Notes

INTRODUCTION: PREPARING THE MATERIALS:
PROLEGOMENON FOR A STUDY OF
PROSAIC RELIGION

1. The graphic brackets—e.g. the physical marks “( )” upon the page—that separate but at the same time bring together the terms “dharma” and “religion” hide a whole host of orientalist power relations. At this point, there is neither the space nor the necessary theoretical apparatus to analyze the ramifications of translating dharma as religion. For this reason, I leave this for the book’s conclusion (page 135–137).

2. In this study, I am concerned with writing religion and tradition in Bhaktapur and hence do not have the space to effectively trace the vein of scripturalism through religious studies. However, I would suggest that it can be found in Emile Durkheim’s notion of religion as society, which is expressed through collective representations (1965, 22, 29, 462–75); Ludwig Feuerbach’s conception of God as the image of Man (1957, 12–14, 17–20, 25–26, 29–31); Sigmund Freud’s notion of religion as wish fulfillment (1964, 21–28, 34–35, 47–50, 81–82); Carl Jung’s notion of archetype (1972, 148, 171, 223); Mircea Eliade’s modalities of the sacred (1958, 1–2, 11, 13, 29, 38–40, 154–63, 367–86, 445–47), to mine just a small amount of this rich ore.

3. Following Dipesh Chakrabarty, by “Western” I do not mean the region of the world we call the West. Instead, “I seek to provincialize and decenter an imaginary figure that remains deeply embedded in clichéd and shorthand forms in some everyday habits of thought that invariably sub tend attempts in the social sciences to address questions of political modernity in South Asia” (2000, 3–4).

4. I borrow the concept of a transcendental complex from David Mandelbaum, who has proposed that two quite distinct complexes of belief and practice coexist in South Asian religions (1966; cf. Babb 1975). On the one hand is the transcendental complex, which is concerned with universal or ultimate problems. This complex tends to lie in the jurisdiction of religious experts and centers on deities and concepts derived from texts. On the other is the “pragmatic complex,” which has to do with the exigencies of prosaic life. It tends to be the jurisdiction of the nonpriestly specialist and mainly involves the lesser deities of local tradition. The difference between the transcendental and pragmatic complexes
should not be seen as a dichotomy between “great” and “little” or between “standard” and “folk” religion (Singer 1972; Ramanujan 1973).

5. To be clear, my argument is not that Hinduism is more prosaic than other religions. I do not claim that Hinduism is somehow more magical. Rather, because of the scripturalist bias against “low” forms of religion, the prosaic element has tended to be ignored generally by the discipline of religious studies. In fact, such de facto pragmatism goes not just for Hinduism and Buddhism, and not just for Bhaktapur. If one looks at almost all religious practices—from tape-recorded sermons in contemporary Egypt and the use of medieval manuscripts in Europe, to late classical symbolism in the Roman Empire and the “Jesus fish” found on many contemporary American bumpers—most people most of the time are concerned with religion’s pragmatic material worldly aspect (Goodenough 1937; Hamburger 1990; Hirschkind 2001; McDannell 1996).

6. I’ve placed quotes around “Hindu” because the Hindu myth of the of the earth being supported by turtles seems to be more a myth about Hindu epistemology as seen by Europeans than an actual myth stemming from within the context of Hinduism. I have found this myth as being told by an Asian woman to Joseph Campbell; by an elderly lady to William James (personal communication, Wendy Doniger, September 2004); and by a Balinese man to Clifford Geertz (1973). The trail seems to go cold in the year 1690 in John Locke’s *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (book 1, chap. 8, p. 19; and chap. 23, p. 2; cited in Halbfass 1988, 62 [personal communication, Richard King, December 2005]).


