

Bound Copy

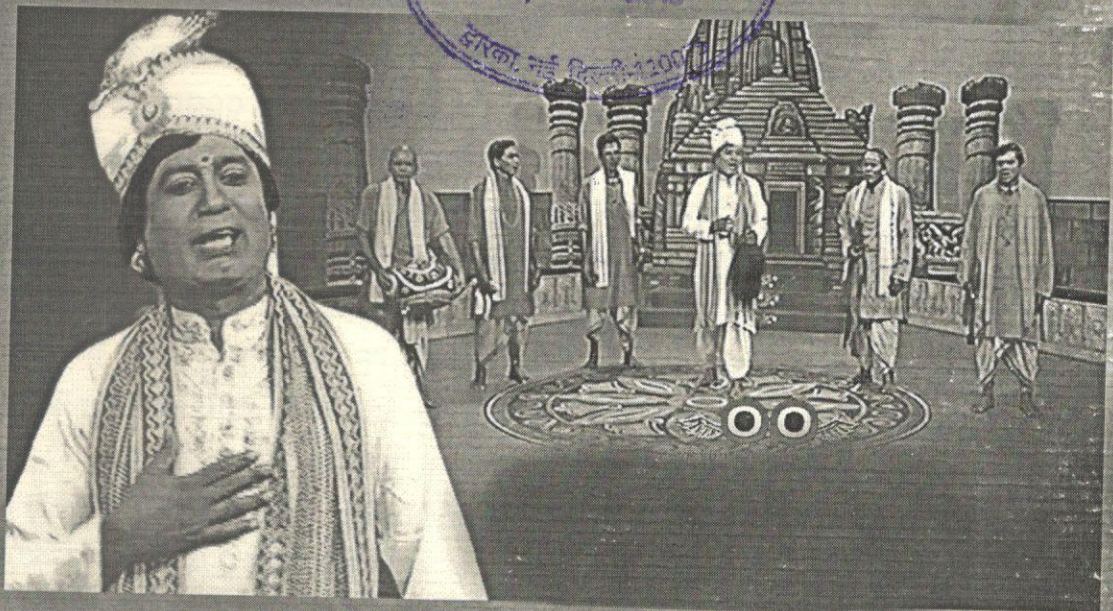
TWO YEAR COMPLETE PROJECT REPORT

FILE. No. CCRT/SF-3/123-2015

PROJECT TITLE

ETHNO MUSICO LOGICAL STUDY OF WESTERN ODISHA

MARGINALISED MUSIC



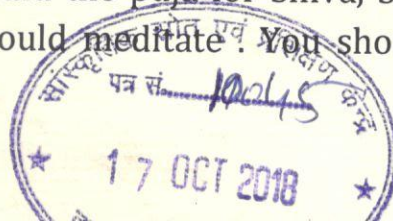
Submitted By :
Surendra Sahu
Mob : 9938485839

A Boil Ritual in Sargival Village:

In Sargival, one of the village of Borasambar region, the Goddess Durga is worshipped weekly in a spirit possession ritual-boil. But during sula puja , the 16 days worship of the goddess Durga taking place before the tenth day of Dusshara, boil performances take on a particularly intensity, and are ascribed a special efficacy to cure the ailments of attending patients.

To start the boil ritual during Dusshara, the dhunkel instrument, an earthen pot(handi ,attire), is played by the dhunkel kutti or sula kutti. The altar is a separate square room with mud walls, located inside the house of the Villagepriest(Pujhari) . here, the dhunkel instrument is kept and the local gods and goddess are venerated. The dhunkelya begins the ritual with a sung meditation, accompanied by the dhunkel to call the goddesses and god into the altar. The dhunkel is placed on a straw crown(dhora/oira) and topped by a straw mat(Kula). It is rubbed with an iron an iron rod(jumka bari) fixed on a bamboo bow(dhun).A straw string,which is fixed on the bow, is simultaneously plucked in order to create a dull, low sound. The sounds of the dhunkel are considered to be the sound of the goddesses Durga and Lakshmi. They are also held to attract or call all other gods and goddesses into the place of the ritual and thus to prepare the following manifestation of the goddess. The dhunkel player, who also is called dhunkel gayako(" the singer of the dhunkel instrument"), sings mythical stories(Katani) about the seven sisters(Sato Bhani) Rohela, Tula, Krishtei,Subokeshi, Nila Rani, Onjona Rani, Dhona Rani, The names of the mythical sisters may vary from village to village, but they are mostly known under the names given here. During this ritual prelude for the boil ritual, the dhunkel player sings the story of the origin of the dhunkel instrument. With this song together with the sound of the dhunkel instrument, the microcosmic character of the instrument is put in relation with the macrocosm of the local worldview, as the following narrative fragment illustrates:

