

Chapter: One

Guthiyars and Researcher

I would like to begin this work by stating the cultural background that I come from and also introducing the reason why I decided to conduct research on this particular topic. I should also state here that I have used Newari words and terminologies frequently, and have provided their equivalent meanings in the appendix section of the research.

I am a Newar, a resident of Thecho, Kwe Lachhi (lower part of the village), Damaga Nani (Baha for city people). Thecho is one of the *Newar* villages in Kathmandu Valley situated six kilometers far south from Patan, Lalitpur. Due to my father's untimely demise in 1994, I have had to bear responsibilities to run my family. Importantly, I belong to Nhesa (*si*: or death) *guthi* and Bhuyu Degu Dyo *guthi* (*Dyo Puja guthi*) Jyapu caste *guthis* since 1994.

As a *duja* (member) of Nhesa *guthi* I am automatically included in the main Bramhayani *guthi* at Kwe Lachhi under which three autonomous *guthis*: Nhesa, Mu: and Kwana run. I had to go through special round of rituals as part of getting enrolled in Nhesa *guthi*. I had to attend *chhoila bhu*, the feast of barbecued buff two days before the full moon day, *Yomali Punhi Jatra* that generally falls in December. And the year was 1994. I with help of *majho*¹ prayed and bowed to *Bhwani Mata*² or symbolic tutelary deity and *bhwani*³ offering *danchhi dan*⁴ or a coin, and also paid

¹ He is one of the four representatives or the leaders of *guthi*. There are four leaders selected in our *guthi* and they represent *guthi* and also monitor *guthi* works.

² It denotes Nava Durga. As Nhesa *guthi* belongs to Jyapu caste, in the past Jyapus used to perform Nava Durga dance. But for several decades Gatha (Malis) have been given this responsibility of performing Nava Durga Dance. Symbolic objects like the masks, *pata khola* (bowl), sword, *si: phanga* (death body-covering cloth) and more in the *ghaucha* (clay pot) and *dwabacha* (clay pot stretched in the middle) are very much parts of Nava Durga properties still preserved in *guthi*.

³ The seniormost *guthiyar* is respected as god inside *guthi*. Especially the eight oldest *guthiyars* are honored and called *bhwani*.

my high respect to the senior *guthiyars* who are regarded as important as deities in *guthi* works. I found myself bowing down to other senior *guthiyars* chanting a mantra that roughly means ðoh dear seniors let me bow youö. I found these senior *guthiyars* seated in an order. This helped me to know who holds what position in the *guthi*. Importantly, *guthiyars* understood about the reason and importance of my presence in their group because they had already participated in my father's funeral ceremony. That was my formal entry in my *guthi* so that I could attend and perform each and every *guthi* ritual that *guthi* hands over me alike to other members. I have been performing works for rituals, festivities and social activities that *guthi* demands upon me to do so. I find myself in honorable position to state here that I have represented Nhesa *guthi* for almost seventeen years.

Inside *guthi*, one finds performing various and serious roles and responsibilities. First and foremost, paying sincere respect to *chyamha thakali* or *bhwanis* (oldest eight *guthiyars*) is a must and should not be taken as a mere phatic communication. I bow to them and show readiness to follow the orders that the *majhos* (leaders) and seniors give to me. While doing this I find myself carving out certain cultural space within my *guthis*. *Guthi* has certain codes and conducts for its members, and following the orders that the seniors make is to act out social and cultural forms of expressions, life styles and so. For example, during *puja* (worship) and feasts, *guthiyars* need to pay respect to *bhwani mata* or the goddess first and foremost. Before worshipping the almighty goddess, *guthiyars* find themselves bathing, manicuring nails, trimming hair and beard and fasting as required. We realise that shoes are not that important in our lives as we leave them at some yards away from the temple. We find ourselves surrendering to the deities and pray them to forgive and

⁴ A coin had the value of a paisa (one hundred paisas equals to one rupee) in the past but it can be a rupee coin these days.

bles for our human follies and safe course of life ahead respectively. Such preparations and offerings should not be taken as mere cultural practices but should be taken as sources of experiences which our forefathers had lived by in the past and what we are doing today is trying to embody the self of our ancestors. Seen in this context, such ritual preparations are not only religious acts and also performative ones. While doing so, we probably feel the same sense of being as our forefathers had done in the past.

How trained and disciplined the *guthiyars* are can be tested on special occasion such as *Yomali Punhi Jatra* session. This is the biggest and the busiest moment that the *guthiyars* find themselves engaged into. I, a teacher of English language and literature and in my early-thirties, a post-graduate, find nothing unnatural when I find myself taking part in several activities from cutting meat items to sanitizing the floor and setting long mats (*sukhu*) for feast, offering liquor, delivering dishes especially beans and buff items to deities and *guthiyars* from the senior most to the youngest ones. I become a cook, a chopping master, a waiter, a host and an assistant to the seniors conducting rituals. Besides, I too assist in ritual functions through carrying out great many activities such as fetching required items for preparing symbolic *puja* (worship), playing musical instruments: *daba khin*, *bhusya*, *dhan* (especial *guthi* drums and cymbals) and carrying symbolic objects which belong to *bhwani mata*. Likely, I convey messages to *guthiyars* and deliver feasts to *bhwanis'* houses, help them to walk, manage thatch and fire for their warmth in *guthi*, prepare fence of thatch in the *guthi* house to hold muffler fence at *chaka bhu* (round feast) at Pingal and guard the worship ritual at Nanigal at night with my fellow *guthiyars*. Further, I too enjoy carrying Bramhayani palanquin during *Yomali Punhi Jatra* and *Mohani* (Dashain) once in every three years. Except

festive participations, I also attend each and every social work such as sanitization of public ponds, temples, roads or alleys, water supply, fetch firewood for cremation, and also work as cremation undertaker, hold meeting for *guthi* rituals and social issues, present opinion in forthcoming changes (if needed) in meeting. I humbly perform them as directed throughout a year. While doing so I realise that *guthiyars* are probably the most important members of Newar communities.

Discipline is one of the great requirements needed to participate in *guthi* driven works. This discipline enables us to be familiar with the items that are culturally and ritually the most important ones. It is through certain discipline we learn musical instruments and dances which are very much part of the festivals and rituals. We learn to prepare wine, open the jars and drink it. Above all, the discipline only discipline familiarizes us with the secret symbols like masks used by ancestors during the Nava Durga dance since time immemorial, dress and so on which are not taken out of *ghaucha/dwabacha* (the clay pots) and have been preserved, demonstrative *pata-khwala* (brass bowl for offering wine), *si-phanga* (red cloth to cover the corpse during funeral procession), *dhan baja* (drums and cymbals), old *khadgas* (swords), brass bowls for drinking wine during the feasts organized by *guthis*, funeral instruments and many more. It is very important that we take these cultural items very seriously. We also learn to draw lines from modern day to day life world with the *guthi* works as we are not supposed to bring guests or relatives except the *pala*'s (turn bearer(s)) family members and kinsmen inside *guthi* sessions. At least for a couple of hours we live a reality that snapping photos is a vulgar thing in some occasions and maintaining patience is very much part of enhancing cultural self (s).

To conclude the matter short rituals and festivals organized by *guthis* as a matter of cultural practices are the occasions of cultural literacy for the *guthiyars*. We

guthiyars learn things from preparing food and offering and serving it to our deities and fellow *guthiyars* to performing music and dances for the deities. During *bhu* (banquet) in *guthi* house, *guthiyars* perform certain rituals. We wipe floor, put *laptya* (leaf plates), offer feast serially. We learn to offer each and every item to the symbolic *ghaucha* before we put in our hundred and six leaf plates according to the number of the *guthiyars* serially besides three for deities and one for a *pala*. We perform *dyo chhayegu ritual*⁵ in pinch to god/dess before we wear a special garland with *dapha swan* (especial leaf as flower) around our right ear, *taya swan maha* (garland made of roasted rice) around our neck. Besides, we offer *takha*⁶ and wine to *dojan masta*⁷ in *guthi* for their assistance in *dyo nhya yegu* (procession of *bhwani mata* to new *pala* house) rituals after the new *pala* has welcomed the deity in his home. Such learnings are very much essentials for us to maintain order of cultural nature.

Similarly, during Nava Durga dance, *guthiyars* need to perform certain type of dance and music for a night and a day on the occasion of *jatra, Yomali Punhi*. In *Desa chyana waigu*⁸, one of the *pwin*⁹ of *ja- pala*¹⁰ *guthi* in special red dress, carry round the Bramhayani palanquin turn by turn in Newar locality before the Nava Durga dance really starts to take place. We only stop the palanquin at few designed spots at *twa*, ward or alley under the special canopy which is the hard job.

⁵ This refers to the every food item offered to god in the pinch before every kind of feasts and family meals.

⁶ Nepali: *thalthale* is a dish used to cook buffalo meat especially to prepare soup. There are two types of *takha*: 1. *Palu takha* (*Nyakhuna*), hot and spicy with dry fish and 2. Light and simple buff gelly

⁷ Son/s or any male same family member of the *guthiyar*.

⁸ It refers to a procession of Nava Durga deities especially from *agan chhen* (god/dess house) on the occasion of *Yomali Punhi Jatra* in December and *Dashain* in October.

⁹ One quarter members of three *guthis*: *Nhesa*, *Mu*: and *Kwana* in *Thecho*. The oldest is respected as *thakali*, the middle is *mahila*, the second junior is *sahinla* and the youngest one is called *kanchha pwin*. They become very active during funeral rituals and in collecting revenue of Bramhayani *guthi*. They work either in group or individually depended by the pressure of the work.

¹⁰ The turn of carrying Brammhayani palanquin falls once in every three years. On such occasion, *guthiyars* have to collect rice from the people who are earning Brammhayani *guthi* land, and have to carry round the palanquin, guard the deity and deposit the ornament of goddess in the temple in front of the *guthiyars* of three *guthis* (*Mu*:, *Nhesa* and *Kwana*).

With this brief introduction on the importance of *guthi*-works, I now like to mention about the reason that I am carrying out this research. In the following section, I state that *guthiyars* should not be taken as traditionalists. They are in fact as much modern as others claim to be as they know and also hold power to improvise certain cultural rules and rites. They too know that too much traditionalism is to bring death to one's own mind and societies.

1.1. Points of Departure

I am an "educated" person and can write but many things in my cultures are disseminated orally. This has remained continuum. *Guthiyars* are in fact mediums of that oral world of knowledge and wisdoms. They, the seniors mainly, also believe that the power of oral tradition has slightly decreased in the recent years. Demise of senior *guthiyar* means a great loss to entire Newar community. *Guthiyars* record things about rituals in their memories and are supposed to hand over as they are to their children and fellow Newars. Young *guthiyars* learn about their cultural practices through watching, hearing and following what seniors say and perform in front of them and others.

In the past before television was introduced in Nepal, *guthiyars* had to keep on organizing several performances to entertain people. It is a common understanding that the *guthiyars* in the past were very much devoted to *guthi* works and motivated Newar youths to participate into community works as *dharma* (religion). The case is different at present. With the coming of cable television, Newars find themselves sitting in front of their television set. Furthermore, agriculture is no longer the main mode of earning for the Newars; most of the local Newars have already sold their farms. Only few are farmers. Equally difficulty is to get labors as youths prefer working in office. Modernization has almost become antonymous to traditional mode

of living. Now, questions abound: why should we blame for these changes? Should we blame our youths or the seniors or the government or politicians? Should *guthiyars* complain the changes brought in by time or should they be ready for redefining themselves? Should over burdening ritual paraphernalia be reduced to a manageable scales or should we completely debunk them?

This research argues that *guthiyars* do have greater roles to play in the changed social and cultural contexts that they and their fellow Newars live in. And, this sense has already become materialized as *guthiyars* these days have started improvising several codes and conducts of rituals and festivities. I argue that *guthiyars* should not and must not be taken only as the representatives of the cultures of the past. On the contrary, they are the minds of the every changing society which they and every one of us belong to. Therefore, *guthiyars* have greater roles to play.

In the next chapters, I introduce the very term called *guthi* and then move to the theories on local cultures in the present context of globalization in brief and explore or trace down some of the improvisations that *guthiyars* have made in my communities, Thecho to show that *guthiyars* are very active members of the society. I must inform here that I have talked much about foods that the Newars need to prepare for every cultural occasion. I personally agree that without talking about food items one cannot talk about Newar rituals, festivals and feast and *guthiyars* themselves. Then in the last chapter I state that *guthiyars* should not only be taken as culturally rooted people, but should also be taken as critical minds who know how to maintain the continuity of traditions in the changed social and cultural contexts.

Chapter: Two

Guthi, Guthiyars and Foods

In this chapter, I briefly introduce the term *guthi* and focus on the roles of *guthiyars*. Since there are so many *guthis* in Newar communities, and is very difficult to state what *guthiyars* are supposed to do exactly, that is why I return to my own *guthi* at Thecho so that I could narrate it out much comfortably. Moreover, I cannot do away without foods as I have seen them occupying the centrality in every festivity that Newars got to conduct. Thus foods become dominately visible as one sets to talk about *guthiyars*. Along with it, this chapter also talks about other cultural items that the *guthiyars* have to deal with mostly.

The Newar word *guthi* corresponds to the Sanskrit *gosthi* and means 'assembly, association' that in Nepal has the technical sense of 'religious association'. In the germination of its term, Gerrald Toffin, a European scholar on Newar performance culture writes, '*Guthi* has been unmistakably borrowed from India since Licchhavi times, but they have been reshaped and reformatted, at least partly, in local terms to adjust to a different social structure' (307). Similarly, a great Newari poet Chittadhara Hridaya writes that *guthi* is a well-managed organization formed for upliftment of life standard of human beings (Regmi 21, Bajracharya 10). Dilli Raman Regmi, an internationally known Nepali historian mentions that *guthi* is an association of people belonging to a certain cultural community established with certain aim to solve out local problems (21). Nepali government has defined *guthi* under its *guthi sansthan* act 2033 B.S. in the following manner:

Guthi denotes an organization formed out of charity of mobile or immobile property or money or any other income generating property donated or withdrawal of right over property by donor to function

temple, shrine, festival or worship deities or any ̄religiousö or for benevolent task of preservation, construction or mobilization of any temple, sacred place, *dharmasala*, shelter, well-pond, lake, spout-spring, road, grave, chautara, grazing land, pastures, garden-grove, jungle, library, school, pharmacy, hospital, building or organization.¹¹

(My translation, Bajracharya 54)

It is very difficult to distinguish whether it is *guthi* that forms Newar communities and cultures or vice versa. But it is suffice to say here that *guthis* mean a lot of dominant things for Newars. Newars have given continuity to this cultural practice for millennia because to accomplish tasks as mentioned in the text cited above, an individual must live in community formed out of mutual bond. This necessity has remained one of the main driving forces behind the coming of *guthi*. Regarding this reality, Anne Vergati, a French anthropologist on Newar culture writes, ̄The desire to accumulate spiritual merit by performing charitable acts was the original reason for the creation of the *guthi*ö (99). Similarly, Dhana Bajra Bajracharya, a nationally and internationally renowned Newar historian writes that *guthi* is an organization formed by small and weak people to support one another in need and crises (10, My Translation). Therefore, *guthi* is a basic integrating factor of Newar society. Its primary function is to enable individual Newar to fulfill his or her many socio-religious obligations through group actions.

