

## THE LOCAL ORAL TRADITION ABOUT THE KINGDOM OF *THIN GARAB DZONG*

Michael Vinding  
*Copenhagen*

### INTRODUCTION

David Jackson, in his "Notes on the History of Se-rib and Nearby Places in the Upper Kali Gandaki" in this issue of *Kailash*, (page 195), throws light on the importance of Thin Garab Dzong, now a ruin on a hill-top half a mile southeast of Thini, but once important in the ancient Kingdom of Se-rib in the present Mustang District of Nepal.<sup>1</sup> His study is based primarily on textual material coming from outside the area itself due to the unavailability of local texts.<sup>2</sup> During my stays in Thak Khola I have collected a few notes on the local, oral tradition about the kingdom of Thin Garab Dzong. They are published here with the hope that they can serve as a supplement to David Jackson's article.<sup>3</sup>

- 
- <sup>1</sup> David P. Jackson, "Notes on the History of Se-rib, and Nearby Places in the Upper Kali Gandaki." Page 189 See also David P. Jackson, "The early History of Lo (Mustang) and Nagari," *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (1976) for further references to the history of the present Mustang District.
  - <sup>2</sup> The two most important local sources on Thin Garab Dzong which we have been able to copy are two local histories (Tib. *'bem chag*) of Thin Garab Dzong. See D. Jackson, "Notes on the History..." The original *'bem chag* of Thin Garab Dzong on which our two copies are based is said to be in Mharpha. My Thini informants claim, and my Mharpha informants admit, that at the beginning of this century some men from Mharpha took away the box with the village documents from the headman of Thini and brought it to Mharpha. Similarly there should be a *'bem chag* and other historical documents with the headmen of Shyaang, Chero, and Chimang. I have several times requested the headmen of these villages to show me their documents, but without success. It is therefore my hope that those western and Nepalese scholars who are said to have seen and even copied historical texts from Mharpha several years ago, will make them available to other scholars. It would be most interesting to go through the documents belonging to the Thaksatsae headmen council (*Dharma Panchayat*), those belonging to the various patrilineal descent groups among the three Thakaali groups, and finally the historical records (Tib. *dkar chag*) of local temples and monasteries like Smad-kyi-lha-khang of Kobang, Sku-tshab-gter-lnga near Thin Garab Dzong, and the monasteries of Lubra.
  - <sup>3</sup> The oral tradition has been recorded in cooperation with Mr. Krishnalal Thakali who assisted me for more than one year in the field. I am grateful to the Danish Research Council for the Humanities under the Royal Danish Govern-

Anthropologists should not neglect the local, oral tradition of the people they study. The value of the oral tradition for historical studies is obvious in societies without a literary tradition,<sup>4</sup> but the oral tradition is also valuable in societies with a literary tradition. In literary societies the oral tradition will be influenced to a lesser or greater degree by the literary tradition. The oral tradition can contain information which is not found in the textual material. More common, however, is the case in which the oral tradition becomes more or less a re-telling of the textual material. In this case a comparative study of the two traditions should be done in order to find out what the people who created the oral tradition found to be the most important parts of the textual material. Thus the life histories of Guru Rinpoche and Milarepa should not only be translated from the texts but should also be collected as retold by illiterate peasants and nomads.

With such comparisons we enter areas other than the historical in which the anthropologist can find the oral tradition useful. As Nancy Levine notes in her study of a Nyinba clan legend:

Aside from the genealogical material which such stories present, they also offer insight into Nyinba beliefs about the nature of their descent system, the significance of clanship in their society and the former relationship which existed between masters and their slaves. They provide detail about local religious belief, marital customs and myriad other features of daily life. Perhaps most importantly, they offer information about the nature of the relationship between descent groups and territorial units, such as villages and village sections. In addition to their evident importance as items of local folklore, they also serve as keys to the elucidation of Nyinba ideology and social structure.<sup>5</sup>

The local, oral tradition is for the local people more than their history in a restricted sense. Believed to have been handed down from the time of the ancestors the oral tradition serves to legitimate rights and duties of groups of people, between groups of people, and between groups of people and their gods. It creates and supports a static world.

---

ment for having sponsored my fieldwork among the Thakaali. I would also like to thank Mr. David Jackson who read and commended an early draft of the present paper.