" When the 7 sisters did the puja for Shiva, Shiva told them: If you want to satisfy me, you should meditate. You should meditate with the dhunkel.



The 7 sister got the dhunkel from the Adi Khon Village. There lived a female singer(gauni) who played the dhunkel.

The 7 sister took the Khond gauni to their kingdom. Brahman then told the 7 sister about the making and playing of the dhunkel.

Brahman told the 7 sister to take a straw mat(Kula) from the Mahar(Bamboo Maker) and then he told them to take a pot(handi) from the khumbar(potter).

Brahman himself gave a bamboo, for the bow(dhun) to the 7 sister. For the bow, the 7 sister made the string(sitalpot) and the straw crown(oira) by themselves.

From the blacksmith(luhura) the 7 sisters took the iron from making the iron rod (dhunbari)."

According to the accounts of dhunkel artists, the dhunkel is made meditation as well as for the worship of all gods and goddesses. No kind of trance or goddess spirit possession occurs during the dhunkel performance("boil nease"). Singing accompanied by the dhunkel(dhunkel gana) has merely the function of narrative story telling, ritual preparation and ritual accompaniment. The sound of the dhunkel only calls and attracts the goddesses and gods, but it does not transfer the musician itself.



Photograph 1 : Dhunkel player, at the dhunkel kutti, village Sargibahal,



Photograph 2 : Dhunkel kutti, the altar of the dhunkel, village of Romedega

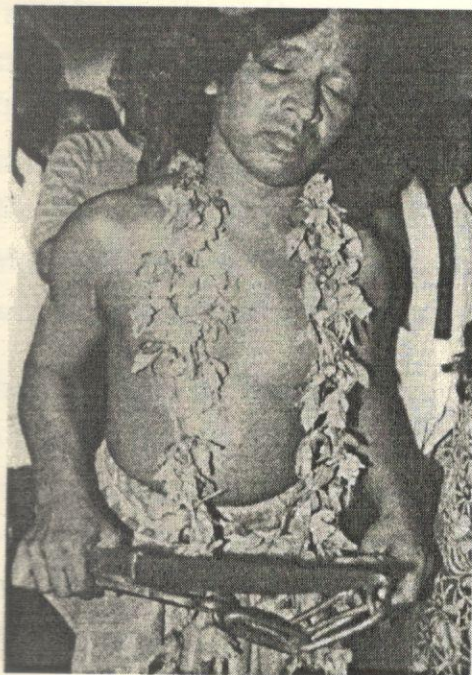
When the persisient, monotonous sound of the shunkel is heard by the villagers, people, star to gather in the dhunkel kutti. The local priest (pujhari), who some moments later will transform to boil, the trance medium of the local goddess, is a middle age man with long hair who belongs to the Mail community. Some years ago, after an apparition of the Godddess Durga in a dream, he became her priest.

While the dhunkel is played , he performs the worship(puja) for the Goddess Durga. Coconuts flowers, and incense-sticke(agerbati) are sacrificedin the sula or Durga kutti to please the goddess. Finally, the priest meditateswithout moving .For this part of the ceremony. He is wearing white clothes.After the end of his "whitepuja"(dhola puja) and his meditation, the music of the ganda baja village orchestra starts outside the Durga/dhunkel kutti butit can clearly be heard inside. While the monotonous sounds of the dhunkel instrument are hld to recall the divine

local narratives, the wild sound of the borua par, the holy rhythms of ganda baja, leads to an escalation of the ritual atmosphere and incites the

following eruption of the divine power embodied by boil, the trance-medium. Inside the small and crowded alra the tension rise. The rhythm and the volume of the ganda baja orchestra rise and fuel the nervousness and excitement of the crowd.