¹¹*Guthi bhannale kunai matha wa kunai deva deviko parva, puja wa jatra chalauna wa kunai "dharmik" wa paropakari kamaka lagi kunai mandir, devasthala, dharmasala, pati-pauwa, inara-pokhari, talau, dhara-piyau, bato, ghata, pula, chautara, gauchara, бага-баgaincha, jangal, pustakalaya, pathasala, ausadhyalaya, chikitsalaya, ghara-imarata wa sanstha banauna, chalauna wa tyasko samrakshana garna kunai datako aphno chala achala sampati wa ayasta aune aru kunai sampati wa rakamama aphno haka chhadi rakheko guthilai samjhanu parchha.*

In the ancient and the medieval Nepa: - Kathmandu Valley- ðthe term *guthi* appears to have been employed to designate an administrative council whose task it was to *manage* donations made to religious or philanthropic endsö and ðthese donations to the *guthi* generally took the form of parcels of land, since land ensured permanent revenues and rural wealth and productsö (Vergati 99). To make *guthi* run people need to get involved into great many familial, social and spiritual events, and for this they need resources of every kind from land, money to scripts. Since the ancient time, *guthi* has functioned as a great help and support for. For example, it is a kind of bank since it financially helps its members. It is also a kind of hospital since priests and persons holding knowledge of traditional medicine also belong to it. It is also like a theatre group since it is responsible for holding several dance and musical performances on rituals, events that keep on falling throughout the year. It functions as a security centre since one of its jobs is to maintain law and order in the community. It also functions as an insurance company as it is responsible for holding rituals when member of its community dies. Thus *guthi* has remained inevitable part of life for Newars. *Guthiyars* are often called well-wishers because they have to remain impartial to their fellow members. *Guthiyars* are still found giving continuity to their responsibilities of organizing dance and drama like *jata* (festival) in every Newar locality, Kartik Naach (dance) in Patan, Nava Durga Naach in Thecho though their incomes are dwindling down.

2.1. *Guthis* Now

Guthis make Newars learn and perform how to be social, cultural and religious in their communities. In each and every festivity, ðbreach and crisisö state of personal and social experiences, *guthis* are supposed to come with certain ðredressiveö actions. *Guthis* do not only maintain social peace but also renews cultural and spiritual powers

assigned to them. Newars are often taken as people who love to celebrate *jatras* and rituals. However, little attention is paid on the roles of *guthi* and *guthiyars* for providing Newar societies such an identity. Moreover, the kinds of problems and challenges that *guthis* and *guthiyars* face to maintain their roles and responsibilities in the present times have not been researched.

Ever growing population, unmanaged development and urbanization, the bureaucratic insufficiency, and the fast development of media, science and technology have brought great changes and challenges in the values and roles of *guthi* respectively. In the past, *guthi* was the only organization that could solve problems and help people to live a life of cultural order. *Guthi* though was not force to create utopia, as functioned as court, network, theatre, security and hospital depending on the need of people. Then was the time when *guthis* made Newars realise that they belonged to *communitas*. But today there are advanced hospitals, theatres, communication, courts and everything. Moreover, people are too busy in works and remain out of their communities, and farming is not only major mode of earning and production. Many do not need to wait for *jatra* to have feasts as most of the Newars in the Kathmandu Valley possess money for varieties of food.

It is common experience everywhere that Newars are too much lured by new settlers as they sell ancestral lands in huge amount of money. The sale of land has remained fruitless as they are mostly found investing it into building house, wedding, organizing feast or depositing in the bank. Price of land in Kathmandu has risen drastically that the land can be hardly bought again. However, they invest money in the lands (which are comparatively cheaper) out of valley or far from their ancestral localities even in the valley. This means Newars live at places that are far from their ancestral settlements. But *guthis* demand upon them to remain in contact with their

fellow relatives and family members. Though Newars live social life, and are straight natured, hard working, some of them are found in living with animosity with each other.

Secret rituals demand upon their practitioners to be kept in secret, and performance of them during rituals doubtlessly secure superiority of cultures. In the meantime several rituals which demand to be performed secretly have naturally faced crises as the manpower or experts on such skills and wisdoms become rare and unavailable. This has brought challenges for *guthis*. Newar youngsters are much more influenced by global cultural cultures of different forms and natures and it is very naturally to be so since they have to live in open societies. Young members of the Newar communities experience modern cultures including the western arts and culture forms of expressions since they live in the capital city. On the other hand, most of the culturally valid skills and wisdoms and knowledge are transmitted secretly and orally. This has created a kind of rupture in the flow of skills and wisdoms that are essential to maintain and manage cultures in new contexts. Senior Newars often complain that youths no longer show any respect to them and do neither show seriousness to the rituals. On the contrary, there are not any motivational forces to divert youths' interests on community rituals. It is common experience everywhere that the *guthi* system has failed to motivate youths. Moreover, *guthi* has become less resourceful. In the past, *guthi* used to be one of the richest institutions in the Valley and thereby ruled over youths and oldies alike. According to Phanindra Ratna Bajracharya, there are some reasons for the downfall of *guthis*.

Due to the 1990 BS (1937 AD) earthquake, innumerable houses, shelters, temples, viharas, spouts, *agan chhein* etc. got destroyed and because of which the local Newars fell in financial problem. This natural disaster had directly hampered the

financial status of *guthi* organisation. Construction, maintenance and *guthi* performances started to run in slow pace. As a result, several *guthi* rituals were given shorter forms. Many senior Newars regard the 1990 BS earthquake brought some drastic changes in *guthi* performances.

After democracy was introduced in Nepal in 1950, people naturally realised that they were about to live in a free society. This was the period when Nepal opened its borders to the world outside. In no time, youths found themselves lured by the modern western forms of art, literature and other modes of expressions. State also got involved in institutionalizing modern forms of art centres such as Academy and University. On the other hand, culturally important organisations or institutes such as *guthis* started to become poorer on a daily basis. *Guthi* became synonymous with old people's gatherings as it did not have any especial programmes for the youths living in the second half of the twentieth century, an age that has seen tremendous changes in the cultures everywhere in the world.

The new Land Reform Act, the 2021 Act that the then government of the 1960s introduced and is known as *ōjasko jota usko potaö* (the land belongs to the ones who cultivate it) directly affected the *guthi* system. Many land cultivators defied to pay *bali* (revenue or crops) to *guthi* and registered land belonging to the *guthi* in their names and sold to others. And some bought ownself depositing little money for *guthi*. *Guthi* since the legal system did not favor it could not make any effort to protect its power. So properties of *guthi* started to decrease. In no time, Newars too found them ignoring *guthi* works as they lacked resources to perform festivities.

Ancient *Nepa.*, Nepal Mandala that followed its own model of human settlements and social structures has experienced great many political, social and cultural changes in its course of becoming the capital city of the country. It has

become the epicenter of all changes that have taken place and are in the processes of taking place in this country. Such historically trajectories that the Kathmandu Valley has gone through so far has directly affected the traditional performance cultures of the Valley. This has also shaped psychology and social behaviors of youths. Many Newars find it very expensive to maintain rituals and responsibilities to manage *guthi* works. As a Newar living in the capital city at present social and cultural context, I regard it natural that youths are not tied with the cultural forms of organization.

Guthis as a matter of obligation and compulsion need to perform great many social and cultural events. Most *guthis* have collapsed and many are in such process. One finds most of the Newars talk about the need of preserving *guthis* only in gatherings of feast and festivities but soon one finds them caught into their own personal life. Youths hardly show any interests on *guthis* since their father is the one who is supposed to know. Moreover, youths bring intervention in their cultures. Evoking this feature of cultural trend, Lowden writes, "During the last decades, the *guthi* system has apparently somewhat loosened its grip on Newari Society. Unorthodox marriages and other unorthodox practices are, though largely unsanctioned, gaining ground" (148).

However, there are still some Newars who show concern for *guthi* works and they are not passive recipient of changes. They are important manpower not only for Newar communities but also for the nation. As responsibility occurs even youths have to engage and pay interest. And they come to know the social bond and value maintained somehow by *guthi*. So despite all schedules, they take out times to run *guthi* activities, and *guthi* still makes a predominant force in Newar society. This has also resulted into a reality that the more creative and pragmatic the *guthiyars*, the

more dynamic and prosperous remains the *guthi*. Therefore much depends on *guthiyars*.

2.2. *Guthiyars* and Foods

Each and every *guthi* like other ethnic communities from the world has its socio-cultural responsibilities which vary according to the form of *guthi*, social situation, seasons, caste and place. However, Newars cultivate their socio-cultural life following the tradition which gives them practical knowledge of living in unity maintaining their identities. As part of this culture, *guthiyars* are expected to respect older or seniors and should realise the space that they occupy according to the age in descending. They should bear roles turn by turn, this means there are already prescribed roles such as cook (*bhalin*): *kancha* (assistant) or *mu*: (main, head), *ja: pala bhalin* (main cook who has to accomplish particular *guthi* work like guarding palanquin of the deity of locality like Bramhayani in Thecho for example), *guthi pala* (turn bearer to run *guthi* activities for a whole year), *ja: pala* (main turn bearer of *guthi*), *lyu pala* (future turn bearer), *nhyo pala* (post turn bearer), *kahan khalak* (air pipe player group), *goan* (funeral or undertaker group), *nayo* (leader) or *chhyanje* (accountant), *dan bhari* (treasurer), *thakali, aju* or *bhwani* (head of *guthi*): *thakali* (oldest *guthiyar*), *noku* (second oldest *guthiyar*), *soku* (third oldest *guthiyar*), *pemha thakali* (fourth oldest *guthiyar*), *chyamha thakali* (eighth oldest *guthiyar*) and so on. They must respect and take care of lineage and tutelary gods. Importantly, they must participate in rituals, social, religious and cultural functions. They should also present their opinion for reformation and dissatisfactory matter freely and must follow norms and values of *guthi*. They should be very careful about rituals that need to be performed and conducted secretly inside the *guthi*. Besides all *guthiyars* should as a matter of their responsibilities actively attend in social works such as funeral,

sanitation, construction or maintenance tasks as *guthi* directs otherwise they must pay fine as punishment.

Tutelary god is the most highly respected god in the *guthi* and is named or respected as *bhwani mata* (*Nava Durga*) in Nhesa *guthi* in Thecho. The *Pala* (*guthi* turn bearer) goes according to systematic order recorded in *guthi* register. New comer *guthiyar* (if he does not belong to *pomi*, musician or *dyo khala*, dancer in *guthi* according to ancestral assumption) is not allowed to join *lakhun charhe* (fourteenth day celebration in Chaitra) feast. *Guthiyar* is not permitted to wear shoes or slippers inside *guthi* during rituals or feasts. *Guthiyar* is strictly forbidden to smoke, take photo and is forbidden to speak vulgar words inside *guthi*. He must not bring any kin or friend inside *guthi* during *guthi* session and should worship and respect to *bhwani mata* and *bhwanis* (senior *guthiyars*).

New comer *guthiyar* must worship *bhwani mata* and *bhwanis* offering *danchhi dan* (a paisa).¹² *Guthiyar* will be promoted to seniority by measuring his age automatically after demise of any *guthiyar*. The newly promoted *guthiyar* as *bhwani* or *chyamha thakali* (eight senior most *guthiyars*) should take *dhau swakan*¹³ in *guthi* so he must bring curd. *Guthi* appoints, *majho*, *lataye pala* or *jya yaye pala* (*guthiyar* appointed to do work or cut meat), *pala*, *kancha bhalin* (assistant cook) and *mu: bhalin* (head cook) according to work load and turn-wise every year. Every *guthiyar* must perform his duty as he is appointed.

¹² It is a tradition to inform everybody that he is the new comer, either *tati wogu* (new comer in terms of his late father or uncle) or a fresh one. In the *guthi*, a *majho* introduces him to deities and *bhwanis*. As part of tradition, he should offer *danchhi dan* (a paisa coin) to *bhwani*. Now the new comer *guthiyar* offers a rupee/two coins to the symbolic deities and the eight oldest *guthiyars*.

¹³ *Dhau swakan* is an act of offering curd on forehead and uppermost part of chicks. This refers good omen according to the beliefs Newars live by. This is a must at every auspicious occasion. It is also offered to one who departs for a long journey. It can also be a wish for great luck in studies, jobs and so on.

Guthiyar is a leader, role sharer and should share idea, information for common benefit without any dictatorship. *Guthiyar* as a *pala* has to bear a turn to welcome *bhwani mata* (*dyo dukayegu*) the tutelary goddess in his house once in hundred and six year¹⁴. The deity must be placed on attic, the highest place. The *pala* family must perform daily ritual: broom and perform *puja* (worship) early in the morning and offer *mata*¹⁵ to the deities every evening for a whole year. *Pala* family must offer this ritual to Bramhayani Goddess for four months turn by turn in cooperation with Kwana and Mu: *guthis*. Further every food fried item must be offered to *bhwani mata* initially before family members sit to eat. The *pala*'s main job is to convey message of *jatra* (celebration) feast, *gu haye kigu* (inform *guthiyars*) in death, assembly, social work like construction, sanitation, repairing and so on. He has to manage all needy things and wash dishes, supply water, tobacco, and thatch for sitting and making fences and so on. Besides them, *pala* has to keep good relation among his *dyo puja khala* (lineage deity team) and *mhyaye macha*, daughterly relations. So he summons his *dyo puja khala* or brotherly and *mhyaye macha* relations for *dyo dukayegu* (welcoming *bhwani mata* in home) ritual. He feeds them *pamula chinagu bhu*¹⁶ on the fourth day of *dyo nhya yegu* (procession of *bhwani*) ritual. In the next year the close daughter relations (sister, auntie, grand daughter/mother, mother) of *pala* come to offer *tan wegu* (add sweet, wine, curd, steamed egg, dry fish) on *chaka bhu* at Pingal the day after full moon day in December. In such case, *guthiyars*

¹⁴ This role of messenger for *guthi* is depended on the numbers of *guthiyars*. In Nhesa *guthi*, there are one hundred and six *guthiyars* at the present. And the turn comes accordingly. Further, it varies in case of new comer. The new comer is offered the *pa* (turn) in the next two years of his entry.

¹⁵ Oil light or lamp made of cloth piece or thread soaked in mustard oil.

¹⁶ On the occasion, the *pala* needs to offer feast to *pemha thakali* (four oldest *guthiyars*), *mu bhalin* (head cook), *pemha majhos* (four *guthi* leaders or representatives) along with his family relation, i.e., daughters and *dyo puja khala*, brotherly relations. It is a formal way to inform that he has become *pala* and he urges help in the year so that he can accomplish his *guthi* rituals with their cooperation.

offer them feast after the *guthi* feast. Ultimately he feeds *tan wegu bhu*¹⁷ to his *dyo puja khala* or *guthi* relatives on the third day after *dyo nhyayegu* ritual to thank them all for their cooperation to accomplish his duty in a whole year. *Guthiyar* as *ja pala* (main turn bearer whose *guthi* carries Bramhayani palanquin) bears a turn that comes once in three years to the each main Bramhayani *guthi*. During this time the *pala* of the *guthi* has to manage his house as a venue of three *guthi majhos* and *bhwanis* meetings and arrange feasts like *bakhun khi kayegu bhu* (feast after cleaning pigeon dung), *San khwa payegu* (painting walls with white powder) as needed besides his duty of *pala*. *Guthiyar* as a *mu bhalin* (head cook), a role that *guthiyar* gets to bear in a ninety four year in case he is not promoted to *chyamha thakali* (eight seniormost *guthiyars*) or nominated a *majho*. He is responsible for cooking for *jatras* (celebrations) and four times in four *charhe bhu* (feast on every fourteenth day in lunar calendar). For this he has to arrange all food items and should hand over them to the *pala* or keep in the *guthi*. The *mu: bhalin* has to take responsibility of every food item so he does not leave *guthi* throughout the session. As there are two *mu: bhalins*, they keep cooking and securing food turn by turn. *Mu bhalin* from the *ja pala guthi* has to take care the Bramhayani goddess palanquin as a guard since goddess ascends in the palanquin until proceeds back to *agan chhen* (residence of deity). For this job, he can substitute his male family members like son, brother, grandson, etc. as well. *Guthiyar* as a *kancha bhalin* (assistant cook) has a job to assist the head cook in cooking in *guthi* session. He along with other cooks manages feast materials.