8. Because Sullivan fails to foreground the agency and creativity of these other knowledges, he ignores power and often ends up reproducing asymmetrical power relations. For instance, in his essay “Sacred Music and Sacred Time,” he describes the initiation of Shipibo girls (1984). For him, the girls’ initiation rite is just another example of sacred time, and he fails to take account of the girls’ own “experience” of clitorectomy at the end of the ceremony. Similarly, in *Icanchu’s Drum*, by abstracting sacred time he fails to see the patriarchal power relations inherent in the symbolism he is describing (1988, 261–64). For the patriarchal power of menstruation rites, see Bruce Lincoln (1981).

9. The notion that *paubhas* are pragmatic remedies is not outside their in situ use. Many contemporary nontourist *paubha* images are used as medicines. I have seen images painted to heal diseases ranging from shingles (*herpes zoster*) to postpartum depression and spider bites.

10. “Cadastral logic” is defined below on pages 16–19.

11. “Dialexis” is defined below on pages 20–21.

12. Considering that Nepal was never officially colonized, “postcolonial” in the narrow sense—as the time following the establishment of independence in a colony—may not seem to accurately describe Bhaktapur’s interstate relations. However, if one understands postcolonial more broadly—as the way Europe and the United States maintained their global dominance by misrepresenting
other cultures after the decolonization that followed World War II—then it is an apt description (Bhabha 1994).

13. I did not fall comfortably into a sense that my work could be a “tool of the dominance,” but was rather pushed into it by the historic and geographic circumstances of my research. This became especially apparent on a local and very personal level when I was helping a local pundit man his general store. He turned and explained why he did not like to be tape-recorded: “[Another Western scholar] had come over to our house for four hours a day for five months, my family had fed him, and shown all types of courtesies; but [that scholar] hadn’t even sent me a book afterwards” (personal communication, August 7, 1997). He went on to say that this looked bad for Americans. He said that if he goes to the toilet, and it is messy, then he flushes it and makes sure it is clean. Even if he did not make the mess, because since he was the last one there, he will be held accountable. Obviously, he was implying me.

14. In Bhaktapur, both Buddhist and Hindu practices intermingle, and most people tended not to talk about these traditions by name, but rather to talk about “religion.” This was not true, however, for the forty Muslim families with whom I spoke. Muslims tended to see their religion as essentially different and did not participate in the festivals of the city.

15. The clearest definition Levy gives of Hinduism is as follows: “When contrasted with Judaism, Christianity, Islam and Buddhism (other than its Vajrayana and Tantric varieties), Hinduism is a peculiar contemporary religion. Ahistorical (without a heroic, that is, transcending, founder, and without a future to be obtained through some progressive struggle of faith, wisdom, or rectitude); rooted in local space, local population, and a local inheritance; distributive of its godhead into a pantheon of meaningful and immanent gods—essential resources for organization of space, time, and community; insisting on the inclusion of social order and social behavior with the sacred realm; insisting on the presence of the sacred in the here and now, and not restricted and banished to the eschatological beginnings and endings and distant heavens—Hinduism is in many of its features, which contrast with the ‘world historical religions,’ a system for and of what we have called ‘archaic urban order’ “ (1990, 27–28).


17. Levy never directly attributes the notion of mesocosm to Mus. He does, however, refer to Mus’s articles “Symbolism á Ankor Thom” (1936) and “Angkor in the Time of Jayavaruman Vii” (1937) with which he was acquainted through Wheatley (1971) (cf. Levy 1990, 268). Levy was also exposed to Mus’s Barabudur (Mus 1998 [1935]) through Zimmer (1951) (Levy 1990, 406).

18. Levy hints at the difference between a generative image and a representative image (cf. 1990, 757, fn. 2), yet his analysis of Bhaktapur operates as if religious practices are logocentric symbols that represent an underlying structure and not models that generate the sacred social world of the city (cf. Levy 1990, 15, 499–500, 600–601).

1 FRAMING THE STUDY: THEORIZING THE HISTORIES OF TRADITION IN BHAKTAPUR, NEPAL

1. There are other important notions of "tradition," such as the Nepali nationalistic use of the term. However, at the present time in Bhaktapur, the romantic-historicist and prosaic tradition (\textit{parampara}) notions are not only the most significant ones, but are often used to resist the "Nepali" understanding (Burghart 1984; Caplan 1975; Kothari 1984).