A villager acting as assistant priest (pujari) helps the main priest to change from his white clothes into a red female sari skirt. Slowly, the main priest (pujari) starts to lose control over his body. His eyes close and his limbs become heavy and powerless. Finally, the assistant priest touches his head with a small lamp of melted butter (ghi). Touched by the light, the almost unconscious priest starts to tremble. He is moving his head as if he is weeping. "S" Boil asila" ("Boil has come") the people whisper. "Ma Asila" ("the mother (goddess) has come"), they tell each other. Now the mother goddess has taken possession of her priest, and the priest himself has become "boil" Boil,



Photograph 3 : Trance medium boil as the possessed priest and embodied goddess, Sargibahal village,

the priest turned trance medium, then takes an iron chain-a symbol of the local goddess-from the ground with his right hand. He grunts and falls into

a wild ecstatic dance. During the dance boli-the possessed priest-start to silently a melody.

Immediately after the priest has transformed himself into boli, the trance medium, physically and psychologically suffering patients(kosti) approach him from out of the crowd and wind garlands of flowers around his neck. The trance medium boil trembles and start to utter presicion and incantations. In a repetitive tune he is chanting different names of goddesses:

" Mother is with you-Mother with you-Mother will save you-Mother will save you-Durha Ma(mother)-Durga Ma-maha KaliMa -Maha Kali Ma-maha Kali Ma-Mangala Ma- Mangala Ma-Tarani Ma-Tarini Ma-Oila Ma-Oila Ma-Subhakesi Ma Tulsa Ma-Tulsa Ma-Bontei Ma-Bontei Ma-Chandraseni Ma-ChandraseniMa-Ganga Ma-Ganga Ma-Parvati Ma-Parvati Ma-Lakshmi Ma-lakshmi Ma-Buri Ma-Buri Ma-patneswari Ma-patneswariMa- Samleshwari Ma-samleshwari Ma-Mother is with you- Mother is with you-Mother will save you-Mother will save you Mother will save you".

While boil chants to the patients, the music from outside, which up to now has driven on the ceremony, stops. For a tome , the tension level of the priest's ecstasy is moderated. But as the ganda baja music sets in anew the priest's-bolis body starts to tremble again and he commences to move in a circular movement . After moving around for some time with closed eyes, boil steps outside the altar, here he meets the ganda baja musicians, playing their instruments: Dhol, Nisaan, Tassa, Tassa, Mohuri and Jumka. The dhol player(dholya) takes a leading function in the following trance performance. He visibly in interact with boil and drives forwarded an ecstatic communication process. A provocative dialogue between the sound,beat and rhythm and the dance of the trance medium sets in. The

dhhol drum seems to offend boil. The baja, which means "music", but also signifies "bite", literally "bites"(baja)the geese. An aggressive communication unfolds between the beats of the dhol and the dance of the trance medium, who expresses the answers and reactions of the goddess through its wild ecstatic movements, which are derived from the dalkhai folkdance.

The music, the rhythms, the dance and the cries of the crowd touch everyone gathered around the sacred space of the dance of boil. There is a thrill about the ritual escalation, about the sudden appearance of boil, the goddesses embodied in her trance medium. But the crowd is also about the power and effectiveness of the ritual performance. The boil ritual and the consultation of the boil trance medium are particularly believed to make fertile those who attend the performance-both men and women. The dance and the wild music are held to manifest a curative and procreative energy which flows from the goddess personalized in boil to the participants of the ritual. The iron chain and the iron sword that boil, the trance medium, carries are symbols of the power of the goddess. In boil the goddess dance for her believers. She is wild and she can give fertility. But it is also the feminized male priest transformed into a divine woman, who is held to have obtained healing and transformative powers. The creative and procreative power of the goddess, according to the belief of her worshippers, is not only manifested in boil as a medium, but transferred from the Goddess to the possessed priest.