Nowadays *guthi* directly separates ten to twenty *guthiyars* as assistant cook so that

¹⁷It is a thank-giving feast given by *pala* to his daughterly relatives. On the day of *Bhailaju nhyayegu* (procession of *Bhairab* to *guthi* house at Chwe Lachhi), *pala's* daughters arrive at his house with a *pathi* of *jaki* (rice) and *baji* (beaten rice). It is known as *tan wegu*. And, they are offered feast with gratitude. This tradition shows the cooperation of daughters to their brothers even after they get married.

they can finish their work in time. At past it was every *guthiyar's* job to assist in every *guthi* task and do *ta tu yayegu*¹⁸ while working.

In fact the very important space that food occupies in rituals conducted in Newar communities reveals out the special features of Newar societies. Pointing out this very fact, researchers argue, "At the feast, which follows every act of *guthi*-worship, the *guthiyars* sit in a line, with the Thakali in the place of honor, and to his left the other *guthiyars* in order of seniority" (Furer-Haimendorf 32). And taking food on such occasions should also follow certain rules as a matter of rituals. They are found "seated shoe-less and cross-legged on straw-matted floors" (Slusser 95) for every feast and *guthi* rituals. Whatever Newars eat at home, "they eat delicious and grand in *guthi*" since "it is impossible to avoid feast in each and every religious and cultural task" (Bajracharya 32).

So for preparation of food, *guthi* appoints ten to twenty number of *guthiyars* as *bhalin* (it depends and varies in the size and festival in different *guthis*), servers of food and drink, and this task of *guthi*-feasts is undertaken in rotation by all the *guthiyars*. With permission from *bhwani* (oldest *guthiyar*), *guthiyars* perform each and every step of ritual. "Guthi is the association which needs collective participation in work so there is equal right to every *guthiyar*. They put equal portion to all while putting feast. Even any *guthiyar* is absent; his portion is kept" (Bajracharya 47) except on the *Chaka bhu* at Pingal in Thecho¹⁹.

¹⁸ It is a tradition to receive *chhoila* (barbecued buff), pickle or any spicy dish with wine during work in every festival performance so that workers get refreshed and mood of celebration is set.

¹⁹ During *Chaka Bhu*, *guthiyars* of Nhesa *guthi* enjoy the following *ghasa*, feast items: *baji* (beaten rice), *palu* (jinger), *haku musya bi* (steamed black soyabean), *bhute* (brown bean), *pa: maya* (a type of pulse), *ka su* (pulse), *ga:hi* (Nepali: *tarul*, yam), *lain kala ghasa* (blood cooked with raddish), *chhoila* (smoked buff), *takha* (jellied buff), *palu takha or nyakhuna* (jellied buff soup with dry fish and chilli fry), *kwakala* or *dayeku la* (buff curry), *syen la* (kidney), *go* (part of stomach used as a meat item), *guli* or *arapati* (intestine), *karthoan* (brown wine), *tuyu thoan* (white wine), *aila* (alcohol), *chaku mali* (sweet breads) offered by relatives of *pala* (turn bearer). *Guthiyars* offer feast to *tan wo pinta*

Four *guthiyars* nominated as representatives of *guthiyars* in *guthi* and outside in society have to handle, organize and lead *guthiyars* in tasks. They have to convince and use *guthiyars* in needy social and *guthi* tasks like death and festive performances. They present different issues to discuss in assembly for reformation, adoption, change and continuity with permission of *bhwanis*. Nowadays, they search scapegoat and buffalo that *bhalins* used to search in the past in Nhesa *guthi*. They represent *guthi* in different functions like *tisa bwayegu* (demonstration of ornaments), *tisa tikigu* (ornamenting god/dess), *dyo thachhoyegu* (ascending god/dess into residence), *dyo bwakegu* (run palanquin in the square) out of *guthi*. Alike in internal works like funeral procession, *nani puja* (worship of god/dess in the respective quarter), *dyo nhyayegu* (procession of deities towards new *pala*), every *same*²⁰ and (snacks) feast in *guthi* and every social function, at any cost one of them must be present.

A new *Mu thakali*, a *guthiyar* who automatically gets promoted to the oldest *musi* in *guthi* after the demise of the previous *mu thakali* has to offer *thakali lwigu bhu* (feast of being the senior most *guthiyar*). If a *guthiyar* has financial crisis, he can skip it through offering a bowl of curd. Initially the *mu thakali* or *bhwani* has to worship *bhwani mata*. Likewise in every *guthi* ritual, *mu thakali* must participate to perform *puja*. He has to be present during *tisa tikegu* (ornamenting) and *dukayegu*

(relatives of *pala* who offer sweets, steamed eggs, curd, liquor, etc.) after they have eaten at the same spot.

However, Shahi, Kapali and Napit *gutyhis* have their own celebration in different occasions as Napit or *Nau* (barber) caste *guthi* celebrates feast on the fourth day after *Bala Chaturdasi*, in November every year. Likely Kusle (Kapali) *guthi* celebrates *chhoila bhu* the day before Shivaratri (in February, *Silacharhe*, fourteenth day in *Sillaga*) and *mu bhu* on Shivaratri and *dhun bhu* on the next day. Shahi (Naye) celebrates yearly feast on *Disi-charhe* (fourteenth day in lunar calendar, Thinlaga) and another *guthi* with sixteen *guthiyars* celebrate on Paush Punhi (full moon day in Paush, in December/January). During those days, these *guthis* celebrate three days feast (*chhoila bhu*, *mu bhu* and *baye bhu* or *dhun bhu*) worshipping their tutelary goddess, *Bishnu Mai* every year.

²⁰During *Nani puja* in *Yomali Punhi Jatra*, Nhesa *guthi* does not provide barbecued buff (*chhoila*) since *Nani Puja* runs at night. In stead of *chhoila*, *takha* or jellied buff is offered. The items in *guthi same* contains *takha* (buff jelly), *siwa baji* (roasted beaten rice), *baji* (beaten rice), *musya bi* (steamed soya bean) and *palu* (jinger). It completely varies from the concept of the *same baji* items generally used in Newari Culture.

(proceeding in) rituals, *dyo nhya yegu* (procession of Nava Durga to home of new *pala*), *dekha pola thachho yegu* (ascending the images and ornaments of deities along with roof from the palanquin) rituals and so on. He must wear *ghuji lan*²¹. He should also be aware of his role that is his permission that every *guthi* rituals run.

Like *mu thakali*, *pemha thakali* (four head or oldest *guthiyars*), the *thakali* (oldest *musi*), the *noku* (second oldest *musi*), the *soku* (third oldest *musi*) and the *peku* (fourth oldest *musi*) have to assist one another in *guthi* rituals like *tisa tikegu*, *dukayegu*, *dyo nhya yegu*, *dekha pola thachho yegu* rituals and so on. They have to bless other *guthiyars*. They must retell the traditions of the past orally. They are the flag bearers of the ancient cultures. They have to maintain tradition so far practicable and possible. Without their permission, other *guthiyars* cannot do conduct any cultural activities. In case certain conflicts happen, this group's decision becomes a mandate. They have to perform *pata khwala la lhayegu* (offring wine in a copper bowl with two pieces of *chhoila*) tradition in *guthi*, *nani puja* (worship of death deity or *bhwani mata* in the quarter at night) and *chaka bhui* (round feast) at Pingal at *Yomali Punhi Jatra*.

As a *guthiyar*, every *musi* (*guthi* member) must perform his duty when *guthi hayekigu* (call in *guthi*) for funeral procession, construction, maintenance, preparation of banquet, sanitation, helping in feast, collecting revenue in different places and so on is made. He must perform his role at *Yomali Punhi Jatra* like worshipping *bhwani mata*, *bhwanis*, *dyo khu wanigu*²², play *dabakhin* (special long drum to dance Nava

²¹It is special thick cotton stuffed in white multi folds tailored dress like pyjama specially designed for oldest *guthiyars* during *guthi* session in winter like *Yomali Punhi Jatra* in Thecho. According to *guthi*, the numbers of *guthiyars* who wear this special dress also varies (like in Nhesa *guthi* four seniormost *guthiyars*).

²² Like other *guthis* performing *dyo khu wanigu* secretly, at least three *guthiyars* from Nhesa *guthi* go to the house of current *pala* at night after Nava Durga proceeds back to *agan chhen* since the tutelary god/dess of Nhesa *guthi* is Nava Durga. And it is not accepted to bring the symbolic three clay pots contained ancient Nava Durga materials (masks, swords and bowls) along with *si: phanga* (red cloth to

Durga) and *khin* (drum) during *nani puja*, *dyo nhyayegu* (the procession of tutelary deity to the new *pala's* house) and *Chaka bhu*, carry Bramhayani palanquin round Kwe Lachhi, *dekha pola kwakayegu* and *thachho yegu* (descending and ascending god/desses and treasures) and act out the main role like *pala*, *bhalin*, *thakali*, etc. come in turn. Besides them, he has to present his valuable opinion in favor of *guthi* so that the tradition survives for a long time. He has to pay attention to learn *guthi* traditions and play instruments: *daba khin* and *khin* only during *guthi* session at *Yomali Punhi Jatra* in *guthi*. Therefore, succession to ritual and social office is regulated by reference to a membership-roll which is maintained strictly according to the age of the members.

Guthiyar as a head of family has to manage family expense, has to do job, work in the field, and attend social and religious performances to live social life. He has to deal with neighbors and rest of every activity to live social life in harmony. Hence, *guthiyar* is an active member of society connected with different *guthis* like cult-*guthis*, lineage *guthis* and many compulsory to optional *guthis*. A *guthiyar* is more than a *guthiyar*. First, he is an active character of the multicultural societies. He bears responsibility to run his family life in social norms and values, and should earn for living and also think of running culture and traditions like *jatras* (festivals), rituals from birth till/after death. He must participate in social works like sanitation and construction of shelters, ponds, temples; management, preservation, continuation and participation of /in festivals and rituals and must play an active role to reform and

cover the dead body) encountering Nava Durga (that Mali *guthiyars* dance) in the stage at Kwe Lachhi. This tradition is taken as stealing deities from *pala* since it is believed that nobody sees it, even family members stay quiet as if they know nothing while *guthiyars* go in the house signaling of cough or *binabi* (excuse me). The *guthiyars* do *puja* (worship) to the deities and offer sacrifice of a chicken all arranged by *pala*. *Guthiyars* eat *same* (snacks) and then carry away the pots hiding in *ten ga* or *tapu ga* (a long woolen muffler or big muffler) to *guthi* at night.

continue the lifestyle of society in demand of time. That is why he has to run social life (for living in community jovially) and professional life (for basic needs) together.

In *guthi* every *guthiyar* possesses equal right to present his opinion. He bears a dominant role in collaboration with other *guthi* members in society. For any crisis caused by the breach of social norms and values or the change in daily life style brought in by the impact of modernization, *guthi* becomes the open floor where they debate, present Meta-commentary ðan interpretive reenactment of its experienceö (Turner, 1985: 181), *guthi* performs redressive interaction ranging from personal advice and informal mediation or arbitration to formal juridical and legal machinery, and to resolve certain kinds of crisis or legitimate other modes of resolution, to the performance of public ritual and maintains reintegration of the disturbed *guthi* members. Seen in this line, *guthiyars* become very active members of the Newar society.

With this brief introduction on *guthi* and *guthiyars*, I now like to discuss them with reference to the cultural theories, especially Performance Studies in the next chapter. By doing so, I will be in a position to highlight the roles that *guthiyars* play directly and indirectly. I must also mention here that I bring examples from Thecho to anchor my discussion.

Chapter: Three

Guthiyars and Newar Performance Cultures

The discussion mentioned above makes us believe the overused expressions such as where is Newar, there is *guthi*; where is *guthi* there is *jatra*, festival and where is *jatra*, there is *bhu*, feast. Newars who love clustered and mutual social life, have maintained diversity of cultural performances that vary according to locality, caste and religion. Newars in the Kathmandu Valley have their unique "*guthis*" or associations which are running various performances according to locality, season, purpose, caste and religion from time immemorial. The member, "*guthiyar*" performs typical rituals in culture to heal social crises through "redressive action". They solve out contestations over meaning and power within and between social groups are multifocal (Owens 703)" and while doing so they maintain such cultural forms.

3.1. *Guthiyars* and Performance

Performance includes a series of intimate gestures or large-scale visual theatre, lasting from a few minutes to many hours; it might be performed only once or repeated several times, with or without a prepared script, spontaneously improvised, or rehearsed over many months or years. Newars in the Kathmandu Valley appeal directly and indirectly huge mass through local performances that each and every ritual accomplishes with huge mass participation at least once a year as a local but annual festival called *jatra*. A Newar village, Thecho remains busy with *guthi* rituals and Nava Durga dances during *jatra*. This village is full of performances where live gestures, rituals have constantly been used as a weapon in which many formal and conceptual ideas are brought to life and this takes place in close and direct observation and control of it. *Guthiyars* and locals mainly Newars participate in such occasions as a matter of their *dharma* or religion.

There is a universal assumption of performance that it requires proper set up of stage in theatre or spot so that the plot and the acting can convey the message that they want where audience can really entertain to receive. True theatre at its height signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of subjects and events (Turner 13). In the context of Newar culture in Kathmandu Valley, the shelters, open space, street, quarters, temples and *chapa* (deity or *guthi* house used for feast and gatherings) play the role of seats for spectators; the quarters, *chok* or yard, *dabu* (stage), *Lachhi* (junctional big spot with main deities in Newar localities) for performance and rehearsal; streets for way to both performers and viewers and worshippers; *agan chhen* (temple for deities) and *guthi* houses for resting, feasting and dressing room for the performers; various ancient temples, houses, shelter, alleys and quarters become the marvelous multi purposed set always fit and fixed for performances whether it is for ritual, carnival or modern drama, meeting, feasting, wedding, chatting, sharing ideas and problems, social justice, drying grains or playing different games. Pointing out this very social and architectural aspect of Newar cultures, the research argues, "The Newar settlement is also marked by the residential compactness in relation to caste, though it is a flux in Kathmandu town. Each caste or groups lives in its own tole and more often than not the tole is named after it. The pattern of caste location closely follows the principle of social distance" (Nepali 55). Every locality has an important place called *Chhwasa*, a junctional spot on the crossing of two/three lanes where the objects connected with the evil spirits are thrown. Another important feature of the Newar settlement is the "prescribed route for the funeral procession and the spot known as *Murda -Do-Pat* . . . The location of cremation is marked for each caste separately. Each settlement has a central square for

the purpose of collective events, social and religious (Nepali 54). Hence Newar settlement itself is the set for multi-purpose performances.