3. I worked with a facsimile copy of the manuscript compiled, with commentaries, by Dhanavajra Vajracarya and Kamal P. Malla (1985). The manuscript is a palm-leaf document, measuring twenty-eight by five centimeters and consisting of forty-eight folios. The script is fly-headed (\textit{bhuji(n) mola}) and was copied by a single hand (except for folio 46b). A few pages are moth-eaten or faded from age. The chronicle, by matter of convention, has been divided by scholars into three sections (V1, V2, and V3). V1 and V2 are loosely related. Starting with the end of the Kali Yuga and the emergence of Pashupatinath's fiery phallus in the Valley and ending with the Muslim invasions and Jayasthitiirajaamalla's reign, V2 and V3 are basically the same narrative but were separated because of a slight break where a double // \textit{danda} occurs, bringing the events up to the reign of Jayasthitiirajaamalla.

4. While based on oral accounts, I was worried that the information may incriminate people, especially with the change in Nepal's political climate. Accordingly, when it comes to discussion of politics, I do not use the names of the sources from whom I received the material and have instead compiled it as a narrative.

2 LAYING DOWN THE GRID: COSMOLOGY AND THE PLACE OF TRADITION IN BHAKTAPUR, NEPAL

1. Myth operates as a form of "language robbery" that lays down a second order of meaning onto ordinary first-order language objects (Barthes 1972, 111–17, 131–37). Barthes gives an example of a language object, a \textit{Paris-Match} cover
which shows “a young Negro in a French uniform is saluting” (1972, 116). On a first order, “a black soldier is simply giving the French salute” (Barthes 1972, 116, italics in original). On the second level of myth, the image signifies “that France is a great empire, that all her sons, without any color discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors” (Barthes 1972, 116).

2. With Barthes’ model of myth as “language robbery” in mind, by “space” I refer to “a first-order abstract territory”—such as that of an aerial photograph—that exists before it is mediated by ideology. However, as the postfeminist debate over “sex” and “gender” suggests (or for that matter debates about photography itself), such a pure unmediated reality cannot exist (cf. Barthes 1974). Accordingly, much as Ash and Chagnon used their film rushes from The Ax Fight (1975), their documentary about the Yanomamo, as a benchmark against which to measure mediation, I use the concept of “raw space” as a compass point by which to evaluate Bhaktapur’s cosmologies today. Moreover, so as not to fall naïvely into a trope of pure space-in-itself, my use of ideology stems from the work of Louis Althusser (1971). Because of human beings’ reliance on language, Althusser felt it was impossible to access our real conditions of existence, and thus he moved away from the earlier Marxist understanding of ideology as simply “false consciousness.” Instead, for Althusser, ideology represents the material practices by which subjects interact with their imagined conditions of existence. Of crucial importance for him is that ideology is not an outside “object” that happens to a “subject.” Instead, according to Althusser, the main purpose of ideology is in “constituting concrete individual subjects” (1971, 116). So pervasive is ideology in its constitution of subjects that it forms our very frame and thus appears as not only undeniably “true” but overwhelmingly “obvious.” “[I]deology never says, ‘I am ideological’ ” (1971, 118).

3. Such interpellation is usually addressed in the second person, “you.” For that reason, this chapter consciously uses the second-person address as a style to frame the three maps. I attempt to give an experience of how such interpellative apparati embed the different cosmologies into the landscape (cf. Fludernik 1993). My strategy stems from Walter Benjamin’s space projects and his understanding of “literary montage” (1978, 1996c, 1999a; cf. Buck-Morss 1989). My use of the second person also stems from the work of the Situationists and their notion of “psycho-geography” (Debord 1987).