4 Oral tradition and myths are compared with history in a more western sense in M. Oppitz, "Myths and Facts: Reconsidering some Data concerning the Clan History of the Sherpa," *Kailash*, Vol. II, no. 1-2 (1974).

5 Nancy Levine, "The Origin of *sTod-pa*: a Nyinba Clan Legend", *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, Vol. 4, no. 1 (1976), p. 59-60.

The myth of the Syopen Lawa festival, which was originally celebrated by the Tamhaang of the present Kobang and Tukuche Village Panchayat, tells how the ancestors of the Tamhaang promised the goddess Nari Jhyowa that thirteen virgin boys would dance before her every year.<sup>6</sup> About a decade ago, as a part of their social reforms to cut unnecessary expenditures, the Tamhaang stopped the Syopen Lawa festival during which the dance before the goddess was performed. It is said that the goddess got angry when the dance stopped and killed some yaks and one herdsman. All of this she recounted to a local "lama" in a dream. After hearing this the Tamhaang decided to reintroduce Syopen Lawa and especially the dance, but in a lesser and more inexpensive way.

The oral tradition can also serve to legitimate a past change and the world created by that change. Thus we hear in the following story how badly the last king of Thini treated his people and how they killed him. The myth not only legitimates the killing of the king but especially the transformation from one political system to another.

Finally I shall note that the oral tradition directly or indirectly gives people good advice about life, similar to the advice found in the so-called folk tales. The moral is: do not steal, do not lie, do not be greedy, do not be proud. etc. Thus we hear in the following story how a king gets killed because he is foolish, how a village gets destroyed because the villagers acted badly, and how a son gets honoured because he exposed a plot against his father. Very popular among the Tamhaang is the story about the eighteen grandfathers of Tulachan, how they neglected a warning from an old woman who had bad dreams, how they boasted, "Who can harm us? Whom do we fear?", and how they then got killed.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>6</sup> Surendra Gauchan and Michael Vinding, "The History of the Thakaali according to the Thakaali Tradition," *Kailash*, Vol. V, No. 2 (1977). The Thakaali are divided into three separate, endogamous groups: Tamhaang, Mhaawatan, and Yhulgasummi or Yhulgasumpa. Mhaawatan are those Thakaali whose ancestors originated from Mhasawa or Mhaarphaa, while Yhulgasummi or Yhulgasumpa is the common name for the people of the three villages Thini, Shyaang and Chimang. It shall be noted, that the words Yhulgnasummi and Yhulgasumpa are usually not used in reference.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

## THE ORAL TRADITION

*Gyal-tang-po-chen and Gyal-punari*

Gyal-tang-po-chen<sup>8</sup> came a long, long time ago to Thini<sup>9</sup> from Kham-sung<sup>10</sup> in Tibet. He came along the way through Lo. Gyal-tang-po-chen had a third eye with which he could destroy everything when he opened that eye.<sup>11</sup>

Gyal-punari, the king of the water, was at that time the king of Thini.<sup>12</sup> When he heard that Gyal-tang-po-chen with his third eye was on his way to Thini then he flew to Omang.<sup>13</sup>

Gyal-tang-po-chen settled in Thini.<sup>14</sup> But Gyal-punari, as the king of water, stopped all the water to Thini.

Gyal-tang-po-chen stood one morning on the roof of his house looking at

8 Gyal-tang-po-chen is said to be the king who established the line of rulers at Garab Dzong. Jackson, in his "Notes on the History..." gives the phonetic spelling as Gyal-Dong-mig-jen, but notices that the written forms of the name vary tremendously in the texts. The king is also known as Gyal-tang-mig-chen. My informants also mention a king named Gyal-tho-kar-chen, whom some informants think is identical with Gyal-tang-po-chen (Gyal-tang-mig-chen), while others state that the former is the son of the latter. As can be seen, my informants all use the name Gyal-tang-po-chen or Gyal-tang-chen when they refer to the king of Thini in their stories.

9 My informants are not consistent where place names are concerned, and it is therefore difficult to find out where the different persons lived. It is especially difficult to place where Gyal-tang-po-chen lived. Most of my informants mention Garab Dzong and some mention Tsho Ghang, which is a place situated southeast of Garab Dzong and where people were living until the beginning of the century. However, there is also a house in the present Thini which is known to have been the house of a king.

