbir lineage as customs collectors in Jomsom against an annual payment of Rs 12,000. This contract was only of minor importance to the Thakali *subba*, and the management of the customs office was entrusted to some relatives from Jomsom.<sup>133</sup>

When the monopoly ended in 1927 the members of the Balbir lineage were the richest persons in Thak Khola and surrounding areas. The wealth of the family was founded primarily on the customs contract which it had held almost constantly since 1869. Besides trade in salt and foodgrains, the Thakali *subba* had a major income from trade in wool. The wool was bought in Tibet and transported to the Indian border where it was sold and exported to India. In the late 19th century the Thakali *subba* also held a contract for collection of customs duties in the upper part of the Marsyangdi river.<sup>134</sup> Further, the *subba* family owned much land, and while the production of barley (the wintercrop) was exchanged for salt, buckwheat (the summercrop) was used for consumption. Finally, the *subba* were major money lenders. A default loan occasionally gave a loss, but more often it was a good opportunity to acquire land and (bond) labour at a cheap price.

In the early 20th century, the majority of Thakalis, especially in the villages situated away from the caravan route (Taglung, Kunjo and Naprunghung) are said to have made a living primarily from agriculture and animal husbandry (yak, goat and sheep). These Thakalis had little or no income from trade and the monopoly did not affect them much, except for the restrictions imposed on import of salt for household consumption.<sup>135</sup>

But to major Thakali traders the monopoly was an evil. The restrictions imposed on trade in salt in effect put them out of this business, and during the period of the

---

<sup>133</sup> In 1954 the government moved the customs office to Neczyung near the Tibetan border so that villagers north of Jomsom no longer had to pay customs duties on foodgrains imported for consumption. In connection with this relocation of the customs office, the Thakali *subba* involvement in custom collection the Kali Gandaki area came to an end.

<sup>134</sup> Messerschmidt and Gurung 1974, pp. 204.

<sup>135</sup> According to informants from Thaksatsae as well as Pacgau, households were allowed to import only five *pathi* of salt for their own consumption during the monopoly. This was not sufficient (especially for households raising animals), and informants from Taglung mention that villagers therefore smuggled salt during the monopoly.



monopoly they therefore concentrated on trade in other commodities, especially wool and live animals (goats and sheep). Some traders also travelled to Kalimpong (in India) to buy Tibetan tea and other goods for resale in Thak Khola and Lo.

The number of Thakalis who gained from the monopoly was very limited. Besides the members of the Balbir lineage, the customs contract benefitted only a small group of affinal relatives and trusted friends who assisted the *subba* in the buying and selling of salt and grains, the collection of customs duties, the keeping of records and accounts, etc.<sup>136</sup>

The wealth of the Thakali *subba* and their connections to the rulers in Kathmandu gave them a dominant position in the political affairs in Thak Khola and neighbouring areas. Within their own community the *subba* used their political influence to introduce reforms of Thakali culture. In the 19th century Thakali society and culture was heavily influenced by Tibetan civilization. However, in the beginning of the 20th century the sons of Harkaman Thakali introduced reforms to substitute Tibetan elements in Thakali culture with elements from the culture and religion of the Hindu rulers in Kathmandu. This 'Nepalization' included, among others, the introduction of Nepali surnames (Gauchan, Tulacan, Sercan and Bhattacan<sup>137</sup>), the abolishment of the Thakalis' traditional Tibetan-style winterdress, a ban on the consumption of yak meat<sup>138</sup>, and a ban on capture marriages. The Thakali *subba* obviously introduced these reforms in order to appear less 'Tibetan' in the eyes of the high caste rulers in Kathmandu, and this move may well relate to the loss of the customs contract to Man Lal Gurung in 1902.

## ADA NAREN OF MARPHA

The present examination has so far focussed on Thaksatsae and the Tamang Thakalis. In the 19th century the economical situation in Pacgau was basically similar

---

<sup>136</sup> This includes especially members of the *dhyacan* lineage of the Tulacan clan with whom the members of the Balbir lineage had (and still have) close affinal relations.