For instance, in Thecho, there is a marvelous two tier small brick (*jhingati*) tiled temple of Goddess Bramhayani in Shikhar style in the centre of Newar locality where four ways (in the right the way to Kwana *guthi* or Mali locality, left is a way to Nhesa *guthi* or Nhesa Tole, north is a way to Lasakuti to Pingal or Gwanani and west is the way to Mu *guthi* or Pacho towards jungle) meet. Nearby the temple, there is a two storey *chapa*²³ in the right hand-side, a yard in front, a pool named Lachhi *pukhu* (pond) behind, a brass swan image on the storey and half pillar facing at the temple, many images of god/desses in different parts in the yard along with a huge Buddhist chaitya, a *phalcha* (shelter) opposite the temple, and *Nasa dyo* or *natyaswara* (shiva) on the left. In the temple on the ground floor nearby *Nasa dyo*, there is a stone Ganesh idol.

Likely, for ritualistic performances, Bal Kumari temple, the three storey temple situated at the heart of Chwe Lachhi, Thecho is clustered together by Jyapu houses. Way at every direction, brick tapped yard, a huge mouse statue in the yard facing Ganesh idol situated in the ground floor of the temple, a brass swan image in the yard on tall stone pillar, grand Buddhist chaitya in front, *chapa* attached on the right, *phalcha* (shelter) on the left and nearby the *chapa* are well built in a rectangular shape. The yard or quarter of the temple is brick tapped. Hence the construction of such a huge set becomes the platform and junction for realistic, ritualistic multi social performances in the society.

Besides, to preserve secrecy of the rituals, *guthiyars* do different tasks like making a fence full of thatch at the entrance likely at Nhesa *guthi* during *guthi* session

²³ *Guthi* house used for meeting, trainings, lodge for travellers and feasting and is usually attached to the main god/desses temple.

as it is by the road so that even passers-by cannot watch in from the way. Toffin, in this regard, writes,

The basic social determinants: hierarchical order based on pure and impure, the seniority principle, the paramount importance of the *guthi* association system, shallowness of kinship units, closeness of residence units, particular relevance of territorial and blood-drinking deities, etc. (117)

However, *guthi* activities are not that open as even the members of the *guthi* are not allowed to enter and attend certain rituals performed inside *guthi* houses. Even kinsman cannot peep inside *guthi* and even *guthiyars* cannot know every detail of the ancient traditions in some *guthis* like in Nava Durga *guthi* and Nhesa *guthi* in Thecho.²⁴ It is an important aspect of tradition where secrecy is a historical mode of preserving tradition and it is practiced to maintain superiority of certain faith. Certain rituals must follow or take place in certain seclusion (Personal interview with Kasi Nath Tamot).

During the festivals the local inhabitants decorate the surrounding together as if crews do in theatre. Newars suspend long thread woven flags of different colors around Lachhi or quarter areas, sanitize the surroundings, set *ilan* (special canopy for deities), wash and paste the ground with red clay, paint the stone images, and so on which reflects there is occurring the local performance. Such decoration and sanitation bring charm in the locality that automatically conveys the message that

²⁴ During Nava Durga dance *pomi*, the new dancer or musician is taught the sacred dance or music from the learned one. The learned one also does not teach about music or dance except the specific ones. However, by seeing and hearing of the beats and steps performed by the co-performer, he teaches the newer one. Likely in Nhesa *Guthi*, no *guthiyar* is taught music or dance. If expressed high request, only few *guthiyars* teach random since they too have learned by watching and hearing only at the festivals: *Yomali Punhi Jatra* and *Lakhun Charhe* in March/April (Chaitra) every year. Besides festivals, no rehearsal is entertained in the *guthis*.

local Newars are in festive mood or celebration. So the yard of local deities, alleys, quarters and *pitha* or holy shrines become the open and social theatre where *guthiyars* as performers perform their respective rituals. As there requires the audience in performances, local inhabitants and guests from neighboring villages play the role of viewers during different festivities.

The audiences not only play the role of spectators in performances but also react and involve in ritualistic redressive action to heal their communication gap, misunderstanding and unite together in merry makings to solving family to social crises. The feasts with liquors and grand hospitality boost them to address their crises. So festivities as social dramas become the part of social life among Newars.

There are various assumptions and ideologies which favor to unite the ethnicities. People who pay faith in similar ideology favorable to selves and their people form or engage in the association. People are always conscious to provide long life to their society and manage resources accordingly. It is said that "the creative element in man is the root both of his personality and his society; it can neither be confined to art nor excluded from the systems of decision [politics] and maintenance [economy]" (Williams 115). For it, they manage properties like human with homogeneous ideology and mutual behaviors, land, grain, money and ritualities. Newars in Kathmandu valley are completely influenced to live with socio-cultural ideology. While ideology was comprise of "representations, images, signs, etc.", its unity and meaning did not derive from those individual elements (content), but from their internal organization and relations (form): "considered in isolations, [signs and representations] do not compose ideology. It is their systematicity, their *mode of arrangement and combination* that determines their meaning and function". That function was social reproduction: "assuring the *bond* among people in the totality of

the forms of their existence, the *relation* of individuals to their task assigned by the social structure (Thompson 215).

Newars' social behaviors are absolutely performative. Ancestors have set up land property in name of *guthi* to secure life and flourishing of the local cultural performance. They have arranged properties like land, money, mutual exchange of labors in life (crisis-rituals and rituals of afflictions). Equal contribution of money or grains, labor and ritual participation have tightened their relation so strong that they hardly think of separation or cheating. This culture of equal treatment and benefit sharing boost their trust in *guthi* as refuse. So, while caste or sub-caste sets the limit to the general status-position of a person in the total society, his ritual and social life is regulated and controlled through these *guthi* institutions (Nepali 191). It is thus the centre of socio-cultural power house which care, cure, prevent and recreate people. Because its management is transparent, equality base, accountable to society and completely empowering members in socio-cultural life-style. *Manka thanegu* (joint work), for example, is a tradition formed for sake of economic co-operation. *Guthiyars* are committed not only to help in the field work of other *guthi* members, but also to render them effective economic assistance in times of emergency. Gopal Singh Nepali writes that if *guthi* member falls ill, for instance, he may rely on the *thakali* of his *manka guthi* to organize urgent work on his fields and to assist in other practical ways. *Guthi*-members are also expected to render one another for assistance in the arrangement of weddings and other domestic celebrations. There preservation of such properties and continuation of ritual performances become the responsibility that *guthiyars* as stakeholders have been performing. For it, there has been set up code of conduct related to the association according to its nature. Each *guthi* provides numerous occasions for collective worship of a particular deity to which it is

consecrated; and for feasts in which its members have the right to ritual participation. Further, while the manifest function of such *guthis* is the fulfillment of some secular or religious interests, they have the latent function of preserving the norms and values of the community (Nepali 191). Thence, variation in rules and regulations is common in each and every association in terms of their motive, locality, ethnicity and season. Newars of different localities practice cultural performances differently.

Every community has *guthis* and *guthiyars* to promptly attend festivities, rituals, and funerals; hosting guests, participate in construction and maintenance of new and traditional *agan chen*, *chapa*, shelter, water spouts, street, ponds in cooperation with local communities through *guthi* association. So these rituals from traditional to modern performances heal the crises occurred in society due to breach like misunderstandings, trespassing of rules, carelessness, busy in self tasks and many more. Performing rituals as gathering, worshipping deities, and managing, demonstrating rituals, discussing and feasting together in festive mood in every life crisis ritual: birth, wedding, *janko* (loin-cloth ritual of a boy in puberty), death etc. and ritual of affliction play vital roles to cope such crises. As a result *guthiyars* become the direct participants into each and every individual's major life-crisis rituals. Life-crisis rituals refer to that class of rituals which mark the transition of one phase in the development of a person to another. Such phases are important points in the physical or social development of the ritual subject, such as birth, puberty, or death (Deflem 8). This means *guthiyars* become inevitable members of the society.

Guthi is an association of Newars established for equal motive of the particular location, caste and occasion. Therefore, if there is any misunderstanding or disagreements which can bring the problem in the society, the *guthiyars* play role of a mediator in the socio-cultural relationship to build up public relation among Newars

through multi-socio cultural performances. Such a way of public relation becomes communication procedure with a sense of belonging, voluntary nature and networking.

To maintain good communication, Newars have set organization like Bramhayani *guthi* and sub-organizations like affiliated *guthis* like Nhesa, Kwana, Mu: *guthis*. In coordination to such organization, sub-organizations function in the social text, "culture as text"(as Clifford Geertz's readings), socio-cultural life (Culture inside social structure). To perform such socio-culture, Newars need to perform several sub-texts in difference of time, place, person and situation. Such sub-texts uplift and perform varieties of ritual performances to harmonize Newars in the society, locality. And among such texts too, there include many texts and sub-texts like ritual performances, festive presentation, funeral rites, feasts, gatherings, etc. Application of ample activities inside the ritual performances, connectivity, participation and retreats are space-related. Hence, space defines and affects performance very much. For instance, Nava Durga which takes place in Newar locality at Dashain and *Yomali Punhi* in Thecho performs dance at specified *daboo* or stage made at Kwe Lachhi only except in Twelfth year fete. Besides, neither Bramhayani nor Bal Kumari palanquin trespass their locality since they have clear local space as theatre. Theatre in the tribal or socio-cultural scenario does not borrow political, military and legal-judicial processes of social drama for redressive action, rather follows ritual process. As Turner states, "Life-crisis ceremonies, particularly those of puberty, marriage, and death, themselves indicate a major, if not altogether unexpected breach in the orderly, customary running of group life, after which many relationships even actual conflict and competition . . ." (Turner 11).

Hence, Turner opines social drama should be taken as changing (spiral form), not static as they reflect society in different manner. And social drama is not single term but multiple forms/terms take place in societies where nature of crisis change; no mutual mirroring since "The relationship between the two modes of acting- in real life and on stage" as components of a dynamic system of interdependence between social dramas and cultural performances" (Turner 16). *Guthiyars* perform real life rituals in the locally marked boundaries which become real stage to them where oral culture rules the performances, not the "hegemony of textualization" since every Newar community has own performance running since time immemorial different to others in society, caste and occasion.

Nowadays, Newars in the societies are busy in their private works. Busy life also means communication gap between and among fellow community members. They may also breach socio-cultural rules or forget to follow different activities. But during *guthi* organized festivity, they gather and participate in festive performances. Besides rituals, they perform democratic dialogue in *guthi* session to cope out the breaching point which causes crises in society. With understanding they settle such crises jovially either performing ritual activities or with mutual understanding among the respected and familiar ones. Hence, the *guthi* session becomes the platform of social dialogue where every *guthiyar* is welcome to opine freely. If the issue is serious and out of a *guthi* decision, the *guthi* invites village assembly in the premise of Bramhayani or Balkumari in Thecho. There the victim and offender are allowed to present their views defending self where as local familiar *guthiyars* play the role of the judiciary and negotiators. If it is beyond local decision, for the *guthis* or village purpose, the entire village unites and appeals in the court and pressurizes the

government for right decision. In this way every Newar is asked to follow the social rule in pressure of the association and locality where social justice is highly preferred.

Among Newars, no festival becomes auspicious and jovial until there is no feast since they enjoy *bhu* (feast) in a grand way forgetting each and every hardship in family and society. That is why feast is the main attraction in Newar festivals. During feast they perform various rituals from playing musical instruments like *Dhime*²⁵, to singing own typical songs, drinking liquor, chanting and worshipping their tutelary god/dess. In *guthi* session, every *guthiyar* is offered each and every item equally. If a *guthiyar* forgets to put equal portion of food items during feast, he has to do *kshama puja*²⁶ by offering *kislin* (a small clay bowl with husked rice, coin and betel nut) since his act becomes the breach of the norms of equality or equal treatment in the *guthi* which brings crisis to him first. He happens to feel uneasy and sick immediately as the symptom. He even gets unexpected situations in his life or body.²⁷ Then the *guthiyar* quickly accepts his mistake as the *guthiyar* who lacks the food item informs. If not so, he must do *kshama puja*. The recovery hence is only possible through redressive action of ritual practice.

Unity is power that Newars always trust on. Newars prefer to conduct their work in cooperation. So participation in social work becomes the compulsory practice

²⁵ It is an especial Jyapu identical big drum with cymbals and is a must in every procession and festival and also needs great energy to play it.

²⁶ It literally means worship for excuse. It is culturally a formal request to the deity to forgive them if any mistake happens. *Guthiyar* performs this ritual offering *kislin* (a small clay bowl containing a coin and a betel nut on husked rice). Besides for each and every ritual, *guthiyars* need to worship the deity asking permission to resume the procession of taking ornaments and images in the yard. During goddess proceeding down, *puja* (worship) takes place twice whereas four times *puja* during procession back to *agan chhen* from the initiation of goddess ascending to the yard till the run of Bramhayani palanquin: three *pujas* from *ja pala guthi*: *kshama puja* in the temple before descending, *sapha puja* (worship at shelter) after washing deities and *kha puja* (worship containing chicken sacrifice) after goddess ascending in the palanquin and final *kha puja* by the wife of *dyo bu* (the Nava Durga idol carrier's wife) of *Gan dyo khala* (Nava Durga *guthi*).

²⁷ Once about thirty to thirty three years ago Bhaicha Jyapu got his body burnt down as he had brought wine from the jar and tasted in the *guthi* without asking the *bhwani* or head of the *guthiyars*. His body suddenly burnt down that other fellow *guthiyars* ceased and he offered *kislin* (a clay bowl with rice, betel nut and a coin) as *kshama puja* (excuse worship) to *bhwani mata*, tutelary goddess.

in Newar society. In case individual Newars fail to participate in *guthi* rituals, he is fined or secluded from the society either by sending out of the society or social exclusion from any social activities. Newars do love, respect and maintain their reputation, social prestige. They fear of social defame and separation. Because they have by-birth behavioral practices to enjoy life in society as they believe ösocial dramas occur on all levels of social organization from state to familyö (Turner 15). They are psychologically and physically prepared and trained to serve the society that they always take *guthi* works as a social work since it belongs to the community and work in favor of entire community. They sacrifice even their urgent job for the social status in need. Every work is accomplished in communal assistance. Thence the breach is well recovered through *guthi* rituals so that they do not meet crisis.

People perform various activities to relief from boredom, loneliness, stress and more crises in society. To address the socio-cultural problems in an ecstatic mood, Newars in every part of Kathmandu Valley celebrate local festivals with their own traditional ritualities. Such festivities often come in every month like *Sanlhu* (first day of the month), *Charhe* (fourteenth day of the month) and *Punhi* (full moon day of the month in the lunar calendar) in favor of time and occasion. For instance, *Yomali Punhi* is the local festival of many villages like Thecho. It is celebrated in winter in leisure time to recreate after rice harvest. Even if somebody dies during this festival, *guthiyars* must accomplish his offices within a day so that all others can enjoy. Besides, since the child birth Newars do various rituals. *Macha bu byankigu*²⁸, *kayeta*

²⁸ Fourth day ritual to purify the baby from the birthly dirt is carried out through offering *same baji* (snacks) to the attendants, and also oldest women folk worship to local deities. On the same occasion some handsome wages are offered to the woman who cuts away the intestinal part and sanitizes the baby and mother in the morning.

puja (worship of loin cloth), *bara*²⁹, marriage, *jya janko* (old age ritual) and death rituals are inevitable rituals in Newar culture.