10 Kham-sung is unknown to me and my informants.

11 Gyal-tang-po-chen is famous among the local people for his third eye, it is usually the first, and often the only, thing they mention, if they talk about the king. However, one learned monk told me that Gyal-tang-po-chen did not have a third eye but a big fatty tumor on his forehead.

12 According to my informants Gyal-punari was living at Bumja Ghang a little west of, but close to, the present Thini, where ruins of houses are still seen. Jiwa-chin should be the name of the father of Gyal-punari, who himself should have had two sons, Namkha Dorche from whom the members of the present patrilineal unit Jisin *phobe* descend, and Gelok Dorche who as a monk had no sons. One of my informants states that Gyal-punari was a Buddhist and that while staying in Omang (see below) he wrote many Buddhist scriptures.

13 Omang is the name of some forest fields south of the present Thini at the base of Nilgiri Himal. Omang and the other forest fields, according to some of my informants, were at that time inhabited by Gurung and Tamang who, however, fled when Gyal-tang-po-chen came to Thini.

14 It should probably be Garab Dzong here instead of Thini.

the mountainside and wondered why the water did not come. Suddenly he saw smoke at the forest side, and therefore sent his army to the forest to find out about the smoke. The army went to the forest and saw there an old man sweating near the fireplace, eating porridge of bitter buckwheat with a vegetable soup and chilli. The army returned and reported to their king: "An old man is eating the rice of gold with a soup of turquoise, and also eating the red sun. He is weeping."<sup>15</sup>

Gyal-tang-po-chen decided to send his army to the forest side to find out why the old man was crying. Therefore the army went to the old man and asked him why he was crying. The old man told the army that he was sweating, not crying.<sup>16</sup> He also told the army that it was he who had stopped the water to Thini because he had been driven away from his home, but he promised to let the water run again, if Gyal-tang-po-chen would give him "a handful of the soil, and a mirror of the sky."<sup>17</sup>

Gyal-tang-po-chen decided to make an agreement with Gyal-punari, and the two kings did therefore make an agreement. Gyal-tang-po-chen should continue as the king of Thini, but Gyal-punari should also stay there and should get whatever he wanted. Now it happened that at the time of the agreement both their wives were pregnant, so the kings agreed to become affines if possible.<sup>18</sup> Gyal-tang-po-chen

<sup>15</sup> This sentence and the following quoted ones are remembered word for word by some of my informants. The phrase "rice of gold and soup of turquoise" for (bitter) buckwheat porridge and nettle soup is also found in "*Chyoki Rhab*", cf. Gauchan and Vinding (1977), p. 115.

<sup>16</sup> It is well known that people sweat when they eat much chilli.

<sup>17</sup> The handful of soil refers to land enough for a house, while the mirror of the sky refers to that small part of the sky which can be seen through the hole in the roof where the smoke goes out. My informants use the word "*mu*" for sky. David Jackson (personal communication) notes that the form *mu* for sky is extremely archaic for most Tibetans, but is found in some border dialects.

<sup>18</sup> Gyal-tang-po-chen got a son and Gyal-punari a daughter. They married each other. In Thini, the members of *Ghelki phobe*, that is all those persons who claim to descend patrilineally from Gyal-tang-po-chen, would formerly, once a year in memory of that marriage, bow down in respect to the members of *Jisin phobe*, i. e. all those persons who claim to descend patrilineally from Gyal-punari, just as the wife-takers have to do to the wife-givers among the Thakaali. It should be noted that this status relationship between *Ghelki phobe* and *Jisin phobe* in Thini is not permanent in a prescribed matrilineal cross-cousin marriage system. The Thakaali marriage system is a non-prescribed, bilateral cross-cousin marriage system without permanent status relations between clans. In short, a man must show respect to all the patrilineal relatives of his wife; and all the men who have received a woman patrilineally related to him have to show him respect. The respect depends on the distance of the relationship. However, a person need not show formal respect to the wife-givers of his male patrilineal relatives. The rights and obligations created by a Thakaali marriage are thus not so much between two patrilineal groups or units as such,

said, when they had reached this agreement, "Our promise shall not break as long as the river does not turn back, and as long as the crow does not turn white".<sup>19</sup>