<sup>137</sup> In the late 19th century the Tamang Thakalis used 'Thakali' as their surname. For example, a document from 1886 mentions Kaviram Thakali and Ram Prasad Thakali (Regmi 1978b, p. 1). It is not known exactly when the Tamang Thakalis invented Nepali names (Gauchan, Tulacan, Sercan and Bhattacan) for their clans and began to use these as surnames, but Harkaman is referred to as Harkaman Thakali as late as in 1895. (Uprety 1980, pp. 169).

<sup>138</sup> This ban is not enforced and many Tamang Thakalis in Thak Khola consume yak meat (see also Vinding 1979/80 and 1984).

to that of Thaksatae, as described above. The bulk of the villagers lived in poverty, and those who could not pay their share of the high homestead tax left their home and settled elsewhere.<sup>139</sup> The village communities included, however, also a handful of rich traders, as indicated by the big houses along the main street in Marpha.

The biggest of these was built by Ada Naren from the Lalcan clan. Kawaguchi, a Japanese monk, met Ada Naren in October 1899 and refers to him as "the chief of the village of Malba."<sup>140</sup> The meeting took place in Tsarang, a major village in Lo, and Ada Naren was on his way back to Marpha from one of his periodic visits to a yak ranch which he owned in the northwest plains in Tibet. Ada Naren had some Tibetan scriptures which he had bought in Tibet, and he invited Kawaguchi to Marpha to recite these. Ada Naren left, however, on a business trip to India, and it was only in March 1900 that Kawaguchi heard about his return and went to Marpha.

Kawaguchi describes that he "was given the freedom of the family chapel, which consisted of two neatly furnished apartments, the innermost of which contained a fine set of Buddha images, as well as the Tibetan edition of the Sacred Text and other volumes of ecclesiastical writings, while the windows of the front room commanded a charming view of a peach orchard.... Towering behind and above the emerald grove stood a range of snow capped peaks, the tout ensemble making a view delightful for its primitive joys and natural beauty."<sup>141</sup>

The peace which Kawaguchi enjoyed in Marpha was, however, spoiled by a trader from Tukche who had gone to Calcutta on business and whom Kawaguchi had asked to deliver some letters to Sarat Chandra Das.<sup>142</sup> In Calcutta the Tukche trader learned that Sarat Chandra Das was an employee of the British Government, and he therefore concluded that Kawaguchi (whom he thought was a Chinese Lama) in reality was a British agent on some secret mission in Nepal.<sup>143</sup> The villagers in Marpha were, of course, concerned to hear this because "if there were any truth in the rumour, he (Ada

---

<sup>139</sup> Vinding 1984, p. 64.

<sup>140</sup> Kawaguchi 1909, p. 62.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 64-65.

<sup>142</sup> Sarat Chandra Das (a Bengali) is the author on several books on Tibet, including a dictionary (Das 1902).

<sup>143</sup> This was not a farfetched conclusion. S. C. Das had in fact visited Tibet as a spy for the British, and he is immortalised in *Kim* as Hurree Chunder Mookerjee. (Hopkirk 1982, p. 55). While it is unlikely that Kawaguchi was engaged as a spy for the British, he may unknowingly have provided S. C. Das with information of intelligence value.

Naren) and his folks would be visited with what punishment heaven only knew."<sup>144</sup> Kawaguchi therefore decided to unveil his identity to Ada Naren whom he found "a man of conscience who could be trusted with a secret."<sup>145</sup> Kawaguchi showed his passport to Ada Naren who "understood just enough English to follow out the spelling of some words in that language"<sup>146</sup> and explained about his plan to secretly visit Tibet. Ada Naren apparently convinced his fellow villagers that Kawaguchi was not a spy, and Kawaguchi stayed in Marpha until June when he left for Tibet.

Kawaguchi does not refer to Ada Naren as *subba*, but according to informants from Marpha, Ada Naren held a contract on collection of customs duties in Charka (immediately west of Thak Khola), and he therefore got the title of *subba*. Tamang Thakali informants confirm that Ada Naren was tax collector in Charka, but they reject that Ada Naren officially was appointed *subba*.