Further there is a tradition of *nakha nakegu*³⁰ or *nakha chakha hanegu* in Newar cultures. Such modes of festivities heal the breach and crises occurred in between relatives. Newars invite one another for liquor and snacks where as in the *guthi* and society, the *guthiyars* attend annual festival in *guthi* session, perform every duty in rituals of funeral to sanitation, construction, collection of land revenue, and fetch firewood for cremation and maintenance. To perform such constructing, reforming and other tasks except in annual *guthi* session, *guthi* permits *dojan* (kin male of the *guthiyar* after loin-cloth ritual) or women for *palsa jya* (substitute labor). For such different activities, *guthi* conduct *dojan nakegu* (feeding ritual to the kinsmen of the *guthiyar*) to bind the society together. For *dojan nakegu*, *guthiyars* offer special feast containing *takha* (buff-jelly), brown-wine (*karthoan*) and *chhoila* (barbecued buff) to *dojan* (male kinsmen of *guthiyar*) during *Yomali Punhi Jatra* in *Nhesa guthi* of *Thecho* in respect of their contribution in society. Even women and relatives attend feast. Likely the relatives of the *pala* who come to add sweets known as *tan wa pin* in the *guthi* feast on the day of *Chaka bhū* are well-fed in the premise of *Pingal*. In this way Newars practice and perform perfect *ōgive* and *takeō* system culturally.

²⁹ It is a puberty ritual of daughter. A girl before menstruation is kept inside house for twelve days. She is deprived from the sun and its rays. But in her house other girls for same purpose are also kept for a night before public demonstrative procession out in line in the local *Lachhi* in the morning in *ala* (red color paste in legs), *tayo*, *payo* like precious typical ornaments, beautiful red dress and plaited hair.

³⁰ This is a typical Newar tradition of offering feasts to the close relatives like daughters and in *ólaws* during special local festivals. For instance in *Thecho*, *Mohani* (*Dashain*), *Sithi nakha* (festival of sanitation of local water resources in *Asadh* like spout, well, *ga* (reserves) and way to such resources), *Yomali Punhi*, *ghya-chaku sanlhu* (ghee-jaggery eating festival in *Magh*), *khai sanlhu* (new year in lunar calendar when Newars sanitize and paste red clay on their house front bottom walls) and *Saparu* (*gai-jatra* in August/September) etc. are the main local festivals when Newars invite and feed them delicious food. In this festive performance, very close ones are invited to have supper at night and others or longtime relatives are hosted in the morning.

Feasts bind Newars to run socio-culture in the society. Initially, to permit the sonly relatives to join *guthi* rituals outside, *guthi* collects *jolan sin*, a pair of firewood or money for funeral purpose. Of the *guthis*, the principal ones whose sanctions are most dreaded by the Newars are the ‘*Sana-guthi*’ or *Si: guthi* and the ‘*Dewali*’ or *Deyaøguthi*. So these *guthis* cooperate to perform funeral rituals as life crisis rituals on behalf of persons believed to be afflicted or bereaved. The members of the cult-association/s are recruited from all over the particular Newar territory, regardless of their particular quarter or lineage membership. In this way, the system of cults helps to hold together the Newar society as Turner sets forth his notion of a ritual symbol's semantic structure (the ways in which meanings are encoded in ritual symbols-and the process for unraveling those meanings).

Rituals function in different assumptions following tradition in favorable to local culture since ritual is universally accepted phenomenon of performance though variable that reflects local especially tribal or ethnic life-style. Turner defines ritual as òprescribed formal behavior for occasions not given over to technological routine, having reference to beliefs in mystical beings and powersö (Deflem 5). Alike in Newar *guthi* culture, rituals become the local power in mystic forces and social unity. People perform rituals regarding their auspicious local festival or celebrations. In Thecho Newars perform ample rituals and mainly *Yomali Punhi Jatra*. Hence, they perform rituals with great importance during that occasion. Respect or worship to the tutelary or lineage deity is the initial ritual everywhere. It requires purifying procedure. Thus generally, the *guthiyars* take bath, manicure nails, fast, wear clean and pure dress, prepare worshipping objects called *puja*, visit the respected deity, scatter pure water to self and the image or symbolic object of the deity to purify, offer *puja*, bow down, pray for security and wish fulfillment, and receive *same* (food items

offered to deity and used as snacks). Thus the role of rituals is to sustain a society's equilibrium and secure solidarity among its members since rituals are looked upon as mechanisms to ensure societal unity (Deflem 4).

3.2. Globalizations and *Guthiyars*

The Buddhist view of globalization is embedded in its cardinal doctrine of interdependence of dependent co-arising (*paticca samuppada* in Pali), also translated as dependent co-origination, conditioned genesis, or conditioned co-production.

Samyutta Nikaya explains *paticca samuppada* as a four-part formula: "This being, that becomes; from the arising of this, that arises; this not being, that becomes not; from the ceasing of this, that ceases" (Macy 39). Accordingly, nothing can exist

independently or autonomously. So, there occur various changes according to time, person and situation since the world is changing highly influenced by globalization.

Therefore, "globalization" is "as a process of social representation" (Alexander 84).

Guthi cannot remain exception in the drastic flush of globalization. Colonization in the part of the world and modernization that Nepal has embraced so far has brought drastic changes in the life styles of the people. The people who live in the rural area, secluded life have dived into the world of information, media, science and

technological development. Their approaches in communication, transportation, food,

information, living style, attitude, luxuries, and connection, etc. to the outer world

have converted them into modern beings that likely and unlikely must follow the

contemporary developments and habits. Despite the rigidity in traditionalism, people

perform their socio-cultural performance with change that favor and ease them in

living. One of the most social changing factors is interest. People with connection and

affection of the modern transformation and taste are bound to follow change in spite

of the cultural norms and values since they taste and cultivate new and change with

easiness as much as possible. The nature of easiness and temptation to change make people follow new culture exposed or bestowed by globalization.

Non-Western perspective of "society (in the broad sense) is as an entity subject to ongoing change. In terms of human nature, whereas, the West's emphasis is on individualism, the East's is on interrelatedness" (Gunaratne 69). So, cultures keep on flourishing among the ethnicities since they believe in interrelatedness. "Social organizations and cultural structures" like Newa Dey Daboo, Jyapu Samaj, Jyapu Mahaguthi, *Manka Khala*, etc. and *guthis* in local levels "alike are expanding their scope and reach" (Alexander 83).

Despite the global impact, ethnic people like Newars keep on performing their social tasks together. They understand "globalization is not an alternative reality that makes previous knowledge and social reality irrelevant. It is a long emerging if only recently risible and represented reality, a social phenomenon that in itself is neither sacred nor profane" (Alexander 82). Rather they internalize the current environment and follow changes favorable to them. Though they dress, eat and live modern, they are somehow following their traditional instincts like faith in *guthi*, recreation in winter season and location is natural and beautiful groves with religious faith. So, even rituals in modern society which may be situated outside the boundaries of the institutionalized religions of churches, sects, and other religious groups, and which take place in the domain of, for instance, recreational activity have some religious component (Deflem 16).

With this brief analysis of Newar performance cultures especially its *guthi* and *guthiyars* in the context of broader meanings, I now try to show how *guthiyars* from Thecho have improvised several rules and practices according to the pressures brought in by the changes in the next chapter.

Chapter: Four

Foods, Foods and Foods: Newar Culture Thy Name is 'Continuity and Change'

Nothing is permanent. This is as much truer about Newar cultures as life is often defined by Buddhists. Newar cultures are no longer the same as they used to be in the past. But by stating so, one should also not claim that Newar cultures have become entirely strange for us. For example, there were several important assumptions about architectural aspects of the house that Newars used to construct in the past. Researchers on Newar performance cultures also agree, 'The Newar type of house is generally rectangular with low ceiling which hardly allows a tall man to stand erect. The roofs are generally sloped on two sides . . . single roofed houses are considered to be inauspicious and their construction is, therefore, as far as possible, avoided' (Nepali 57). But most of the Newars live in cemented houses designed other than the way warranted by their traditional architectures these days. Similarly, Newar women and men, boys and girls do not wear traditional dresses on daily basis as it was the case in the past. However, many of them are seen clad on traditional dress especially on culturally important events and occasions. Senior members of the society recall that such changes started to take place only after 1950, the year democracy was introduced and Kathmandu for the first time and Nepal started to open itself to the cultures of the world.

Similarly, marriage for Newars in the past held different cultural meanings: 'Territorial limitation of Newars' marriage depended on many factors, such as the concentration of one particular caste in a single region, inter-regional variation in the cultural life of the same caste, and difference in occupations' (Nepali 208). In the past the pattern of marriage was somehow rigid, seen from today's context. For example, except local marriages, male Jyapu Newars from Thecho would marry the girls from

Sunakothi, Bulu, Khokana and Harisiddhi or vice versa. Similarly, Malis from Thecho could marry the members of the opposite sex of their caste from Dhapakhel and Bungamati. However, such traditions are gradually giving away to newer or modern ones. But marriages are still conducted in manners warranted by rituals. Social relations are still the most important force in Newars' lives. This makes us realise that Newars still value social relationship the most. Evoking this relationship between individual and social relations in traditional communities, Stuart Hall states,

...social relations do exist. We are born into them. They exist independently of our will. They are real in their structure and tendency. We cannot develop a social practice without representing those conditions to ourselves in some way or another; but the representations do not exhaust their effect. Social relations exist, independently of mind, independent of thought. And yet they can only be conceptualized in thought, in the head. (105)

Hall's interpretation of the relationship between individual and society in culturally important societies sounds very much pertinent to analyze the behavioral pattern of Newars.

We must also accept the fact that Newar youths are liberal and open to many newer ideas. They belong to multiple political parties but represent voice and visions of the multicultural democratic societies of the twenty first century. They are one of the most globally mobile communities of Nepal. But in the meantime, they are seen coming home all the way across seven seas on cultural occasions. Marriages in traditional orders are still the most common practices, and inter-caste marriages are not the mainstream pattern of Newar cultures as far as my observation in Thecho goes.

I strongly believe and also practice this reality that *guthiyars* do understand the very continuity and change state of societies. They know a fact that changes are universal, and the most important and challenging thing is to maintain traditions without breaking away from culturally rich traditions. Next important thing we should notice is that Newars are the most mobile communities across the country and are taken as the flag bearers of business and capitalism in Nepal. In almost every town in Nepal, there are Newar merchants in some good number. One can argue that Newars know that globalization is not foreign to their life patterns. As Brown says that globalization "can also be what people wish to make of it. Thus, it is an important to know what people think about globalization and how this reinforces its dialectic behavior as it is to know what *should* be done to help change future perceptions and experiences" (Brown 46). Moreover, Newars are very important intellectual and economic forces in channelizing the course of globalizations in Nepal.

With this brief introduction about Newar cultures, I would like to explore the way *guthiyars* from Thecho, my locality have addressed the continuity and change states of their ritually important cultural practices. I strongly believe that *guthiyars* know that it is not globalization as such but the very varieties of food that they have to arrange for great many *pujas* (worship) and festivities which have remained as one of the burdens for them. Realizing this very fact, *guthiyars* have improvised several rules especially related to the requirement of food items and materials required from several rituals and festivities.

The following section of this chapter concentrates on how *guthiyars* from Thecho have carefully and successfully addressed the continuity and change factors of their rituals which carry the values of their cultures. Thus how cultures are changing

in Newar communities and the way *guthiyars* are performing their roles to address this very issue is the focus of the remaining part of the chapter.

4.1. Foods and *Guthiyars*

Foods are very integral part of culture. This is so much true about Newars. It is often said that Newars have ruined their family economy because they bother so much about food items. But we should also realise the other factor that without rituals and festivities, Newars do not feel spiritually safe. They believe that gods and demons too need to be fed. They too share the seasons, the crops and festivities. It is a common belief that Newar cultures grew out of agro-economy and foods occupy the central space in almost every ritual and festival. But Newars these days live through a reality that their economy and life pattern are no longer based on agricultures. They no longer grow the food items in plenty. But rituals since they are rituals prefer ritually codified or required food items. Newar *guthiyars*, I argue, should realise the shift that has taken in their economy and act out rituals accordingly. Though this cannot be launched in a form of movement, it is important to notice how *guthiyars* in some particular society have addressed this urgency. For this, I take Thecho as a research site to explore how *guthiyars* have addressed the food items which are very much required in their rituals in the present socio-economic contexts.

There was a tradition of preparing leaf plates made from the leaves of some special tree found in remote villages of southern Lalitpur for a particular feast known as *Kala lapti*³¹ in Thecho. Such leaves were rolled first, and then cut into pieces in a size of palm and finger. This also means the wastages of green leaves and also the

³¹This is a long leaf of a tree like a banana leaf which is rolled and brought from the remote Lalitpur jungle. It is especially used for feast in huge number. It is cut into pieces measuring a hand and a palm. Due to rolling and keeping as it is, there comes a wastage and damage part. Later on it became shortage as well. So feasting on this plate became removed. Instead of this, simple leaf plate worn of many leaves known as *bhwe lapti* (feast plate) but in a big size has been using.

loss of labor. Sadly, such leaf bearing trees became rare things. But *guthiyars* from Thecho decided not to take this as the compulsory material for such festivities especially in 1980 AD. These days, *guthiyars* use simple leaf plates and this has saved their energy as well as money.

Guthiyars in the past used to collect ten *mana* or almost five kilo gram rice from every household (one hundred and six *guthiyars*) on the day of *Sakimana Punhi* (the day of full moon in Kartik, roughly September and October) in order to prepare wine for *Yomali Punhi Jatra* known as *thoan ki kayegu*³². But these many Newar households do not have lands in plenty to grow rice. That is why *guthi* collects only two *mana thoan ki* or one kilo gram rice from every house hold. In the past, *guthiyars* had to carry the wine in jar to the place where feasts were organized. Many share their experience that it was very difficult to carry the heavy, huge and delicate earthy jars filled with wine, and many times such jars got broken while getting them transported on human shoulders. Besides, it was very difficult and uneasy to carry wine in such jars from *pala*'s house to *guthi*'s place. But these days, *guthiyars* can carry wine in smaller jars to *guthi* house. Nowadays *guthiyars* also realise that they should also drink lesser amount of wine as they no longer pay ten *mana* as they used to do so in the past.

Likely, *pala* had to bear all expenses for feasts organized on the occasion known as *thoan ki kayegu* twice a year. The interesting part of the feast was that every *guthiyar* had to bring pumpkin-dishes as there used to be pumpkin in plenty in the *keba*, the backyard field of their home. Such feast-items contained varieties of beans and buffalo fat and was received as the most delicious foods that Newar could enjoy.

³² It literally is collecting husked rice from *guthiyars* for wine preparation. It is the tradition for preparation of special *guthi* session or festival where equal contribution of main *guthiyars* (*musi*;) runs almost once a year according to *guthi* session.

As a result, the feast became bigger in its size. And, *pala* alone had to offer such feasts two times a year to entire community of fellow *guthiyars*. Too much is too much, *guthiyars* decided to bring reformation in this feast as feat in 1974. These days, only *bhwani* and *majhos* gather at *pala*'s house just once a year. The remaining members of the *guthi* do not mind and must not show any gestures of complain for not being invited in such festival. This change is culturally valid and accepted accordingly.

Guthis had to organize feasts of various natures in several occasions in the past. Such festivities used to be full of paraphernalia composed out of food items. But *guthiyars* have gradually stopped giving such festivities such larger forms. On *dyo kanigu*³³, a special kind of ritual, the *pala* in the past had to organise a feast in his house after cleaning Bramhayani temple. This festival used to be very big as all members of *guthi* needed to be invited as a matter of ritual. But the structures of this festival got radically reformed as only *pala* (messenger or turn bearer), *bhalin* (cook), *thakali* (oldest *guthiyar*) and *majhos* (leaders) of three *guthis* associated with Bramhayani are the ones who are invited on this feast. As a result, *pala* does not have to bear much expense. This change has been very well received and followed as a matter of tradition.