*The sons of Gyal-tang-po-chen*

Gyal-tang-po-chen had no sons. Therefore he prayed to the gods to give him a son. The gods gave him a son, so Gyal-tang-po-chen decided to name his first son Lha-sum-pal because he came as the wish of the gods.<sup>20</sup> Gyal-tang-po-chen wanted another son and wished very much from his heart. He got a second son and named him Dha-sum-pal, because he came after a wish from his heart.<sup>21</sup> Gyal-tang-po-chen was then very happy, and wished for a third son. He got a third son and named him Ki-sum-pal, because he came after a wish in happiness.<sup>22</sup> Gyal-tang-po-chen also got a fourth son named Sya-sum-pal.<sup>23</sup> He was an illegitimate son and therefore had to live near Om Kyu below Thini.<sup>24</sup>

---

but between patrilineal groups and units in the role of wife-giver, and single men role of wife-takers. This will be discussed in more detail in my work on Thakali kinship and marriage.

- <sup>19</sup> A similar oath is found in "*Bhurki Rhab*", see Gauchan and Vinding (1977), p. 162. David Jackson (personal communication) notes that the oath is also found in the newest version of the Thini '*bem chag*'.
- <sup>20</sup> Lha-sum-pal is the ancestor of the patrilineal descent group Chyuku *phobe* which is a branch of Ghelki *phobe*. My informants state that Lha-sum-pal means "wishing through/from the gods". David Jackson (personal communication) notes that Lha-sum-pal according to the newest version of the Thini '*bem chag*' is named "*lha gsum dpal*", which can be loosely translated as "glory of the three gods". *Dpal* is the equivalent of *Sri* in Sanskrit.
- <sup>21</sup> Dha-sum-pal is the ancestor of the patrilineal descent group Gyabchan *phobe* which is a branch of Ghelki *phobe*. My informants state that Dha-sum-pal means "wishing through/from the heart". David Jackson (Personal communication) notes that Dha-sum-pal, according to the newest version of the Thini '*bem chag*' is named "dramn gsum dupal", i. e. "glory of the three memories".
- <sup>22</sup> Ki-sum-pal is the ancestor of the patrilineal descent group pal *phobe* which is a branch of Ghelki *phobe*. Ki-sum-pal had, according to my informants, three sons: Su-sin, who is the ancestor of the present *lha sang dorche* lineage of Pal *phobe*; Lha-pal, who is the ancestor of the present *pai sonte* lineage of Pal *phobe*; and Lha-sang-sarki whose descendants have died out. According to my informants, Ki-sum-pal means "wishing through/from happiness." David Jackson (personal communication) notes that ki-sum-pal, according to the newest version of the Thini '*bem chag*', is named *skyid gsum dpal*, i. e. "glory to the three happinesses."
- <sup>23</sup> Sya-sum-pal is also known as Son-cho-pal. He is the ancestor of the patrilineal descent group Dhinchan *phobe* which is a branch of Ghelki *phobe* and only found in Chimang.
- <sup>24</sup> Some of my informants from Dhilchan *phobe* state Sya-sum-pal was not an illegitimate child (Th. *nyelu*).

Once this fourth son saved his father's life. Some people of Thini had decided to kill Gyal-tang-po-chen and the other members of the Ghelki *phobe*. They planned to present beer to Gyal-tang-po-chen and the other members of the Ghelki *phobe*. But Sya-sum-pal came to know about this and warned his father. Gyal-tang-po-chen became very happy and said, "We shall not hate the man who brings us good news". Then Gyal-tang-po-chen sent Sya-sum-pal to the south to establish a border post at Chimang.<sup>25</sup>

### *Sarti, Barti, and Namti Lama*

Gyal-tang-po-chen came from the north together with his personal *chheni*<sup>26</sup> named Namti Lama.<sup>27</sup> Namti Lama was the master of the rain. He settled in Thini. At that time there were two brothers in Thini named Sarti Lama<sup>28</sup> and Barti Lama.<sup>29</sup> They were the sons of Sra-laang-ghum.<sup>30</sup> Sarti Lama was the master of the soil. Barti Lama was the master of natural disasters.