Thea-phony-Music and the Goddess

The boil ritual reveals an indigenous multi sensory and intermodal theory of the sacred and of healing transmitted through the cultural idiom of trance and possession of the trance medium boil. In cross-cultural perspective, music is often a crucial medium which accompanies, enables and guides trance mediumship in trance and possession cults. Trance mediumship implies a specific relationship between a ritual agent and his or her deity, overraching the boundaries between the individual and the environment. It is most cases expressed through embodiment as a non-dualistic perception and lived experience. While possession refer rather to external influences in terms of the notion of a subject being possessed by something exterior to her or him, trance according to Gilbert Rouget,

denotes a sounding, agitated, unusual state of transitory consciousness in a social context, induced through music. However, in academic discussion, the concept of trance, possession or ecstasy are often used arbitrarily and interchangeably to describe various kinds of ritual techniques which are connected to an "altered state of consciousness" it is also a common feature that trance and possession are acted out in a performance which may be termed "theatrical". Trance culturally, trance and possession performances seem to be intrinsically related to ritual efficacy and healing (Laderman/Roseman; Csor das/Lewton) and are central elements of initiations. In South Asia possession and trance are generally widespread as idioms for ritual communication and expression.

During the trance mediumship ritual a central indigenous meaning and belief system of the Bora Sambar region becomes visible, which I have tentatively termed thea-phony. The term thea-phony is intended to express the idea that a local goddess (thea) is manifested in a system of sounds (phony) related to ecstatic body expression. In the Bora Sambar region, social values, ideas and morals are associated with the idea of a feminine sacred power personified by diverse local goddesses and ritually mediated through musical and trance performances. The belief in local goddesses, such as the Sato Bahani (the Seven Sisters Goddess), Durga, Maha Kali, Mangala, Tarini, Nissani Oila Devi, Subakesi, Tulsa Devi, Bontei Devi, Parvati, Lakshmi, Boiravi, Burhi Ma, Patmeswari and Samaleshwari/Samley Ma is predominant throughout the region. This belief must be seen in the larger context of the widespread religious notion of the feminine sacred which can be traced all over India, manifesting itself in local cults of diverse goddesses. The pan-Indian idea of the feminine sacred embraces manifold indigenous notions of power which are often referred to as Shakti. In the Bora Sambar region, these indigenous conceptions of divine powers are particularly associated with the sound of the ganda baja music and the concept of par, the rhythm. Ritual poly-rhythmic music is believed to effect transformation, consolation and healing. Local goddesses are assumed to manifest themselves in the sounds and rhythms of the village orchestra ganda baja as well as in a variety of drums played in various contexts, such as nisaan symbolizing the goddess Nissani and sarmangalia symbolising the Goddess Mangala. The local goddesses are venerated through the sound and rhythms of these drums, while at the

same time being identified with them. Sounds, rhythms and instruments are simultaneously the medium and message of a goddess.

The Village Orchestra-Ganda Baja

Ganda Baja is may be the most prominent musical and ritual feature of the Burasambar region. It is an instrumental orchestral music , performed exclusively by musicians originating from the marginalized Harijan caste Ganda(also called Pano) . The instruments forming the ganda baja village orchestra can be divided into three categories: membranophones (dhol, Nissan, Tasa, also called timkiri), and aerophone(mohuri)and idiophones(kastal/jhang or jumka). Membranophones are musical instruments that produce sound by a stretched membrane (animal skin). Aerophones are musical instruments which produce sound only by using air without any string or membrane and idiophones are musical instruments which resound in themselves, without any strings, air or membranes.

Dhol

The dhol, which is the village orchestra's leading instrument, is a large membranophone. This large long drum (90 cm to 1.5 meters in length) is made from the trunk of a tree and strung with cowhide(gai chomora) on two sides. Along the length of the dhol run strips of cowhide(badi) which are attached to the instrument by rings(kol Kola) . The skin of the right hand side, named tali, is made from calfs, skin; the left -hand skin dhaaya is made from cowhide. The tali is slightly smaller(37 cm in diameter) than the dhaaya(38 cm dia) The dhaaya is beaten with a rubber stick(khanda/nara) of about 40 cm in length; the tali side played with the right hand. The dhol player, known as the dholya, directs the changes of the rhythms of the gandabaja orchestra. Rhythms usually emerge spontaneously with the dholya giving the lead. Musicians gain knowledge of the rhythmic and melodic patterns by listening to various rhythms from early childhood on. It is said that the voices of the goddesses appear first in the dhol drum and express their moods by changing the rhythms.