## THE POST-MONOPOLY PERIOD

After the abolishment of the salt monopoly in 1927, trade in salt was again open to all traders. Consequently, the profits which earlier had been made by the customs contractor became divided among a large number of traders. In the 1930's a new trail was constructed between Ghasa and Dana, making it easier to take pack animals south of Thak Khola.<sup>147</sup> At the same time Thakali traders began to acquire mules. This animal is well-suited for transportation along the Kali Gandaki. Thakali mule owners bought salt and wool in Lo and Tibet which they later sold in Tatopani, Beni, Baglung, Tansen, Bhutwal and Pokhara. On the return trip to Thak Khola the mules owners brought back rice.

Initially, only rich Thakali traders acquired mules. An informant remembers that in the 1930's only two households in Jomsom (both Tamang Thakalis) had mules, while there were none in Marpha, Thini and Syang. Traders from these villages would, however, use jho and ox to transport salt and foodgrains, but they would travel only down to Tatopani since the jho cannot survive further south. But later also the Thakalis of

---

<sup>144</sup> Kawaguchi 1909, pp. 66.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>147</sup> According to Gurung (1980, p. 200) there are two old trails on the western side of the valley. The higher one is 450 meters above the river and is said to have been initiated by Manlal Gurung. The lower one is from 1935 and the cost of construction was paid by a royal priest. See also note 87.

Pacgau acquired mules, and today mule-business is a major source of income in these villages.<sup>148</sup>

In addition to salt, wool and live animals were important trade items. According to an informant, the Thakalis traded about 50,000 kg wool annually in the 1930's. And another informant mentions that the 1940's the Thakalis used to buy about 18,000 goats a year from Tibet. The goats were later sold to Hindus in the south in connection with the Dasai festival.

Thakali trade was not limited only to goods imported from Tibet (salt, wool and live animals). In winter traders took their mules to Bhutwal (near the Indian border) where they bought rice, sugar, cigarettes, clothes, etc. which they sold in the bazaars in the hills, or in Thak Khola. Traders who did not have mules used porters to transport their goods, and even after deducting the cost of portage, the goods were sold with a handsome profit.<sup>149</sup> Some even travelled to Kalimpong (in India) to buy Tibetan tea, incense, etc. The traders took these goods by train to the Nepalese border, and from there onwards they used porters to carry the goods to Thak Khola.

In connection with the expansion of the trade in the south, Thakali women began to establish small inns (Nep., *bhatti*) along the main trails to provide food and lodging for Thakali traders. The inns also served other travellers, especially soldiers from the British Army on homeleave in Nepal.

In the post monopoly period the Thakali *subba* began to expand their business south of Thak Khola. This relates to growing business opportunities in the south, a decline in their share of the salt trade, and limited investment opportunities in Thak Khola. The Thakali *subba* already had houses and farm land in Dana (where the customs office was located), and their trading network extended to India, but for the first time members of the *subba* family settled permanently in the south.

The first member of the Balbir lineage to do so was Hitman Shercan's eldest son Anangman who in 1930 (only 17 years old) was appointed head (Nep., *subba*) of the tax office in Taulihawa close to the Indian border. Other family members went into business. In Bhutwal the Gurung *subba* had since 1924 held a contract on the collection of customs duties, but in 1936 and from 1939-42 this contract was held by Lalitman

---

<sup>148</sup> Vinding 1984, p. 79-82.

<sup>149</sup> An informant from Marpha recalls that in 1935 he travelled to Kathmandu where he bought Rs 1,400 worth of cloth. From Kathmandu he took the cloth to Tansen where he sold it with a handsome profit. The cloth was transported by 14 porters; each porter carried 60-65 kg and was paid Rs 20 for the entire (two-week) trip.

Sercan (Mohanman's first son). Further, Krishnaman Sercan (Hitman's second son) had a contract in Rajapur from 1939-42, and Nagindraman Sercan (Mohanman's second son) held one in Nepalganj from 1939-42.<sup>150</sup>

While the eldest sons settled in the south, the middle sons (including Mohanman's son Sankarman and Hitman's son Indraman) were asked to stay in Thak Khola to look after family interests. The Thakali *subba* were well aware of the importance of education, and although only few Nepalese at this time received higher education, their youngest sons were sent to colleges in India.

As mentioned above the Thakali *subba* had established themselves as the most powerful family in Thaksatsae. In the early 20th century the family extended their influence to the areas north of Thaksatsae, including Pacgau. This influence was economical as well as political.