<sup>25</sup> Some of my informants state that Sya-sum-pal established Chimang village; others say that there were people at Chimang when Sya-sum-pal was sent there. Today besides members of Chinchang *phobe* there are only found members of the sub-unit of Kya *phobe* known as Bharti *phobe* (see note 29). Kya *phobe* is the patrilineal unit from which the religious specialists known as *aya-lama* are exclusively recruited. (See note 30.) Kya *phobe* was invited to Chimang by the first settlers of Dhinchang *phobe*, because the latter needed the former to look after their religious ceremonies and sick people.

<sup>26</sup> *Cheni* refers to a religious specialist who performs the religious ceremonies of a special client group, for example, a family or patrilineal descent group.

<sup>27</sup> Namti Lama is the ancestor of Namti *phobe* of Kya *phobe*. There is at present (1978) only one male member of Namti *phobe* left. He has no sons, so Namti *phobe* may die out.

<sup>28</sup> Sarti Lama is the ancestor of Sarti *phobe* of Kya *phobe*. Sarte *phobe* is extinct.

<sup>29</sup> Barti Lama is the ancestor of Barti *phobe*, which at present can be found in Thini and Chimang, but not in Syhyaang.

<sup>30</sup> Sra-laang-ghum, the father of Sarti Lama and Barti Lama is, according to my informants, identical with Nhaaraa Bhunjyung (cf Tib., Na-ro bon chaung), a religious specialist of the so-called Bon religions who failed to defeat Mi-la ras-pa (Tib.; A. D. 1040-1123), when they contested their spiritual power at Mtsho-Mapham and Gangs Ti-se. See Gauchan and Vinding (1977), p. 138. The original religious specialist among the Yhulgsummi is the *aya-lama*, who is recruited exclusively from Kya *phobe*, and who claims to follow the line of Nhaaraa Bhunjyung. The *aya-lama* is closely related to the *dhom* of the Tamhaang, and the *pheyu* of the Gurung. These religious specialists do not enter into trance, and therefore cannot be classified as shamans. It should be investigated whether there is a connection between the *aya-lama* and the religious specialists of the so-called Dur-Bon, which was introduced into the Year-lung dynasty under King Gri-gum-btsan or sPu-de-gun-rgyal. See Erik Haarh, *The Yar-lun Dynasty* (Copenhagen, 1969), p. 99-125.

The work of the three lamas was complementary, so they started to discuss among themselves whose work was the most important. Sarti Lama said that without his work there would be no good soil and therefore no crops, no matter how much the two other used their power. Barti Lama said that without his work there would come natural disasters and therefore no crops, no matter how much the two others used their power. And Namti Lama said that without his work there would be no rain and therefore no crops no matter how much the two others used their power.

In this way they discussed for a long time. Finally when they could not reach an agreement they started to fight among themselves. Sarti Lama only took care of the soil in his own fields. Barti Lama only prevented the natural disasters from his own fields, and Namti Lama only sent rain to his own fields. The crops in the other fields failed and the villagers became unhappy. Barti Lama tried to stop the dispute, but the two others wanted to continue.<sup>31</sup>

#### *Bom-phobe-khe*

Bom-phobe-khe<sup>32</sup> was a high lama who came to Thini from Tibet. He settled outside Thini at the present Chang-pie *chorten*<sup>33</sup> and there did his religious practices.

Gyal-tang-po-chen was one day looking towards the north from his house when suddenly he saw smoke. He ordered his army to go towards the north and find out where the smoke came from. The army went towards the north and came to Bom phobe-khe, whom they saw during one of his religious practices. Then the army returned and told Gyal-tang-pochen that they had seen a very high lama. The king told his army to go to the lama and ask him if he was able to cure sickness. Bom-phobe-khe told the army that he could.

After Gyal-tang-po-chen had heard this he planned to test the lama. Therefore he tied a piece of wood to a very long rope and threw the wood into the fire. Then he told his army to see the lama and tell him that their king was sick and would not be able to come, but that the rope was tied to the wrist of the king. The army went to Bom-phobe-khe, who agreed to feel the pulse of the king via the rope.<sup>34</sup> After a while Bom-phobe-khe told the army that their king was extremely hot.

---

<sup>31</sup> Therefore, state my informants, the descendants of Sarti Lama have died out, and the descendants of Namti Lama are in danger of doing so, while the descendants of Barti Lama are numerous.