Similarly, *pala* as a matter of culturally required practices had to build a thatch hut (*bala gwegu*) and clean it especially for the festival *Yomali Punhi*. And for this, he had to take help from his relatives. On this occasion, *pala* in the past had to organize a gala of food for his relatives. *Pala*'s relatives still help him to sanitize *guthi* house and

³³It is a traditional performance of sanitation and painting of the Bramhayani and Bal Kumari temples before *Yomali Punhi Jatra* when walls and windows are repainted. Especially Simbah (*Simhini*) and Dhumba (*byangini*) statues side by side at the main entrance of Bramhayani are repainted and redrawn well.

build the thatch fence and also the entrance. But, instead of such grand feast, *pala* these days offers them tea or liquor. And this is very much accepted by his relatives.

For *chhoila bhū*³⁴, another feast of important nature, the *pala* had to manage all the food items by one day before it started. As a matter of *guthi* rules, *guthiyars* had to contribute or donate a *mana*³⁵ of beaten rice. *Guthi* used to hand it to *pala*. And, he had to bear the entire expense of spices and feast items except meat. Further during *guthi* session, they had to follow a lot of rituals and prepare varieties of chapatti like *gojan mali* (round pyramid shaped rice bread), *tapa mali* (huge bread of rice and soyabean), *chatan mali* (chapatti of rice flour), *wo* (pulse cake) in the past. But these days, *pala* does not need to take such economic as well as labor burden.

4.2. Foods and Festivals

Some cultural performances in Newar society are compulsory and *guthiyars* should show their strong participation on such occasions. A vital instance is compulsory sacrifice in multi-cultural performance. There used to be sacrifice ritual on *chhoila bhū* on the day before *Yomali Punhi*, ð. . . since the Newars are known to be great consumers of animal flesh; and animal sacrifice is the core of their ceremonial and religious lifeö (Nepali 43). *Guthiyars* then needed to sacrifice two buffaloes: a male and a female one in the Nava Durga dancing yard at Kwe Lachhi early in the morning for three *guthis*: Nhesa, Mu: and Kwana. Later from 1989 AD, feeling the unpleasant scene of female buffalos being slaughtered, *guthiyars* decided only two male buffaloes to be sacrificed. Similarly, the meat needed to be divided among three *guthis*. And this was very difficult and odd to manage as it required

³⁴ It literally means feast, gala of barbecued buff. It is culturally organized by *guthi* for *guthiyars* a day or two before main feast in main festivals like *Yomali Punhi Jatra* in December and *Dyo Puja* in February in Thecho. Besides, it is offered to maternal uncle and auntie of the boy whose ritual celebration of *kayeta puja* (loin-cloth ceremony) is done.

³⁵ Four quarters full of tea glass is a *mana* in traditional measurement in villages.

weighing the meat. But these days, three *guthis* sacrifice three male buffaloes separately in the morning on the same day for *chhoila bhu*. And the day is celebrated thoroughly eating the dish *chhoila* (barbecued buff), probably one of the most popular dishes among Newars.

On *Chaka Bhu*, *guthiyars* of nine Newar *guthis* in Thecho gather at Pingal³⁶, offer *puja* (worship) to deities of *Pitha* and celebrate feast in their own *guthiyars* separately. There they used to offer eggs too. But eggs turned out to be troublesome as many would get cracked and were very difficult to put in the leaf plate. Hence, like other bread items, it was removed from 1994 AD. This makes us realise the important nature of cultures practiced everywhere in the world. Since 'People are not cultural dopes . . . they know something about who they are. If they engage in a project it is because it has interpolated them, hailed them, and established some point of identification with them' (Hall 59). Hall imports humanist conception of human beings as self-aware, self-determining, subjects whose actions derive from the force of arguments (ideologies) presented to them. Exactly *guthiyars* opine freely inside *guthi* and the mass determines it with great pleasure. This is how such changes have become possible.

In the case of preparing varieties of bread items like *gojan mali*, *tapa mali*, *yomali*, *chatan mali* and *wo* (pulse bread) in feasts at *Yomali Punhi*, the *pala* had to bear a lot of troubles in the past. The trouble was that it was as much financially burdensome as it demanded lots of dos and do-nots while preparing *tapa mali*, *chatan*

³⁶ On the day of *Pingale Swegu*, observing at Pingal or Pitha, *Guthiyars* from nine Newar *guthis* of Thecho: Charhe, Bhairab, Paru, Punhi and Acha (from Chwe Lachhi) and Mu:, Kwana, Nhesa and Gwa or Gopali (from Kwe Lachhi) gather separately at nine spots hovering round the *pitha* to have feast together with their separate cult-members every year. For the feast every *guthiyar* purifies self manicuring nail, taking bath, wearing new or washed dress and fasting to join the feast in the premise of Pingal. However some food items are somehow different in other *guthis*.

mali and other food items³⁷. For example, on the occasion of *chaka bhu* (round feast), there was a strong tradition of preparing *chatan mali* (soft rice bread) in great amount as not only *guthiyars* but also the viewers could eat. *Guthi* also required *tapa mali* (big piece of rice bread) for *nhi pyakhan* (day dance) feast and the next day. Another food item *wo* (pulse cake) was needed to be baked for *wo bhu* (feast of bread). Since *tapa mali* used to be bigger in size, *guthiyars* could not finish eating it. As a result, they were found carrying the food back home and fed their guests, also demonstrated them as the symbol of *guthi* or ate them later. But concerning the hardships to prepare such food items, *guthiyars* decided to remove these items from the list.

4.3. Ornaments and *Guthiyars*

In the past, Bramhayani and Nava Durga *guthis* used to have ornaments in plenty. On the day of *dyo kwanha wayegu* (descending ritual of god/dess) and *tisa bujhe yayegu* (handing over jewelries), the ornaments were registered marking the golden ornament, diamond locket, etc. Thence, there was a great risk of robbery. It was too big problem for *pala* since he had to take care of ornaments of Bramhayani for the whole year. He could not leave his house for a single day. These days, *majhos* check and register the ornaments just naming the gold pasted ornament so that no

³⁷ *Tapa mali*, the pure rice bread is three/four times bigger than *chatan mali* (soft rice bread). To prepare this bread, *pala* fellows needed to go to water-mill near by to grind it a whole night before the day of preparation. The rice is soaked initially and dried for while on the muffler before grinding. In a required content, some soaked and husked or skin removed soyabean is mixed in the rice. Mixing soyabean in rice flour gives stickiness and softness. To feed the fellows, two/three men had to go there carrying *mutigu thoan* (wine first time taken out from the jar) and *chhoila* (barbecued buff) for their meal for night. Then after grinding, it was brought back home and from early in the morning the helpers start preparing *tapa mali* for two days since it was used for *nhi pyakhan* (day dance) and the next day feast (today it is known as *mu bhu*, main feast). After heating the clay pan, they put a huge bowl (contained a *mana* or four tea glass full four quarters) full of half- solid paste like thick glue or honey on it to bake. There used to occur big holes than of *chatan mali*. Due to business in feastivities and hosting guests, *guthiyars* did not have time to eat such hard labor contained breads. However, after four five days of *jatra*, they collected breads like *tapa mali* and *yomali* (lovely dome or simple shaped rice bread) even stored with the cooking pot and offered to every jar of grain or container on the day of *Yomali punhi*. They had to wash such stale breads with hot water till all green fungus removed away and steamed them again in the *porsi* (special pot with holes in the bottom like momo pot) to soften, cook *na: la* (fresh or new meat) and enjoy together with rest of wine. In this way *guthiyars* used every item even after the feast.

guthiyar has to take the burden of taking care of such expensive and culturally important jewelries.

On the occasion of *chaka bhū*, another special ritual, the Nhesa *guthi* needs to organize a huge amount of feast in the premise of Pingal *mai* (*asta matrika*) every year. Although this tradition remains the same, the duration and time of the feast has been shortened. In the past, the feast used to start early in the morning and lasted till noon. This is why older *guthiyars* needed fire to warm up. In the present, this feast takes place during afternoon. Moreover, there was a strict rule that if any *guthiyar* was absent on the occasion of *chaka bhū*, he would be fined a *mana* of rice. But this is not the case these days.

Guthiyars belonging to Saraswati *guthi* needed to show the light from *phalcha* (where Mu: *guthi* sit nearby at Pingal for *chaka bhū*) to ease *nhemha phai syayegu* (sacrifice of seven hairy sheep) in the morning. This ritual of light showing was conducted to ease the *hoam* ritual at Pingal in the December morning. In the past, this ritual would take place in the early morning and the weather remained very foggy and cold. Nowadays, this ritual occurs in the afternoon. Moreover, on this occasion *guthiyars* displayed *chata mali*, an especial food item. The bigger the *chatamali* the greater would be the reputation of the *guthiyars*. But these days, *guthiyars* do not practice such competition.

Change will happen best if it is left to happen gradually, naturally. It does not need to be driven, monitored, etc (Steyn 11). This sounds very true to Newar performance cultures. Traditional performances get affected by globalization. Gradual replacements and changes in rituals start to take place. Thecho *guthi* performances are some of the burning examples of such phenomenon. To conduct *hoam*, fire-ritual at Pingal and *chhoila bhū*, *guthi* used to hand over responsibility to six *guthiyars*. They

were responsible for searching *san phai* (hairy sheep) and *meh* (buffalo). But before bringing these animals, the *guthiyars* had to show them to *majhos* so that they would not bear complain of over expense. Hence, they needed to search animals to sacrifice on the occasion. In the past *majhos* handled this scapegoat-searching job to *guthiyars*. *Guthiyars* used to bring *san phai cha* (woolen ship or *chyangra*) for the *hoam*. Due to shortage of sheep as Lamas or Bhotos from Tibet do not bring sheep downwards anymore, *guthis* have replaced the animals with the he-goats.

At the night of *chaka bhu*, Jyapus from Nhesa *guthi* as a matter of rules should have performed Nava Durga Dance throughout the village³⁸. But nowadays local Malis are taking the responsibility of performing this dance. However, *guthiyars* of Nhesa *guthi* still perform *gandyo* (Nava Durga) dance inside *guthi* on the occasion of *nhi pyakhan* (day dance). On the day, *guthiyars* used to organize a huge feast in the

³⁸ Though there lacks written proof, cultural practices prove that Jyapus of Nhesa *guthi* danced Nava Durga dance at past. Jyapus still do perform Gan Dyo on *Lakhun Charhe* (fourteenth day in Chaitra) every year to occupy the dance stage. It is known as *kha ko teligu* (occupying the stage). During twelfth year fete of Nava Durga, culturally *mu: thakali* (oldest *guthiyar*) of Nhesa *guthi* is must for Mali Nava Durga team to accomplish ritual performances especially *hoam* (fire work) at night at Kulpi, Sunakothi. They have to host *mu: thakali* during their feast with their relatives before proceeding back to Thecho in the afternoon. The Nava Durga dancers do not receive any *puja* (worship) until Nhesa *guthi* offers especial *puja* with multi-items along with *chyangra* (woolen sheep) nearby the *guthi* house in Thecho. It is still culturally believed if *mu: thakali* brings Simhini (*Simba*) into Nhesa *guthi*, Nava Durga automatically goes to Nhesa *guthi*. Likely, in twelfth year *Jatra*, Nava Durga team offers feast to whole village (Thecho and Sunaguthi). For it Nhesa *guthi* has to sanitize the route from Durikhel to Saraswoti Khel in Thecho a day before the *dey bhwe* (whole country feast) where Jyapus do not only clean the route but also cut tree/branch if any branch or leaf is over the grotto. On the day of *dey bhwe*, *mu: thakali* (Nhesa *guthi*) must offer *puja* before preparation of feast items and before the starting of feast at Durikhel. There *dyo khala* (Nava Durga team) of Nhesa *guthi* wearing garlands sit first in descending order. They are not only the first receiver of feast from Mali Nava Durga team but also the second time receiver after every *guthiyar* or individual house representative of entire Thecho Newar community receives feast. Every individual or *guthiyar* of Thecho and Sunaguthi must pay seven pathi unhusked rice for feast except Nhesa *guthi* Nava Durga dancing *guthiyars* and their sonly relations. Such cultural evidences show that Jyapus were the first Nava Durga dancers. It is believed The Mali Gan Dyo team has been offering feast to whole village for villagers respect and offering *pujas* to them throughout a year. Further Nhesa *guthi* Nava Durga dancers except musicians are offered this feast twice at Durikhel for their handing over the deities to Malis and rest of villagers pay seven *pathis* or money in behalf of Nhesa *guthi* dancers as well.

Related to Nava Durga, it is believed that once the son in law was sacrificed in twelfth year ritual for Nava Durga and buried under the ladder in urinating ditch. Recognizing the husband's hand while urinating, the daughter cursed Nava Durga to go to the lower caste. So it went to Malis then. The Nhesa *guthi guthiyars* are still prepare *puja* to Nava Durga on twelfth year ritual from the same house separated room and the *guthiyar* of the family must offer *puja* as he is known as *dyo bu* (priest of Nava Durga) at that time.

past. This was the occasion when all kin, guests and friends from neighboring villages would gather. The scale of feast made the hosts remain busy preparing all delicious items. Senior locals narrate that many a times it was embarrassing experience even for guests as they found their hosts busy throughout the day. That is why *guthis* latter decided to improvise it and brought the feast into an ordinary size.

Twenty years back *guthi* utensils in Nhesa *guthi* in Thecho were mainly clay pots: *bhegacha*, *bata*, *ghaucha*, *pacha*, *koan*³⁹, etc. with some copper and brass bowls, *jashi* (huge copper cooking pot) and plates. Nowadays almost all clay pots have been replaced by metal ones except few wine jars and the three *ghauchas* where *bhwani* or *dyo* (god/desses) are kept.

Charhe bhu, the name of the feast organized on the fourteenth day according to the lunar calendar is a cultural practice recently removed. *Guthiyars* had to guard Bramhayani goddess and her ornaments for four months turn by turn. Thus the feast marked the end of the turn of *puin* (one quarter or one-fourth group of *guthiyars*) and the beginning of another *puin*. This turn of guarding the deity and her ornaments was marked by a huge feast. This turned out to be a burden. The *guthiyars* from Thecho have recently removed the feast and everyone is happy with this decision.

Chhoila, an especial dish prepared out of buffalo meat is a must in every activity that *guthi* is supposed to carry out on rituals and festivals of any kind. Like many other things: *si phanga* (dead body covering red cloth), *musya* (hand holding long oil light), palanquin, drum and bowl and *chhoila* are very dominant symbol comprises both a natural necessary and a social need or desire; it represents both the obligatory and the desirable (Deflem 6). Whenever, whoever hears about *chhoila*

³⁹ They are different size clay pots: *bhegacha* (bottom stretched clay bowl), *gha* (jar), *bata* (round pot like bowl bigger than *bhegacha*), *ghaucha* (a middle stretched small jar), *pacha* (a small tray like clay pot), *koan* (big jar especially used to prepare wine, store grain or keep water), *bakun cha* (a small clay pot piece) and *soma* (a wine pot like kettle).

salivates his mouth since it is one of the best items to dine. There is a special way of preparation of *chhoila* with special ingredients: *subh chhun*⁴⁰, milk, mustard oil, ground jinger and garlic, red chilli powder and salt. In the past *guthiyars* prepared *chhoila* piece cutting with measure of knee of a man especially for *khun nani puja*⁴¹ at night. Since they were big pieces, it would be very difficult to bake them. But these days, *chhoila* pieces are very small, hence saved money as well as energy of the *guthiyars*.