As the richest persons in the Upper Kali Gadaki area, the members of the Balbir lineage lent money not only to fellow Tamang Thakalis, but also to villagers further north. Debtors who were unable to pay the interest on their loan had no alternative but to sell their land to the Thakali *subba*, or to let a family member work as bonded labour for the Thakali *subba*.<sup>151</sup> In this way the Thakali *subba* accumulated large landholdings in Pacgau and Baragau. Lending was not limited to poor villagers, but included also the local elite, for example the Mustang Maharaja.<sup>152</sup>

In the 1930's members of the Balbir lineage became external headmen (Tha., *chikyap*<sup>153</sup>) of the villages in Pacgau and Baragau.<sup>154</sup> Harkaman Thakali's sons divided the villages so that Hitman's family got Syang and Cimang in Pacgau, and Tangbe,

---

<sup>150</sup> Krishnaman first became a contract *subba* (Nep., *thekka subba*), but he was later appointed *subba* in the civil service (Nep., *sarkari subba*, or *kitab khana subba*). As a civil servant he worked for about three years near Riç where the retired ex-prime minister Juddha Shamsheer lived for a short period.

<sup>151</sup> According to informants, the members of the Balbir lineage never forced fellow Tamang Thakalis to work for them as bonded labourers.

<sup>152</sup> Thakali traders and businessmen often take loans to finance new ventures if they can get a loan cheap, or if they lack capital for a new venture. The Thakali *subba* too obtained loans to finance new business ventures. Several loans were obtained from rich traders in Tetang (in Baragau), and some were repaid only in the 1970's.

<sup>153</sup> Tha., *chikyap*, cf Tib., *spyi skyabs*, "chief helper" ?

<sup>154</sup> The villagers in Thak Khola and Baragau often request powerful neighbours to mediate in conflicts which cannot be resolved locally. However, the villagers of Pacgau and Baragau are said to have asked the members of the Balbir lineage to become *chikyap* of their

Tetang, Chusang, Gyaka and Cheli in Baragau, while Mohanman's family got the rest of Baagau and Guptaman's family Marpha and Thini in Pacgau. As *chikyap* the members of the Balbir lineage mediated in conflicts within and between villages, but they also initiated the construction and rehabilitation of irrigation systems, and, in the 1950's, the establishment of schools.

As payment for these services the *chikyap* received (in Syang) two mandays of free labour and seven kg of barley from each household; further, during visits in the village he received free boarding and grass for his horse. Some *chikyap* were also presented plots of uncultivated land.<sup>155</sup>

### DECLINE IN THE 1960's

In March 1959 the Dalai Lama fled Tibet following an unsuccessful uprising against China which had occupied the country in 1950. In the following months thousands of Tibetans fled to India, Nepal, Bhutan and Sikkim. Some of the Tibetans who settled in Mustang were armed guerillas (the so-called Khambas). They remained outside the authorities' control until 1975 when the Royal Nepalese Army forced them to lay down their weapons.

The political developments in Tibet as well as the insecurity along the caravan route caused by the Khambas disrupted the flow of salt from Tibet and increased the price in Nepal. Until 1959 the exchange rate in Tukche was 20 measures of salt for 10 measures of barley, but in 1962 11-12 measures of salt were exchanged for 10 measures of barley.<sup>156</sup> In the 1950's cheap Indian sea salt had entered the market in the southern and middle parts of Nepal. Due to the disruption in the flow of salt from Tibet and the increase in the price of this salt in the 1960's, as well as the construction of roads from India to the middle hills of Nepal (which reduced transportation costs significantly), Indian salt soon took over the market in Nepal. The amount of Tibetan salt entering Thak Khola has now been reduced to a minimum.<sup>157</sup>

---

villages because they believed, that these could look after their relations to the government better than any local.

<sup>155</sup> Until recently the members of the Balbir lineage were among the biggest landowners in Pacgau and Baragau.

<sup>156</sup> von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 190.

<sup>157</sup> For a description of the present salt trade in Thak Khola, see Vinding 1984, p. 74-75.