<sup>32</sup> Bom-phobe-ke is the ancestor of Bom *phobe*, which is found in Thini and Jomsom.

<sup>33</sup> The Chang Pie *chorten* is situated a little northeast of the present Thini. A *chorten* (cf. Tib. *mehod-rten*) is a reliquary and memorial monument of Buddhism being the Tibetan form of the Indian *caitya* or *stupa*.

<sup>34</sup> Medical specialists of the Tibetan culture area usually feel the pulses of sick people in order to determine the sickness and especially the cause of the sickness.



Gyal-tang-po-chen became very surprised when he heard the answer. But again he would try the ability of the lama. Therefore a few days later he tied a big stone to the rope and threw the stone into the cold river. The army again consulted the lama, who after having felt the rope told them that their king was now extremely cold.

Gyal-tang-po-chen now realized that Bom-phobe-khe was a great lama and therefore wanted him to settle in Thini. Bom-phobe-khe, however, did not immediately accept the invitation, but threw some barley grains (Th. *karu*) into the air and said that if this was a good place to settle then in three days there should come forth some small plants of barley (Th. *chang pie*). They did come forth, and the place therefore became known as "Chang-pie". Afterwards Bom-phobe-khe became a member of the village, was included in the marriage system and became the *keawa*.<sup>35</sup> When he died the villagers made a big *chorten* at Chang-pie where he was burned.<sup>36</sup> That *chorten* is therefore known as Chang-pie *chorten*.

#### *The end of the kings of Thini: Version One*

Once there was a very big tree high up in the mountains in the eastern direction which stopped the rays of the morning sun.<sup>37</sup> Gyal tang-po-chen wanted the rays from the morning sun and therefore ordered his people to cut down the tree. The people went high up in the mountain and finally managed to cut the tree down. But they became extremely cold, and in a fit of anger, decided therefore to kill Gyal-tang-po-chen. They told Gyal-tang-po-chen to come up and see the tree, because they needed his advice on how to cut the tree into pieces. The king came and saw the tree. By cunning the people got Gyal-tang-po-chen to place his fingers in a crack in the tree which was held apart with small stop blocks. When the king had his fingers in the crack the people removed the stop blocks, and the king could not move. Then the people rolled the tree with Gyal-tang-chen over, and the king died in this way.<sup>38</sup> Since that time there have been no kings in Thini.

---

35 *Keawa* refers to a special religious "post" in Thini. The *kaewa* is said to have been the personal astrologer of the king of Thini. There is only one *kaewa*, and he is always recruited from Bom *phobe*. Usually the son of the *kaewa* succeeds his father. I have copied a list giving the names of thirteen men in the line of *kaewas*.

36 The deceased *kaewas* are still burned near the same *chorten*.

37 The tree should have been situated east of Thini near Meso Khantu pass.

38 In the "*salki Rhab*" we hear that the eighteen grandfathers of Dhocho were killed in the same way; see Gauchan and Vinding (1977), p. 125. It is interesting to note that informants from Mhaarpha state that the villagers of Mhaarpha a long long time ago revolted against and killed a foolish headman who had traded some of the village land to Shyaang for a beautiful coat.

*The end of the kings of Thini: Version Two*

In the eastern direction there was a mountain top which stopped the rays of the morning sun. Gyal-tang-po-chen ordered his people to go up in the mountains and cut off the mountain top because he wanted the rays of the morning sun. The people feared Gyal-tang-po-chen very much and therefore started the work. But the people became very angry with the king, because they soon realized how impossible their task was. One old grandmother decided to kill Gyal-tang-po-chen so that the suffering of the people would come to an end. She made a plan, and told it to the men. Every morning Gyal-tang-po-chen used to stand near a big cliff at Garb Dzong to say good-bye to the people going to the mountain to work. The old grandmother would come there with her little grandchild. Suddenly she would rock the child and when the king looked at her the men would push the king down from the cliff. And so it happened according to the plan, and Gyal-tang-po-chen died. Since that time there have been no kings in Thini.