There was a tradition that every year just after the *Yomali Punhi Jatra*, the *majhos* and the *thakalis* needed to gather at Kwe Lachhi to decide the price of the rice for the forthcoming *Yomali Punhi Jatra*. Such a gathering used to take place at *ja: pala*'s house known as *bha chheligu bhū* (deciding price of crops). And the *ja: pala* needed to organize a feast. It was too costly for the *pala*. That is why *guthi* decided to stop this feast. However, *guthiyars* gather to discuss current market price of the rice every year and decide the price of grain for the *guthi* revenue collection context. As soon as the price fixed, the *ja pala guthi* collects rice sending *guthiyars* to *talsings*, the land users.

On the occasion of *Lakhun Charhe* (the fourteenth day in Chaitra according to the lunar calendar), Nhesa *guthi* has to organize an especial feast inside *guthi* and dance at Nava Durga stage at Kwe Lachhi. On such occasion, *bhwani* needed to organize a very expensive feast but these days he bears only cigarette, fire wood,

⁴⁰ Sour powder made of a plant seed available in the slopes functioned to digest.

⁴¹ It is a tradition of worshipping the deity: *bhwani mata* at night inside the special quarter or yard inside Nanigal near *guthi* house where *guthiyars* of Nhesa *guthi* worship symbolic deities: *si: phanga* (dead-cloth piece), *dalucha* (light pot), *gungu maka* (vase with special insense), etc. it is not allowed for public view as it is performed at night when nobody walks out. It is believed if anyone except *guthiyars* looks this ritual, he or she will die. So *guthiyars* guard the entrances north and south and ask local quarter people to sit in closing windows and lights off so that nobody comes and observes it. That is why it is said *khun nani puja* which literally means stealing worship of the deity in the quarter.

cooks and helpers. And *guthi* bears the cost of vegetables, wine and meat. Thus *guthi* has become much friendlier to the members.

In the past *guthiyars* in Nhesa *guthi* were not allowed to receive wine in a small clay or brass bowl. That is why the *guthiyars* had to drink wine in open mouth without touching the *dhoan soanma* (a unique piece of dome shaped clay pot) or bowl as much as they could. But these days, *guthiyars* are allowed to use bowls for drinking wine. Likely in Nava Durga dance, the dancers were offered *krthoan* as blood in the past. They could drink it mouthful as much as they liked. Nowadays they are offered wine in *ken khola*, a brass bowl with two pieces of *chhoila* on *nhi pyakhan* (day time Nava Durga dance) except at Nava Durga stage, Kwe Lachhi.

It is argued that mechanisms of cultural transmission depend on the cognitive ontogeny of humans as creators, bearers and re-creators of culture into the focus of interest. Anthropologists argue,

Particularly the capacity to imitate has been stressed as one foundation of the uniqueness of human cultural evolution. A promising way of explicating imitation as the mechanism to adopt not only short-lived behavioural episodes, but long-lived skills, habits, attitudes and (practical) knowledge as essential parts of cultural practices is to conceptualize imitation as a kind of simulation, which rests on the capacity to understand other persons as intentional agents and to identify with them. (Kannetzky 592)

This is also true about *guthi* cultures which function almost orally. Newars pay attention to each others, especially the junior *guthiyars* pay attentions to the senior ones. Moreover, they are conscious that they need to be very careful and particular at this juncture of cultural changes. Therefore, they think that the more *guthiyars* are

there the better are chances to understand and manage cultural activities. That is why unlike two *majhos* (leaders) who dominated *guthis* in the past, there are four *majhos* in *guthis* these days.

Anthropologists argue that religion, economy, law, politics, and other cultural domains are essentially interwoven. It is believed that tribal rituals have some religious component, since tribal religion in both mythology and ritual practices has not (yet) split off from other sectors of tribal culture. In industrial societies, on the other hand, the several institutions have become independent of each other, each of them dealing with certain needs and questions which these societies face (law, politics, economy, religion, etc.). Rituals may take place in either one of these institutional domains, but not always with religious connotations, since they may happen outside the realm of institutionalized religion in domains where matters or the supernatural are not dealt with (Deflem 17). Thus changes are universal. It is so much true about *guthi* performances. Moreover, Newar rituals, feast and festivals take place in the capital city therefore changes are the most natural phenomenon. For example, there used to be a fifteen-night-long performance during *Yomali Punhi* in Thecho but in later days it was reduced to five days. And this has not damaged the performance cultures. The zest of ritual performance has remained the same. Thence, taking into account the trends of convergence and divergence between societies, there can be addressed the changing character of ritual activity in relation to patterns of change in and between societies, as a result of both internal developments and external influences (Deflem 18).

There used to be fifteen-day-long feasts in *guthi* during *Yomali Punhi Jatra*. Feasts such as *chhoila bhu*, *chaka bhu*, *phai bhu*, *tapa mali bhu*, *chhoila bhu*, *mu bhu*, *wo bhu*, *gojan mali bhu* (or feast of Goddess Nava Durga to new *pala*, *dyo nhyai*),

kasala bhu, *ja bhu*, *dhun bhu* were must things to take place⁴². In the past, things were not that expensive, but *guthiyars* later found it very difficult to manage. This could be one of the reasons why *guthiyars* decided to stop several expensive feasts in 1961/62 AD. The senior *guthiyars* tell that they had faced very difficulties and many of them had gone bankrupt. However, some essential ritualities are still performed (Personal Interview with Krishna Bahadur Maharjan). These days *guthiyars* perform feast generally for five times during *Yomali Punhi Jatra*: four times in *guthi* and one at *pitha* or Pingal by main nine *guthis* of Thecho: Nhesa, Mu:, Ta:, Kwana, Paru, Punhi, Gopali, Acha and Charhe. They are *chhoila bhu*, *chaka bhu*, *phai bhu*⁴³, *mu: bhu*, *dyo nhyayegu bhu* (feast of *bhwani mata* procession to new *pala*) and *dhun bhu*.

Change is natural phenomenon in every sector of the society. Same is the case with the music that the Newars need to perform during ritual performances. *Dhime*, for instance is the identity of Jyapu culture, is the most necessary instrument in every jovial situation in the society besides its purpose of chasing wild animals in ancient time. Instruments of indigenous ideologies, a nexus of signifying practices grounded in the routines of contemporary life (Mahon 469). *Kahan*, an air pipe is so dominant in Newar culture that its sound awakes everybody and forces to concentrate since it is played only in the religious or auspicious occasions like funeral and ritualistic procession organized in the name of deities like Bramhayani, Bal Kumari, and Nava Durga. During the training sessions, it is strictly prohibited to play out the music. Trainees are not allowed to rehearse to play well. Moreover, the musical

⁴² There were fifteen day feasts in *guthi* session. They were *chhoila bhu* (feast of barbecued buff), *chaka bhu* (feast in the round circle), *phai bhu* (feast of sacrificed ram), *tapa mali bhu* (feast of big rice bread), *chhoila bhu* (ending), *mu bhu* (main feast), *wo bhu* (feast of pulse cake), *gojan mali* (round pyramid shaped rice bread) *bhu* (or feast of Goddess Nava Durga procession to new *pala*, *dyo nhyayegu*), *kasala bhu* (feast of beans), *ja bhu* (rice eating feast), *dhun bhu* (ending banquet). Though they are not altogether fifteen in number, fifteen days were celebrated working and preparing for feasts and festivities in the past.

⁴³ Nowadays only eight seniormost *guthiars* dine *phai bhu*, the feast of the sacrificed sheep (nowadays he-goat) just to run the tradition in Nhesa *guthi*.

instruments such as *kahan* are not allowed to be taken out since they are worshipped and placed at the designated place for training which cannot be released without worships. Important change that has surprised Newars is that their daughters are seen performing *Dhime* (drum and cymbal). In the past, the Newar girls were not even allowed to touch them. Local Newars these days wish their daughters to learn to play *Dhime*. And senior *guthiyars* tell that girls are more disciplined and serious in learning. The fact that girl Newars have started to play *Dhime* and perform on several occasions assure us that cultures keep on changing. Cultures are person-centered. They exist in the minds of people and the behaviors of the people. "Every individual exists in a continually changing world of experience of which he is the centre" (Mersham 84). This statement also implies that culture is also seen as always in flux; it is forever changing and adapting to new information.

Next thing, we must state here is that *guthis* must not be taken as homogenous entity. There are several *guthis* and each *guthi* has got its own dos and do-nots. *Guthiyars* therefore keep on improvising their behaviors accordingly. For example, on the day of *chaka bhu*, four *bhwanis* from Kwana and Nhesa *guthis* dress up in turban whereas only three *bhwanis* of Mu *guthi* of Kwe Lachhi do so. Moreover, *guthis* of Chwe Lachhi do not have such exact tradition as its *bhwanis* do not wear such dress. Besides, *musi* (*guthiyars*) attend the Pingal feast in some *guthis*. But *Acha guthi* offers feast to their whole family members where as *Charhe guthi* does to its *dojans* (male family members of *guthiyar*) as well.

Kwana *guthi*'s particular ritual performance known as *dyo nhyayegu*⁴⁴ is very different from the ones that are conducted by Nhesa and Mu: *guthis*. In the formal ritual even women can worship *bhwanis* along with symbolic deities in Kwana *guthi*. But such tradition is not the case with Nhesa and Mu: *guthis* as only male *guthiyars* prepare and perform rituals of *dyo nhyayegu* and *dyo dukayegu* (welcoming deities) except the *thakali nakin pyakhan huyegu* (dance of the oldest woman folk). Kwana *guthi* does not need *basa layegu* (offer long white new muffler on the way). There are differences in *guthis* at Kwe Lachhi. In Nhesa *guthi*, *kahan khala* leads the procession on the *basa*. Behind them walks the *musya* bearer, then *dyo baja* (*guthi* musical instruments: *dhan* and *dama khin*) players, *kosa jashi* (dowry couldrum) carriers and so on. Kwana *guthi* requires a pair of *goja*⁴⁵ (*saukhi goja*, *chokabaji goja* and *chokabaji (pulegu) goja*) for each *bhwani* during the *dyo nhyakegu* ritual in *nani* or the *guthi* quarter where the *guthiyars* need to perform *guthi*-related rituals. But Nhesa

⁴⁴ This refers to the procession of *guthi* deity to the new *pala*'s house on the last day of the formal *guthi* performance at *Yomali Punhi Jatra* during the full moon day in every December. *Dyo nhyayegu* is the part of the same ritual when the *bhwanis* with symbolic deities of *guthi* proceed from *guthi* towards the new *pala* and *dyo dukayegu* (welcoming deities) is the ritual performing in the yard of the *pala*'s house when the four *thakali nakins* (the oldest women, the wives of the four *thakalis* of the *pala*'s *Dewali guthi*) perform the welcoming ritual by offering *swan sina* (varieties of flowers, roasted rice, rice, vermilion, a traditional long key, etc) in *phan*, a grain measuring pot. *Thakali nakin* takes round and jumps while pouring such *swan sina* which is known as *thakali nakin pyakhan hugu* (dance of the seniormost folk woman). During the performance, *nyamha thakali* (five oldest *guthiyars*) carry the symbols of deity like *gungu maka* (scented matter in residue fire vessel), *sukunda* (oil lamp pot), *pata khola* (a special brass bowl used to offer alcoholic drink in *guthi* among *guthiyars* only), *sinha thala* (a pot of vermilion) and *si: phanga* (a red cloth to cover corpse during funeral procession) etc. along with other treasures of the deity, *bhwani mata* in a procession walking in queue: a *kahan khala* (air pipe players), *dabakhin* (special drum to make deities dance in *guthi*), treasure bearers, a *chhoila* (barbecued buff) inserted *dhusu* (a three pole like material used to prepare *chhoila*) bearer, a half chopped firewood bearer, light offering women and girls of *pala* relation (*mhya ye macha*), *bhwanis* in *ghusi laan* – a special wrinkling white dress like pyjama and *betali*, turban like white round cap-holding *guthi* symbols: *gungu maka*, *mata*, *pata khwala* and *si: phanga*, *pala* (the turn bearer of the year) with a muffler concealed feast, and *guthiyars* walk on *basa* (the new muffler like long clothes) from the *guthi* to the new *pala*'s house in order.

⁴⁵ A piece of stupa shaped object made of different things like beaten rice, cow-dung, rice-saw, rice-dust, etc. To make it, Newars use above soaked rice, knead dough, paste the dough on the laid-clay-bowl, shape out the stupa and paste soyabean, pulse, white bean, peas. *Saukhi* (cow dung) *goja*, *chokabaji* (beaten rice-dust) *goja* and *choka* (rice-dust) *goja* etc. are some types of *goja*. And only Kwana *guthi* use such three pieces of *goja*.

and Mu *guthis* place only one piece of *goja*. Besides, Nhesa and Mu: *guthis* do not need the *saukhi goja*.

At Chwe Lachhi, *guthis* do not enjoy feast named *bali uthe yayegu*⁴⁶ whereas three main *guthis* at Kwe Lachhi: Kwana, Mu: and Nhesa take feast once in three years according to the main turn, *ja pala* after collecting *bali* (crops) respectively. The crop collection occurs on the second Magh (roughly 16 January) every year at Chwe Lachhi and is handed it to the Balkumari *guthi* that none of the *guthis* has a right to share any portion.

There is a *goan gu:* or funeral- *guthi* at Chwe Lachhi so that Balkumari associated main *guthis* do not have separate goans (funeral performers or undertakers) like at Kwe Lachhi Bramhayani *guthis*. So the *guthiyars* of Kwe Lachhi need to perform funeral rituals like the roles such as carrier of funeral materials to bier⁴⁷, sympathy-giver, *kahan* (long air-pipe) player. There is succession to ritual and social office is regulated by reference to a membership-roll which is maintained strictly according to the age of the members (Furer-Haimendorf 36).

The discussion made above makes me conclude that *guthiyars* in Newar communities should not be taken as homogeneous minds. Their roles and

⁴⁶It refers to the act of collecting revenue of the land and eating feast by the *ja: pala guthi* (palanquin carrying *guthi*). Before collecting crops, the *majhos*, the leaders of the main seven *guthis* associated to Balkumari and Bramhayani goddesses gather and negotiate the price according to the time during any day favorable after *Yomali Punhi Jatra*.

⁴⁷ According to Indra Mali, secretary of Nepal Bhasa Academy Newars perform such ritual with great zeal. It is a type of information to the people that one of the *guthiyar* or his relative has died and it alarms people to be aware of death. In funeral procession, *guthiyars* play *kahan* (long air pipe), carry thatch and drag broom which symbolizes the brooming and clearing the way, smoky *sapra* (dried cow dung) and *gungu* (scent material) on a clay pot which means the purifying the way through scents, next to him a *guthiyar* spreads the vermilion powder, coins on the way, especially on the junctions to show the offering *dana*, donation and portions to the spiritual residents. Likely there the bare footed bereaved women relatives with disheveled hair join tussing *taye* (fried husked rice) and *wa* (unhusked rice) on their *tuyu gacha* (white muffler) weeping and the two *goans* (designed cremation specialists) carry the corpse on the green bamboo bier wrapping with white clothes, etc. systematically. Back to the bier, the bare footed males of brotherly relation with white muffler round their neck join sobbing too. Next to them, some people or *guthiyars* assist the grieved mourners by holding their hands to proceed. Ultimately some *guthiyars* come with fire wood or bare handed.

responsibilities do differ from one *guthi* to another *guthi*. Moreover, *guthis* do not have same exact dos and do-nots. Some *guthis* are always active than others because the minds sets of *guthiyars* play important roles in defining and projecting the image of the *guthi* that they belong to. Thus the more visionary and the much wiser the *guthiyars*, the much managed remains the *guthis*.