Also trade in wool declined in the 1960's. Following the war between India and China in 1962, India restricted the import of Chinese goods, including Tibetan wool.<sup>158</sup> In this way Thakali wool traders lost their most important market.

Due to this decline in the trade in salt and wool, the insecurity caused by the Khambas, as well as several other push and pull factors, a large number of Thakalis emigrated from Thak Khola in the 1960's.<sup>159</sup> Tukche which used to depend much on trade was hardest hit and while 64 out of 92 houses in 1962 belonged to Thakalis, there were only 9 left in 1972.<sup>160</sup>

During the period of the salt monopoly the members of the Balbir lineage stood united in order to keep the customs contract within the family. However, in the post-monopoly period the relationship between Harkaman's sons (especially) Mohanman and Hitman) deteriorated.<sup>161</sup> This conflict was brought out into the open during Nepal's first general election in February 1959 when Yogindraman Serchan (a son of Hitman) and Lalitman Serchan (a son of Mohanman) fought against each other for the same seat to the Lower House, the former for the Nepal Congress Party and the latter as an independent candidate. Yogindraman won and he was later appointed assistant minister in the B.P. Koirala Government.

In 1960 (the late) King Mahendra dismissed the government and jailed Koirala and other leaders of the Nepal congress Party, including Yogindraman Serchan.<sup>162</sup> Two years later (December 1962) King Mahendra promulgated a new constitution of Nepal. The political system laid down in this constitution is known as the Partyless Democratic Panchayat System.

In connection with the introduction of the Panchayat System the government undertook a major administrative reorganisation of Nepal. This reorganisation divided Nepal into 75 districts. Mustang which formerly had been a part of Baglung district,

---

<sup>158</sup> von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 193.

<sup>159</sup> For an analysis of these push and pull factors, see Vinding 1984, p. 91-93.

<sup>160</sup> von Furer-Haimendorf 1975, p. 202.

<sup>161</sup> This conflict is now half a century old, but it is still very much alive. Once I asked an informant who was close to the family about the reason for this conflict. He answered, "brothers fight over money and women". When I asked him to be more specific, he told that the brothers had disagreements over business, and that some of the brothers' sons had wanted to marry the same girl.

<sup>162</sup> Yogindraman Serchan was released some years later, but shortly after his release he was killed by a car.

became a separate district. Mustang district extended down to Tatopani in the south, and Dana became the district Headquarters. However, following a reorganization in 1972 the area south of Thak Khola was transferred to Myagdi district, and Jomsom became the new Headquarters of Mustang district.

Mustang district is presently divided into 16 village panchayats. There are six village panchayats in Thak Khola, namely Thini-Jomsom, Marpha, Tukche, Kobang, Lete and Kunjo.

## ON THE ROAD TO DEVELOPMENT

Under the Rana regime the state interfered little in the local affairs in Thak Khola as long as the villagers paid the taxes imposed by the government, and law and order was maintained. This changed, however, after the fall of the Rana regime in 1951, and the state now seeks to promote the welfare of the rural population.

As mentioned above, the general economic situation worsened in the 1960's due to the decline in the salt and wool trade. However, since the 1970's there has been a recovery, especially in Pacgau; and Thak Khola is now firmly on the road to development.

In recent years the development of infrastructure has been dramatic, especially around Jomsom. There are more than 30 government and quasi-government offices in Jomsom, and several in other villages in Thak Khola. Jomsom has a small army garrison, a police station, a jail and a wireless station. Post offices are found in several villages, and there are two banks in Jomsom. Primary and lower secondary schools are found in all major villages, and there are higher secondary schools in Jomsom and health posts in most other village panchayats. A government agricultural farm is located in Marpha, and offices providing agricultural and veterinary services are found in some other villages. Almost all villages have potable water supply, and since 1983 the northern part of the valley has had electricity. There are no roads in Thak Khola, but there is a small airport in Jomsom and it is possible to reach Pokhara and Kathmandu in less than an hour.

Only few villagers in Thak Khola face serious problems making a living. The majority of households live a relative secure life producing sufficient foodgrains or making enough cash to buy essential goods and services at the market. The level of cash income is high. For example, in 1983 there were 320 mules in Syang (in Pacgau), and the net annual earning from these animals was an estimated Rs 700,000, or about Rs.