*The Jewel Cat*

Once a long, long time ago the people of the vilages around Thini<sup>39</sup> possessed a magical cat named "The Jewel Cat". Wherever it stayed it brought prosperity to the

39 We shall see below that the former villages Gungle and Dho-thaang had Gurung populations. My most learned informants say that the original people of the Thini area were *Thin mhaakdu*, which they translate as "the foundations of Thin". The six Thin are according to one of my informants: 1) *Laanglung Thin*, who are supposed to have lived at Laanglung-thang, a small plateau above the present airfield in the northeastern corner of the territory of Shyaang village. Traces of houses can be found at Laanglung-thang. One version of "The Jewel Cat" story mentions that the cat died at Laanglung-thang, but later was placed in Dho-thang, and that Laanglung thang therefore was destroyed by an earthquake. The survivors settled members of the patrilineal descent groups *Syantant phobe*, *Pasin phobe*, and *San phobe* came from Laanglung-thang, while the members of the patrilineal descent group *Saka phobe* and the patrilineal descent unit *Jisim* and *Che phobe* came from Thini or Garab Dzong. 2) *Mha-thaang Thin*, whom the informant says are the present people of Thini. 3) *Chaki Thin*, whom the informant says are the members of *Bom phobe* of Thini and Jomsom. 4) *Om Thin*, whom, according to my informant, the people of Phalak claim to be. I have been told by other informants that the people of Phalak originally came from the Manang side of Thini via Tilichhe and from there went to their present village, that their language was originally similar to that spoken in Thini today (now the language of Phalak is closer to the Tibetan dialect spoken in Kagbeni), and that the people of Phalak together with the people of Khyenkhu among the villages of Kagbeni and Muktinath Panchayats have a relatively low social status. 5) *Dho Thin*, whom the informant identifies as the villagers of Dho-thang. See Note 4. 6) *Srane Thin*, whom my informant cannot identify. It should be stressed that other informants can only give some of the names, and that I have heard Gungle Thin of Gungle (see note 41) mentioned as one of the six *Thin mhaakdu*.

people of that village. The villages therefore made an agreement among themselves that The Jewel Cat should stay for a certain period in each village by turn. Should it happen, however, that the Jewel Cat died in one of the villages, then the people of that particular village would have to pay one *paisa* for each hair on the body of The Jewel Cat as a fine.

Now it happened that The Jewel Cat died while it was living at Dho-Thang<sup>40</sup>. The people of Dho-thang became very afraid, because they knew of the fine. One man from Dho-thang therefore took the dead cat and placed it secretly one night in Gungle.<sup>41</sup>

Soon afterwards all the other villages came to know that The Jewel Cat had died at Gungle. The people of Gungle had to pay the fine and agreed to do so even though they knew that The Jewel Cat had not died in their village. So they agreed to one *paisa* for each of the hairs on the body of the The Jewel Cat, but were finally able to pay for only the hairs on one of the Jewel Cat's ears. In anger the people of Gungle made an oath. They said that in three days the village where The Jewel Cat had died should be destroyed and all its people killed. Three days later an earthquake struck Dho-thang and destroyed the village killing most of the villagers. But the people of Gungle felt sad and a little guilty. They decided therefore not to stay any longer in the valley, and migrated to Ghandrung<sup>42</sup> where their descendants can still be found. Also those people of Cho-thang who had survived the earthquake settled in Ghandrung.

#### *The history of Mhaawa*

The ancestor and ancestress of the Mhaawatan, the people of Mhaawa, were Sheli Raja and Mon-narchya-komo respectively.<sup>43</sup> Sheli Raja was a brother of

---

<sup>40</sup> Dho-thang is situated in the eastern corner of Jomsom village in front of the present high school. Ruins can still be seen there.

<sup>41</sup> Gungle is situated a little above the first tributary of the Kali Gandaki when walking on the southerastern side of the river from Jomsom to Kagbeni. Traces of a village can still be found there according to informants.

<sup>42</sup> Ghandrung is a large Gurung village situated northeast of Pokhara. Don Messerschmidt has written several articles on the Gurungs of that area. One of my informants mentions that many years ago an old Gurung woman died at Ghandrung. Before she died she said that her ancestors had come from Dho-thang and that a big pot with gold coins could be found there. Many Gurungs and Thakaalis are said to have tried without success to find the pot.

<sup>43</sup> According to one informant Sheli Raja and Mon-narchya-komo are not mentioned in any written sources. They are, however, mentioned in old, traditional songs.