5. While there are many cosmographic images of Bhaktapur (cf. Slusser 1982) I concentrate on the mandala map for two reasons. First, during my ethnography, it was referred to by numerous informants (Grieve 2002). Second, this image has been referenced frequently in scholarly literature. For instance, J. B. Harley and David Woodward mention a 1925 copy based on an older model (1992, 456). And Bernard Klöver published a similar image, in “A Ritual Map from Nepal,” owned by a resident of Bhaktapur, Ratnaraj Sharma (Klöver 1976, 70). Anne Vergati submitted a paper entitled “The Representation of Newar
Towns in Paintings” on this subject in a conference, which was held on June 19–22, 2003, at the Institute of Indology and Central Asian Studies, University of Leipzig. The scholarly information is important because much information about Bhaktapur’s religion is secret, and thus while I know religious practices are important for configuring space, I do not wish to give examples from my own fieldwork.

6. For reasons indicated in footnote 5, I concentrate on the mother goddesses because they have been detailed by other scholars. Other gods marked by the map are the eight Ganeshas, ten Mahavidyas, and eight Bhairavas, which also play a part in Bhaktapur’s ritual structure. However, because of the secret nature of tantric knowledge, I have found it unethical to report upon them. By relying on this already public account, I can express pertinent information without divulging secrets.

7. Barthes originally introduced the “awkward” neologism governmentality to describe those discourses that make the government seem like an effective agent (1972). Foucault builds upon this understanding, and posits governmentality as a form of power that is exercised through an ensemble of institutions, procedures, analyses, and reflections, which results in the formation of specific governmental apparatuses and of a whole complex of power.

8. According to Edward Said, orientalism refers to three intertwined phenomena (1978). First, an orientalist is anyone who claims to have expert knowledge or a special understanding of oriental cultures. Second, orientalism is a style of discourse based upon the assumption that there is an ontological and epistemological distinction between the “East” and “West.” And third, “Orientalism can be discussed . . . as a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient” (Said 1978, 2–3).


3 Sketching the Central Point: Cadastral God-Images and the Politics of Scriptural Mediation

1. Ironically, while scholars were engaged in scripturalism, the government of the Raj and other English institutions actually partook of a dialog of ritualism and material culture (Waghorne 1985).

2. “Iatrogenic” is a medical term that describes an illness or symptoms that are induced in a patient as the result of a physician’s words or action. It is also used in the field of social welfare to describe a problem induced by the means of treating a problem. I borrow this usage for theorizing in religious studies from Richard King (1999).

3. For instance, Bruce Lincoln, in “Revolutionary Exhumations in Spain,” describes “profanophanies,” instances in which the church was shown to be not eternal but “in full temporal reality: a human institution, not one divine”
(Lincoln 1989, 125). While appearing to be the opposite of symbolism, such idolic reduction—to coin a phrase—also operates through scriptural revelatory terms, because, as Lincoln writes, the exhumations reveal not an “assault on religion per se, but rather on one specific religious institution” (Lincoln 1989, 127).

4. This missive, posted by “Chadan,” is based on an article by Dr. David Frawley (also known as Vamadeva Shastri), of the American Institute of Vedic Studies (http://www.vedanet.com/ accessed February 26, 2005). “Redactions” of this article are found across the Web.

5. These were collected by David White; the source is the Bhaktapur historian Dr. Purushottam Lochann Shrestha. The list can be found in Grieve 2002.

4 ILLUSTRATING SAMSRARA: RELIGIOUS “RECIPES” FOR MAKING A PROSAIC LIVED WORLD

1. Mr. Chitrakar’s use of “yama” and “niyama” comes from the yogic concepts of ethical commands and prohibitions, the first two limbs of Patanjali’s Astanga-yoga as outlined in the *Yoga Sutra*. These should not be confused with the Nepali “Yam,” god of the underworld, or the word “yam,” which indicates a period of time of around three hours.