1,500 (US\$ 100) per villager. One third of the households in the village had mules, and thus the income was not restricted to only a handful of households.<sup>163</sup> Moreover, new sources of cash income have been created in recent years. For example, there are now about 23,000 apple trees in Thak Khola, and more than 6,500 tourists (1980 figure) visit the valley each year.<sup>164</sup>

Two important political developments have taken place in Thak Khola since the introduction of the Panchayat system.

First, almost all members of the Balbir lineage (the so-called 'subbas') now live outside Thak Khola, and consequently they have lost most of their former influence in the political affairs in Mustang district. Several Thakalis have been elected to the National Panchayat (not only from Mustang district, but also from Myagdi, Baglung and Kaski districts), but none of these are from the Balbir lineage.

And secondly, the villages of Pacgau, Barau and Lo which formerly were dominated politically by the members of the Balbir lineage, have increased their influence in local political affairs. For example, in 1979 Nar B. Harachand, a contractor from Marpha (in Pacgau), was elected member of the National Panchayat from Mustang district. Mr. Harachand was reelected during the first direct election to the National Panchayat in 1981, and he later served as an assistant minister in the L.B. Chand Government.

The 2nd May 1980 was an important milestone in the political history of Nepal. On this day the voters in the country went to the polls to decide whether they wanted a multi-party system or to retain the panchayat system with 'appropriate' reforms. The panchayat system secured 55 percent of the valid votes, against 45 percent for the multi-party system. The panchayat system achieved a remarkable result in Mustang district: out of a total of 6,899 votes, 85 percent were for the panchayat system and only 10 percent for the multi-party system (5 percent of the votes were declared invalid). This was the second highest percentage of votes for the panchayat system among the country's 75 districts.

---

<sup>163</sup> Vinding 1984, p. 79.

<sup>164</sup> Vinding 1984, p. 72-76.

## References

Bacot, J. et. alia

1940-46 *Documents de Touen-houang relatifs à l'histoire du Tibet*. Annales du Musée Guimet. Bibliothèque d'Etudes, Vol. 51. Paris.

Bista, D. B.

1971 The Political Innovators of Upper Kali-Gandaki. *Man*, Vol. 6, p. 52-60.

1976 "Patterns of Migration in Nepal." p. 397-399 in *Himalaya: Ecologie-Ethnologie*. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.

Das S. C.

1902 *A Tibetan-English Dictionary with Sanskrit Synonyms*. Calcutta: The Bengal Secretariat Book Depot.

Francke, A. H.

1926 *Antiquities of Indian Tibet. Part II. The Chronicles of Ladakh and Minor Chronicles*. New Delhi 1972: S. Chand.

Furer-Haimendorf, C. von

1975 *Himalayan Traders. Life in Highland Nepal*. London: J. Murray.

Gauchan, O. P.

1980 "Hansa rajako thakma sasanthyo bhanne ullekh bhayeko kagaj." (Document proving the reign of Hansa Raja in Thak). *Khagalo*, Vol. 1, p. 11-15.

Gauchan, S. and Vinding, M.

1977 "The History of the Thakaali according to the Thakali Tradition." *Kailash*, Vol. 5, p. 97-184.

Glover, W.

1970 "Cognate Counts via the Swadesh List in some Tibeto-Burman Languages of Nepal." *Occasional Papers of the Wolfenden Society of Tibeto-Burman Linguistics*, Vol. III, Part II, p. 23-26. Urbana: University of Illinois.

Gurung, H.

1980 *Vignettes of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Sajha Prakashan.