Hansa Raja<sup>4</sup>. They had come to Thak Khola from Jumla.<sup>45</sup>

Once there was a conflict between the two brothers. Sheli Raja went to Dzong<sup>46</sup> and established his village there. Hansa Raja sent his army to attack Sheli Raja. At that time the people of Dzong were busy threshing the six-rowed barley. The army of Hansa Raja saw the people from a distance and thought that they were all soldiers practising warfare. They saw the *kar kyung*<sup>47</sup> and the sticks with the small flags<sup>48</sup> and thought that they were war-ready soldiers. The army of Hansa Raja therefore became very afraid and fled away to Jumla.

Sheli Raja had a daughter named Jhomo,<sup>49</sup> who was given in marriage to one of the sons of Gyal-tang-mi-chen of Sumbo Garab Dzong.<sup>50</sup> Sheli Raja gave a very big dowry including one full basket of gold.

Jhomo and the son of Gyal-tang-mi-chen had only one daughter. She was given in marriage to a prince of Jumla, because Gyal-tang-mi-chen and the father of the prince of Jumla were good friends. Gyal-tang-mi-chen gave a very big dowry to his son's daughter, including one full *pathi* of gold, one full *pathi* of silver and also twenty-one soldiers for her protection.

44 Hansa Raja is the famous (but legendary?) king or prince who came from Jumla to Thak Khola and from whom many of the Thakaali claim descent. See Gauchan and Vinding (1977). A few new items can be added here. *Pumpar quakpa*, "The line of the king", is a sub-clan of Sherchan and found only in Chhero. Sonam-pumpar is the ancestor, and his story is similar to that of Hansa Raja. He came from Sinjaa near present Jumla to Thak Khola where he married Nhima Rani, a princess from Thini. The king of Thini gave as a dowry all the land from Tea-kyu (near Dumphaa-kyu) in the north, to the Lhaki forest at the foot of the plateau of Chimang in the south. Sonam-pumpar and its descendants had however to pay tax to Thini. My informant adds that the king of Thini also gave as a dowry the goddess Lha Chhuring Gyalmo. That goddess is described in Gauchan and Vinding (1977), p. 112. Lha Chhuring Gyalmo is said to have an elder sister named Tho-rimpoche who still can be found in Thini.

45 According to this information Mhawatan descend from some Jumla people. There are, however, more informants from Mhaarpha who state that they descend from the people of Garab Dzong.

46 Dzong, also known as Tamang, is a relatively big plateau north of the present Mhaarpha. There are more houses there which belong to different patrilineal descent groups.

47 According to my informant *kar-kyung* is the Mhaawatan word for chan (Th.) which is a white stone structure on the roof and believed to be the place where the protecting god of the house resides.

48 Small wooden sticks with small pieces of coloured cloth are placed in the *chan*.

49 *Jhomo* (cf. Tib., *jomo*) is usually used as a term of address for nuns.

50 Sumbo is the Tibetan name for Thini. My informants do not know which one of the sons Jhomo was given in marriage to. Again information which confirms what many different Thakaali have told me, namely, that the present three endogamous

The people of Thaksatsae started to make trouble when Gyal-tang-mi-chen passed away. In order to settle the border trouble seven men of Thini, seven men of Mharpha and seven men of Thaksatsae met near the present border.<sup>51</sup> The men of Thaksatsae were under the supervision of Ngima Rani. The first round of negotiations failed, but an agreement was reached during a second round of negotiations.<sup>52</sup>

\* \* \*

---

Thakaali groups formerly could marry each other.

- 51 The present border between Yhulnghaa and Thaksatsae is disputed. It should be stressed that the map in Gauchan and Vinding (1977) which gives the border between Thaksatsae (on the map named Thasaang) and Yhulnghaa at Dhon-kyu is based on and represents the views of the people of Thaksatsae. However, the people of Yhulnghaa, that is, Mhaawatan and Yhulgsummi, strongly deny that Dhon-kyu is the border and claim that the border is further south approximately opposite Mhaarshyaang-kyu at a place named Dhocho Khang. I apologize to the people of Yhulnghaa that their view concerning the disputed was not represented in my former paper and stress that all boundaries mentioned in this paper are approximate and thus not authoritative.
- 52 Some informants from Mharpha mention that there exist documents of border agreements from A. D. 1623 (=1680 B. S.) and A. D. 1854 (= 1911 B. S.).