2. The most vital material is pure unbroken husked rice (*kigah*). Some of the other chief elements of worship are three kinds of pure water (*na:nà, ninà, and ga(n)gà jal*), pigments (*sinha[n], mha:sinusina[n], bhuisinha[n] etc.), rice (*u:à, jàki, akhye, wàkijàki, jà, matàki, etc.*), *samae baji* (a mixture of beaten rice, popped rice [*tæ(n)*], dried fish, roasted meat, eggs, soybeans, and ginger), and *swaga(n)* (a mixture of *kigah*, *tæ(n)*, curds, and *abir* [a red pigment]). Beyond these most basic substances, Rajopadhyaya Brahmins list over two hundred materials that are necessary for more complex worship—cleaning materials, leaves and grasses, flowers, other foodstuffs, alcohol, sacrificial animals, products of the cow, threads, oil lamp wicks, cosmetics kits, and unglazed dishes to name just a few.

5 PERFORMING PROSAIC TANTRA: JHINJAN MINJAN DANIGU’S ANIMATING AFFECT AND SOCIAL CRITIQUE OF RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

1. One could further argue that this vertical axis is also created through both Newar Hindu and Buddhist esoteric tantric practices which directly use *mandala* worship. However, for reasons detailed in footnote five of chapter 2, I hold that is unethical to report such practices.
2. This ceremony is known as *pratisha karma puja*; much has been written on this process. I am concerned here with how once the eyes are opened, they continue to stay open.

3. Following Erving Goffman, I define “performance” broadly as “all the activity of an individual which occurs during a period marked by his continuous presence before a particular set of observers and which has some effect on the observers” (1959, 22; cf. Artaud 1958; Bénamou and Caramello 1977; Blau 1996; Carlson 1996; Carr 1993; Kaye 1994; Sayre 1989; Tambiah 1979). Milton Singer argues that the phrase “cultural performance” accurately maps a category recognized by and salient to people in South Asia (1955).

4. In the simplest terms, *tantra* stands for a collection of practices and symbols of ritualistic, sometimes magical, character, which form an esoteric religious tradition founded on practice (Brooks 1990, 20–25, 85). In any case, *tantra* is used as a blanket term by South Asians as well as Western scholars to designate a body of practices and theory that, from the sixth century C.E. on, was a mainstream Hindu, Buddhist, and Jaina practice (Brooks 1990, 48–55). Yet, in the end, *tantra* is a complex historical current, and its varied and complicated nature renders a single definition almost impossible (Goudriaan and Gupta 1981, 5). Still, while a “fuzzy” referent, when applied in context, *tantra* serves to gloss certain esoteric ritual discourses and practices (cf. Sanderson 1986, 660; Smith 1994).

5. I would like to thank Gary L. Ebersole (University of Missouri-Kansas City) for his insight into the role of emotional discourses in religion.

6. As such, nirvana is not merely an empty space, but a nowhere, a not-yet, a noncreated space (Mus 1998, 316). As Mus writes, “The *nirvana* is neither existence nor non-existence, neither one and the other, nor the negation of the two” (Mus 1998, 272). In a nutshell, as Stephan Beyer has translated Nagarjuna’s definition of nirvana, it “isn’t is, (isn’t isn’t) isn’t is, and isn’t isn’t isn’t is and isn’t” (1974, 214). To push this definition one further step, it is “nothing.”

7. In the history of religions, the sentiment of the sublime comes to rest firmly on the notion of religious experience. For William James, religious experience was the total reaction to the divine, the blooming, buzzing confusion that individuals feel in connection with the transcendent (1990). In the twentieth century, especially for the history of religions, the sentiment of the sublime has become an important means for describing religiosity. This is most apparent in the work of Rudolf Otto, for whom the numinous can only be suggested by that feeling (mysterium tremendum) of being overwhelmed by the totally other (1958). For example, as Otto writes in *Idea of the Holy*, “So that the idea of the sublime is closely similar to that of the numinous and is well adapted to excite and to be excited by it” (1958, 42). This is “a proof that there exists a hidden kinship between the numinous and the sublime which is something more than a merely accidental analogy, and to which Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* bears distant witness” (1958, 63).
6 BRINGING A FORGED MANDALA TO LIFE: THE COW PROCESSION AND THE IMPROVISATION OF CADASTRAL GENERATIVE MATRIXES