- Haarh, E.  
1969 *The Yar-lung Dynasty. A study with particular regard to the contribution by myths and legends to the history of Ancient Tibet and the origin and nature of its kings.* Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad's Forlag.
- Hamilton, F. B.  
1819 *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal and of the Territories Annexed to this Dominion by the House of Gorkha.* New Delhi 1971: Manjusri Publishing House.
- Hofer, A.  
1979 *The Caste Hierarchy and the State in Nepal. A Study of the Muluki Ain of 1854.* Khumbu Himal Band 13, Lieferung 2, Seite 25-240. Innsbruck: Universitätsverlag Wagner.
- Hopkirk, P.  
1982 *Trespassers on the Roof of the world. The Race for Lhasa.* London: John Murray Ltd.
- Iijima, S.  
1977 "Ecology, Economy and Cultural Change among the Thakalis in the Himalayas of Central Nepal," pp. 69-92 in S. Iijima (ad.), *Changing Aspects of Modern Nepal: Relating to the Ecology, Agriculture and Her People.* Tokyo: Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa.
- Jackson, D.P.  
1976 "The Early History of Lo (Mustang) and Ngari." *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, Vol. 4, pp 39-56.
- 1978 "Notes on the History of Serib and Nearby Places in the Upper Kal Gandak. *Kailash*, Vol. 6, pp. 195-227.
- 1980 "A genealogy of the Kings of Lo (Mustang)," pp. 133-137 in M. Aris and Aung San Suu Kyi (eds.), *Tibetan Studies in Honour of Hugh Richardson. Proceedings of the International Seminar on Tibetan Studies*, Oxford 1979. New Delhi: Vikas.
- 1984 *The Mollas of Mustang. Historical, Religious and Oratorical Traditions of the Nepalese-Tibetan Borderlands.* Dharmasala: Library of Tibetan works and Archives.

Jaschke, H.A.

- 1881 *A Tibetan-English Dictionary with Special Reference to the prevailing Dialects. To which is added an English-Tibetan Vocabulary.* London 1968: Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd.

Kawaguchi, E.

- 1909 *Three Years in Tibet.* Madras: Theosophical Publishing House.

Macdonald, A.W.

- 1979 "A Tibetan Guide to Some of the Holy Places of the Dhaulagiri-Mukitnath area of Nepal." pp. 243-253 in A.K. Narain (ed.), *Studies in Pali and Buddhism. A Memorial Volume in Honour of Bhikhu Jagish Kashyap.* New Delhi: B.R. Publishing Corp.

Manzardo, A.E.

- 1978 "To be Kings of the North: Community, Adaption and Impression Management in the Thakalis of Western Nepal." Unpublished Ph. D. thesis, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Manzardo, A.E. and Sharma, K.P.

- 1975 "Cost-cutting, Caste and Community: A look at Thakali Social Reform in Pokhara." *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, Vol. 4, pp. 25-44.

Mazaudon, M.

- 1978 "Consonantal Mutation and Tonal Split in the Tamang Sub-family of Sino-Burman." *Kailash*, Vol. 6, p. 157-179.

Messerschmidt, D.A.

- 1982 "The Thakalis of Nepal: Historical Continuity and Socio-Cultural Change." *Ethnohistory*, Vol. 29, pp. 265-280.

Messerschmidt, D.A. and Gurung, N.J.

- 1974 "Parallel Trade and Innovation in Central Nepal: The Case of the Gurung and Thakali Subbas Compared," pp. 197-221 in C. von Furer-Haimendorf (ed.), *Contributions to the Anthropology of Nepal.* Warminster: Aris & Phillips.

Petech, L.

- 1939 *A Study on the Chronicles of Ladakh (Indian Tibet).* Calcutta.

- Pignede, B.  
1966 *Les Gurungs, une population himalayenne du Nepal*. Paris: Mouton. Pittman, R. and Glover, J.
- Pittman, R. and Glover, J.  
1970 "Proto-Tamang-Gurung-Thakali." *Occasional Papers of the Woolfenden Society on Tibeto-Burman Linguistics*, Vol. III, Part I, p. 9-22. Urbana: University of Illinois.
- Rahul, R.  
1971 *Modern Bhutan*. New Delhi: Vikas Publications.
- Ramble, C.  
1983 "The Founding of a Tibetan Village: The Popular Transformation of History." *Kailash*, Vol. 10, pp. 267-290.  
1984 "The Lamas of Lubra: Tibetan Bonpo Householder Priests in Western Nepal." Unpublished D. Phil. thesis, University of Oxford.
- Ramble, C. and Vinding, M.  
1987 "The Bem-Chag Village Record and the Early History of Mustang District." *Kailash*, Vol. 13 p. 5-47.
- Rana, P.S.  
1978 *Rana Nepal. An Insider's View*. Kathmandu: R. Rana.
- Regmi, M.C.  
1972 *A Study in Nepali Economic History, 1768-1846*. New Delhi: Manjusri Publishing House.  
1977a "Recruitment of Troops and Auxiliaries during the Nepal-Tibet War." *Regmi Research Series*, Year 9, pp. 114-118.  
1977b "The Salt Trade in Dana." *Regmi Research Series*, Year 9, pp. 161-163.  
1978a *Thatched Huts and Stucco Palaces: Peasants and Landlords in 19th-century Nepal*. New Delhi: Vikas Publishing House.  
1978b "Petition of Subba Ram Prasad Thakali," *Regmi Research Series*, Year 10, p. 1.