However, almost all *guthis* have to bear feasts and festivities. And food items are the most essential things that they get to manage every time they set to organize the festival. Foods and festivals have made several *guthis* poorer as they are becoming expensive every year. Since they are the things which must take place at any cost, they have become the metaphor of continuity and change state of Newar cultures. In the past *guthiyars* were supposed to be first good farmers, great cooks, and hosts. But time has come for them to sit time and again to fix the new menu of such culturally required items. Moreover, *guthiyars* are also found screening their codes of conducts of performing rituals. This shows that *guthiyars* are not mere recipients of given cultural orders. They are important minds engaged in appropriating the culturally given rules and regulations. They experience the pull both towards the past and the future. They also realise that such pulls are important to maintain some sorts of balance in the cultural order. Anyone who is not aware of this state of belonging both times is probably the outcaste, unfit to the times.

Chapter: Five

Conclusion

It is often argued that Newars love to invite, worship, host and enjoy feasts with gods and goddesses. As a Newar I strongly believe that we need to offer what we eat to deity. We invite deities from the localities as we invite to our relatives from neighboring villages. So our deities are almost around our localities like: Phulchoki Mai at Phulchoki, Tika Bhairab at Tika Bhairab, Kumari from Bal Kumari at Sunaguthi and Bramhayani at Thecho, Karunamaya at Bungamati, Ganesh at Khokana, Barahi at Bajra Barahi, Chapagaun, Lalitpur etc. Curiosities bound. How do we Newars manage doing it? Do not individual Newars find such practices full of burden? I personally believe that Newari cultures are still vibrant only because Newars have given continuity to some important institutional mechanisms popularly and collectively known as *guthi*. This demand upon us to recognize and appreciate the roles *guthiyars* play in this regard. While stating this, we are aware that there are several individual Newars who have misused *guthi* resources. But what is important are the efforts which great many *guthiyars* have been making to keep Newar cultures alive. And on the basis of discussions made in the earlier chapters, I argue that *guthiyars* are critical locals as they are aware of the need to address cultural practices according to the socio-economic realities which they belong to. As a *guthiyar* I am familiar with the burdens of preparing foods which each individual Newar needs to make during feasts and festivities. *Guthiyars* as insiders have very well understood this very internal as well as burdensome experience. They have replaced rare, costly and extravagant food items with the ones which are easily available and economically friendlier. And, they have done so in a very subtle manner without harming the faiths that their fellow beings have been living with.

As a Newar resident of Thecho in my early thirties, I am amazed to know that each and every festivity Newars perform here is solely based on orally transmitted knowledge and skills. I am a teacher by profession and reading and writing or print-culture is the main base of my profession. But when I join my *guthi* works and start taking parts in great many works I come to a different ethics and cultures of working. There is not any written document regarding how to practice or perform except how to sum financial activities and turn obearings of *guthi*. But all the major responsibilities that every *guthiyar* has to learn are practice based. There are no books or documents in this regard. *Guthiyars* learn by observing one another's works. And this demands upon them to pay respect to the seniors. Senior *guthiyars* therefore represent differently important cultural forces. They are living forms of libraries. They are encyclopedias and above all they are googles and new *guthiyars* or any Newars or even outsiders need to visit or browse through them in order to understand the spirit of the Newar cultures.

Guthiyars learn how to perform musical instruments, ritually important dances and songs from their seniors. And such performances take place only on certain rituals. Therefore, the learners have very rare and brief moments to learn from their seniors. For example, the famous festival or *jatra*, *Yomali Punhi* takes place just once a year and *guthiyars* especially those who are novice get chances to observe their seniors performing just once a year. Several rituals take place secretly. No one is allowed to peep into the scene. Not even all *guthiyars* are allowed to join the scene. But it does not mean that Newar cultures are going to die out soon since they do not take place openly. There are always some minds probably special minds which perceive mantras and codes of conducts without much many difficulties. Like some great dreamers, several *guthiyars* handle down secret worlds of Newar rituals orally.

Therefore, *guthiyars* are important stakeholders of performance cultures of very serious nature. They cultivate and conduct such ritual performances just through observing and following senior *guthiyars*'s instructions and guidances.

We know that we live in the era of globalization. Multiculturalism is a common experience everywhere in the world. It is always argued that multiculturalism is the culture of the future and we all be flourishing. However, people also believe that their cultures are not going to be the same in the days to come. As a Newar, I have seen several Newars preferring jobs and their business over community or *guthi*-oriented activities. There are many who feel sad that we are going to miss a beautiful tradition. Many educated people think that Newars are more prone to lose their cultures since they do not have any things documented.

But the fact of the matter is that Newar cultures are performative in their nature. Therefore, Newar cultures, it looks as if, trust on their performers who inherit skills and wisdom through watching each other. Several postmodern theories have critiqued the script-centric cultures of expression. They argue that books can make salve to their words. But orally transmitted wisdoms and skills help us become more innovative and understand the value of cultures in deeper level. Several senior *guthiyars* do not bother to write anything. Wisdom and knowledge come to them because they have watched them being performed for over several decades and also assume that there are always and already some people who are watching them performing so. Festivals and rituals are very frequent to Newars so are the meetings between senior and junior *guthiyars*. The greater the number of such meetings, the greater the chances of learning and teaching core cultural values which are performance based.

Guthiyars are also aware that their children will not have time enough to bother about cultural activities. They also know that farming is no longer the major mode of their livelihood. But their rituals and festivals are strongly based on seasonal activities in farm. They are very much related to the foods that their forefathers used to grow in the Valley. But such crops and vegetables do not grow anymore. Thus *guthiyars* know that they need to address this change which they are also partly responsible for. As a result, out of two weeks *guthi* sessions and feasts, only five feasts are performed in Nhesa *guthi* in order to ease burden that the individual Newar family needs to bear.

Since *guthi* is a social network for mutual living, *guthiyars* need to work together. This need has become more urgent. *Guthiyars* therefore should sit often and share about the challenges they must address. One may ask question: are there such *guthiyars*? I strongly argue that *guthiyars* in Newar communities form a heterogeneous force. They come from diverse ranges in terms of age, knowledge and professions. Many of them are local leaders, aspiring as well as established entrepreneur and so on. Some of them are still farmers. When they sit together to conduct certain ritual or festival, they understand a reality that their challenge is common and they need to maintain the social bonds at any cost.

Guthiyars still show their concern in performing traditional performances, organise grand feasts with available seasonal items, try to do their best to maintain social harmony through creating cooperation among the members of *guthi*, perform life crisis rituals, host guests and deal with familial and social issues. Above all, *guthiyars* are found breaking the rigidity, addressing the cultures according to the socio-economic realities of their members.

Thus *guthiyars* are truly critical locals, and they are bestowed with great responsibilities of not only continuing the traditions but also bringing changes for the sake of preserving them in their æcontinuity and changeøstates.

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Appendix

1. *Baji* = beaten or flatten un-husked rice.
2. *Bali* = revenue or crops.
3. *Ban bigu* = offer animal sacrifice to the deities (*ban* = scape animal or bird and *bigu* = offering).
4. *Bata* = round bowl like big dish.
5. *Baun khin* = musical instruments: *khin* (drum) with cymbals just played in rituals like in *yomali punui jatra* and *charhe* in Thecho.
6. *Bha chheligu* = decide the price of rice for the next year's *Yomali Punhi Jatra* by *majhos* (leaders) in presence of oldest *guthiyars* known as *bhwanis*.
7. *Bhai-ti* = *bhagi yaye ti* = 1. Let me bow you. 2. Bless me.
8. *Bhalin* = cook.
9. *Bhegacha* = round clay pot bigger than a bowl.
10. *Bhusya* = big cymbal.
11. *Bhwani* = 1. Bhawani or Hindu Goddess Durga 2. The four oldest *guthiyars* or aged Newar associational members.
12. *Bhwe* = *bhu* = feast, banquet.
13. *Bibha* = combination of grains: un-husked rice (*wa*), husked rice (*jaki*), another type of unhusked rice with long hairy skin (*swan-wa*, or *kancha thagu wa*), wheat (*chho*), another type of wheat with long hairy skin (*tachho*), corn (*kani*), soya-bean (*musya*), sesame (*hamo*), small bean (*chiwo kegu*),. It is used to worship deities. Besides, *Charhe Guthi* at Chwe Lachhi, Thecho cooks *bibha* to feed deities and spirits at junctions around their territory spreading on every *charhe*.

14. *Bina bi* = excuse me.
15. *Chaka* = circle.
16. *Chaka bhū* = feast in a circle round the shrine.
17. *Charhe* = fourteenth day in a month in lunar calendar.
18. *Chhoila* = smoked or barbecued buff.
19. *Chwe* = upper part.
20. *Chyamha* = eighth or eight.
21. *Daba khin* = a big drum especially played with both hands without using any other things to perform Nava Durga dance.
22. *Degu dyo* = lineage deity
23. *Dha* = *dhan* = a type of drum played with a stick on the left and hand on the right.
24. *Dhala thoan* = pure homemade rice beverage at first time using or dedicated for deity or worship purpose.
25. *Dhime* = especial drum with cymbals.
26. *Do jan* = 1. Adolescent or mature kinsmen: son, brother, uncle of the *guthiyar* or the tutelary association member from same family who has offered the portion of firewood or money every year. 2. The man or boy after cultural *kayeta puja* (loin cloth ceremony) or who has fed *dhina bhwe* (feast of puberty ritual to *Dewali* or lineage *guthiyars*). He is eligible to attend outdoor *guthi* tasks.
27. *Du: ja* = a member of the association or *guthi*.
28. *Dyo dukaye gu* = welcoming deity to the turn bearer.

29. *Dyo nhyayegu* = movement or traveling procedure of deities like Nava Durga ,
Bramhayani and Bal Kumari deities of guthis to *nani puja* (worship at the quarter) or
procession towards the new *pala*.
30. *Gacha* = muffler.
31. *Gan dyo pyakhan* = Nava Durga dance.
32. *Gha* = clay pot, jar.
33. *Ghasa = bhwe jwalan* = food items in feast.
34. *Ghaucha* = a dome shaped clay pot like jar.
35. *Goja* = A piece of stupa shaped object made of different things like beaten rice, cow-
dung, rice-saw, rice-dust, etc. To make it, use above soaked rice, knead dough, paste the
dough on the laid-clay-bowl, shape out the stupa and paste soyabean, pulse, white bean,
peas. *Saukhi* (cow dung) *goja*, *chokabaji* (beaten rice-dust) *goja* and *choka* (rice-dust)
goja etc. are some types of *goja*.
36. *Gu haye kigu* = inform *guthiyars* for *guthi* task.
37. *Gungu* = scent material.
38. *Guthi* = Newar association, social network of common interest of Newars almost of same
caste which performs communal rituals in the society to live in harmony and ecstasy.
39. *Guthi du thya kigu* = inclusion or admission in *guthi*.
40. *Guthiyar* = a Newar member of the particular social organization or *guthi*.
41. *hoam* = fire work.
42. *Ilan* = especial rectangular canopy.
43. *Ita* = mustard oil soaked white double or triple rolled thread which is used to offer light
to deity.

44. *Jaki sinha* = tika or paste of red color, curd, water and rice mixed up.
45. *Ja pala* is the turn bearing of the *guthi* or *guthiyar* who has to take responsibility to perform palanquins like Bramhayani or Bal Kumari palanquins in Thecho or guard the deities in the temple or in home for certain time.
46. *Jashi* = huge copper cooking pot, couldrum.
47. *Jatra* = festival, festivity celebrated at particular locality in Newar culture relating to lunar calendar.
48. *Jyapu* = Maharjan Newar, aborigine of Kathmandu valley, who uses to depend in farming and used to guard the frontiers before Shah Dynasty.
49. *Jwajwalpa* = *namaste* or greet with both hands close.
50. *Kahan* = long air pipe played only in funeral and festive performances of deities in Newar culture.
51. *Keba* = backyard field attached to house.
52. *Ken* = 1. Small cymbal, 2. Brass.
53. *Khadga* = sword.
54. *Khala* = *khalak* = group or team member/s.
55. *Koan* = a huge long clay pot.
56. *Kwana* = lower
57. *Kwe* = lower part.
58. *Lachhi* = the designed junctional spot in front of the main deity's temple in Newar locality.
59. *Lasakuti khwayegu* = the ritual to purify the god/dess by the four oldest women from *Dyo puja guthi* of *pala* after Bramhayani palanquin has run in different places of the village.

60. *Man* = respect, honor.
61. *Mata* = *maan* = mother.
62. *Mali* = *Gatha* or *Gathu*, a Newar caste who uses to gardening and farming.
63. *Mohani* = *Dashain* = festival in every October.
64. *Majho* = representative of *guthi*, *nayo* or leader.
65. *Mu:* = main, prime.
66. *Musya* = oil lamp in a long stick shape diyo with role of white cloth.
67. *Nakin* = old lady
68. *Na: la* = fresh or new meat.
69. *Nhesa* = 1. Step child, 2. Previous or pre.
70. *Nusila* = washing hands or purifying oneself after feast during the *guthi* or brotherly gatherings.
71. *Pacha* = a clay plate or tray.
72. *Pala* = turn bearer of *guthi*, association who functions as a messenger throughout a year.
73. *Patah* = a long red cloth piece hanged from/on the top of the deity towards the ground on which respected deity's image may also be printed.
74. *Pomi* = 1. Musician, 2. One who holds the *dyo khala* or masked dancers.
75. *Puin* = one of four quarters in numbers of *guthiyars* in *guthi*.
76. *Puja* = worship
77. *puja jwalan* = materials of worship to respected deity generally contains: flowers, husked rice, *jajan ka* (rounded white thread made of cotton), vermilion and yellow colors, *same baji* (snacks item), *dhala thoan* (wine), *ita* (oil thread for offering light), coin, scape-animal/bird for sacrifice, etc.

78. *Pyakhan* = *Naach* = dance.
79. *Saki* = arum colocasio.
80. *Same* = snacks before feast in Newari culture generally contains: beaten rice, *siwa baji* (roasted rice) black roasted soyabean, two pieces of ginger, steamed mustard vegetable, potato and bean curries, etc.
81. *Sapra* = dried cow dung
82. *Sattal* = shelter under the temple.
83. *Si:* = 1. Death, 2. Cooked limbs of sacrificed animal or bird to offer the oldest *guthiyars* during lineage and tutelary *guthi* or Newar gatherings in feasts.
84. *Si lalhayegu* = handing over the *si:* to the oldest *guthiyars* of lineage or tutelary *guthis*.
85. *Sinha* = Nep. *tika*, paste of colors.
86. *Si: phanga* = death body covering red cloth.
87. *Sukhu* = straw mat especially used for dining in feast and home sitting cross-legs.
88. *Sukunda* = a copper two stepped pot which contains oil in and *ita*, white thread on the tray like part on the upper part with *sumicha* (oil putting spoon) attached.
89. *Ta:* = very small and thick cymbal.
90. *Taye* = roasted unhusked or seed rice.
91. *Thakali* = the oldest member or *guthiyar* of the association, *guthi*.
92. *Thaya yenigu* = tradition of taking feast home after feast.
93. *Tika* = paste of colors used on foreheads.
94. *Yanya Punhi* = *Indra Jatra* which falls on the full moon day in Bhadra.
95. *Yomali* = *Yomari* by Kathmandu city Newars = delicious, sweet and so liked bread especially prepared in *Yomali Punhi*, full moon day in December.