2. The most obvious example for North America is Halloween and the Day of the Dead (Día de los Muertos) (Bezley 1994; Carmichael and Sayer 1992). The Dominican carnival in Santo Domingo has a figure who wears the classic skeleton and skull attire, always seeking to frighten others. Holding a scythe, Death grabs children by their feet so that they can be hit by the Diablos with their air-filled bladders. This figure is popularly known as “La Muerte en Yipe” (Death Driving a Jeep) (Aching 2002). In Russia funeral ceremonies like those of “Burying the Carnival” and “Carrying out Death” are celebrated under the names, not of Death or The Carnival, but of certain mythic figures, Kostrubonko, Kostroma, Kupalo, Lada, and Yarilo (Bueno-Román 1990). It can also be seen in the English “Dance of Death” (Boughton 1913). At Tabor in Bohemia, Death is also vanquished.

3. With the help of others sitting around the table, he supplied the following historical legend. In what I would call a classic example of collective agency, the story here was fleshed out not only by Mr. Jha, but by all those at the table. It would be hard to pin it down to a specific person, and it would be better in effect to cite it at the level of conversation.

4. This tale is related to the Buddhist story of the mustard seed and Hindu folk tales of the laughing queen, except in the case of the Cow Procession the populace, outraged at this indignity, dressed up instead in garish costumes to taunt the king (Wendy Doniger, personal communication, June 2002).

5. Bhaktapur’s procession route moves within the city as a meandering oval. Dutt (1977, 33) shows that in an ideal Hindu city, the Pradaksinapatha should circumambulate the outside wall. Slusser (1982, 1, 93) argues that this was the case of Kathmandu. Barré et al. (1981, 40f) argues that for places such as the Newar village of Panauti, the processional route acts as a boundary of purity. It runs through all the city’s neighborhoods but one and proceeds past all the most important temples and public spaces (Gutschow 1980).

6. It was said that during the Malla period, officials would count the cows so as to tell the number and type of people who died during the preceding year. More recently, in 1988, five hundred were counted (Gert Wagner, personal communication, August 1997).

7. There is an exception to this with the Lakulachen (sub)twah. As a climax to the festival, they enter themselves as group along with anyone else who wants to join in the festivities. They carry a tall image of a cow float dressed as the god Bhairava (Levy 1990, 445–46).
8. Such derision is not merely symbolic—the Cow Procession is seen as a time of intensified political strife. The most obvious example, as touched upon in chapter 1, is the Hyonju incident, in which Mr. Hyonju—who was seen as a “turncoat” by many locals—was beaten into unconsciousness and later died in the hospital after been dragged around the procession route close to the time of the Cow Procession (cf. Grieve 2002, 51–52; Calise 1994).

9. Aaron Gurevich (1985) problematizes Bakhtin’s understanding of medieval carnival. Gurevich argues that we need to be grounded in the “world picture” of the Middle Ages to understand their festivals. As such, we need to adjust our interpretive efforts—rather than arguing for the structural reversal and absurdity of festivals, we need to rethink such basic categories as time and space in lieu of medieval reality. While I agree that Gurevich is correct, his observations do not necessarily affect my use of Bakhtin’s notion of carnival as a heuristic interpretative category.

10. One needs to theoretically differentiate between such concepts as Victor Turner’s “anti-structure,” and the minimally structured generative matrixes that are being analyzed here (cf. 1967, 1969, 1974, 1985; also see Levy 1990, 451). The fake sacrifice is more than just a liminal creation of communitas—it is the generation of a new social world. Moreover, while the Cow Procession may call into question certain economic and political structures, it is not “liminoid” in the sense of existing outside of them (Turner 1974).

11. For instance, Levy defines it as a “anti-structural local festival” (1990, 451).

12. This has changed since 1995. Currently, because of the influx of carpet factories and other small-scale industry, many lower-income low-pay wage earners have come to live in the area. These people are usually not Newar and come from India and from the lowlands of Nepal.
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