210/Kailash

- 1979 "Thak and Thini, 1811." *Regmi Research Series*, Year 11, pp. 52-54.
- 1980 "Petition of the Inhabitants of Thini Village." *Regmi Research Series*, Year 12, pp. 75-76.
- 1981a "Revenue Collection in Thak." *Regmi Research Series*, Year 13, pp. 10-11.
- 1981b "On Prices." *Regmi Research Series*, Year 13, p. 116.
- 1983 "Weights and Measures in Mustang."  
*Regmi Research Series*, Year 15, p. 80,
- 1984 "The Salt Trade during the Nepal-Tibet War." *Regmi Research Series*, Year, 16, pp. 17-18.
- Richardson, H.E.  
1962 *Tibet and Its History*. London: Oxford University Press.
- Rose, L.E.  
1971 *Nepal: Strategy for Survival*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Sharma, P.R.  
1972 *Preliminary Study of the Art and Architecture of the Karnal Basin, West Nepal*. Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique.
- Shrestha, T.B.  
1976 "Parvataka kehi tamrapatra." (Some Copper Documents from Parbat).  
*Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, Vol. 3, pp. 71-82.
- Snellgrove, D.L.  
1967 *Four Lamas of Dolpo*. Autobiographies of Four Tibetan Lamas (15th-18th Centuries), Vol. 1: Introduction and Translations. Oxford: Bruno Cassirer.
- 1979 "Places of Pilgrimage in Thak (Thak Khola)." *Kailash*, Vol. 7, pp. 73-170.
- Snellgrove, D.L. and Richardson, H.E.  
1968 *A Cultural History of Tibet*. Boulder 1980: Prajna Press.
- Snellgrove, D.L. and Skorupski, T.  
1977 *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, Vol. 1. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.

- 1980 *The Cultural Heritage of Ladakh*, Vol. 2. Warminster: Aris and Phillips.
- Stiller, L.F.  
1973 *The Rise of the House of Gorkha. A Study in the Unification of Nepal. 1768-1816.* Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar.
- Stein, R.A.  
1972 *Tibetan Civilization.* London: Faber and Faber.
- Tiwari, D.N.  
1984/85 "Cave Burials from Western Nepal, Mustang." *Ancient Nepal* (Journal of the Department of Archaeology), No. 85, pp. 1-12.
- Tucci, G.  
1953 *Tra Giungle a Pagode.* Rome: Libreria dello Stato.  
1956 *A Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions in Nepal.* Rome: Istituto Italiano Per Il Medio Ed Estremo Oriente.
- Uprety, P.R.  
1980 *Nepal-Tibet Relations 1850-1930. Years of Hopes, Challenges and Frustrations.* Kathmandu: Puga Nara.
- Vinding, M.  
1978 "The Local Oral Tradition about the Kingdom Thin Garab Dzong." *Kailash*, Vol 6, pp. 181-193.  
1979/80 "Marriage Systems of the Thakalis and Related Groups of the Bodish Section of Sino-Tibetan Speaking peoples." *Folk*. Vol. 21/22, pp. 325-345.  
1981 "A Note on Patrilineal Descent Groups among the Thakalis of the Nepal Himalayas." *Folk*, Vol. 23, pp. 205-219.  
1984 "Making a Living in the Nepal Himalayas: The Case of the Thakalis of Mustang District." *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, Vol. 12, pp. 51-105.
- Vinding, M. and Bhattachan, K.B.  
1985 "An Annotated Bibliography on the Thakalis." *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, Vol. 12, pp. 1-23.