Photograph 4: Ganda Baja orchestra met on a road to Padampur town, from the left: Nissan, Mohuri, Tassa, Jumka, Dhol.

Nisaan

The Nisaan drum, another memberanophone, has a tapered form, resembling a melon cut in half. It is reported to be the most ancient instrument of the village orchestra. A Nisaan is made of wooden and iron sheets and is played with two rubber sticks (chimta). The leather (Chipra) of the drumhead is made of cowhide or goat skin and often covered with colourful paintings. In the Borasambar region and Sambalpur area Nisaan drums were traditionally decorated with deer antlers, but as hunting deer has been forbidden, today this form of embellishment has nearly disappeared.

The Nisaan is always played with maximum strength, thus producing a deep and penetrating sound which is compared to the "sound of the thunder storm" and identified with the horrifying strength of Goddess Nissani.

Tasa

The Tasa (also called timkri), a small memberanophone, is a drum made from clay (matul) and strung with cowhide (gai chmra). The drumhead is attached with leather strips to the tapered body of the instrument (mola). It is played with two thin bamboo sticks. The Tasa

produces a high and thin sound . Even if the sound of the Tasa drum is not associated with a specific goddess, it contributes to the divine drum chorus.

Mohuri

The Mohuri is an oboe-like instrument. According to the Ganda musicians, its sound plays a crucial role in changing the character of the music and rhythm. It is often compared to the "seductive voice of a capricious woman". As the musicians explain, but can also be associated with the "desperate wailing of a mother crying for her dead son". Those poetic sounds, descriptions refer to the arbitrary character of the mohuri which is considered the most difficult instrument to play in the orchestra. The sound of the mohuri is identified with the expression of the specific goddess which enters the musical sense during a ganda baja performance.



Photograph 5 : Mohuri Player, village of Cherchela

Kastal

The Kastal or Jhang are iron cymbals; they may be replaced by a kind of rattle called the jumuka. Their sound is associated with the goddess Ganeshwari ("the Goddess of bells")

Ideally an orchestra consists of five instruments and might include five to seven players. Sometimes, it is also called panchabadya referring to the five instruments assembled. Similarities can be traced between ganda baja and other orchestral traditions like those of Chhattisgarh or Nepal.

All ganda baja instruments play together in tune and rhythm. It is central for the formation of a Gunda musician to listen to the play of other musicians and to learn to play together with them. Besides the command of one's instruments, playing ganda baja thus implies a sophisticated culture of listening. The beat of the right-hand tali side of the dhol provides orientation for the tasa, which in response beats a double rhythm. The beat of the left-hand dhaaya side of the dhol provides orientation for the Nisan, which answers with a country-rhythm to the beat of the dhaaya. As the sound of the mohuri is intended to resemble the flirting of a woman's voice, it is played in an extremely alluring way. All the instruments in the inter-village orchestra are worshipped before being played. Notably, they are used for the worship of gods and goddesses, but at that same time require worship themselves. The instruments are usually only touched by the musicians, but there is no ritual prohibition to touch the instruments. However, no one should step over them as this is considered disrespectful and is supposed to cause a curse by the goddesses. The instruments are stored in a secular context: they are kept by the particular musician who plays an instrument. The sacredness of the instruments evolves mainly through the ritual context and the sound vibrations transforming the instrument to the mediator as well as to the corpus of a particular goddess.



Photograph 6: The worship of the instruments of the gaanda baja orchestra, village of Banjen Munda.

In the performance of ganda baja notion of an identity between music and goddesses come to light. Various goddesses are assumed to

appear through the sound of specific instruments and their rhythms (par), while the polyrhythmic structure of the orchestra is understood as the manifestation of their voice.⁴⁵ In the rural regions of Bora Sambar no socio-religious ceremony, such as marriage or puja, the ritual service for gods and goddesses, may be celebrated without ganda baja music, played exclusively by the Ganda musicians. A village orchestra, usually formed by inhabitants of one and the same village, is called to the neighbouring villagers for the celebration of such musical-religious events. The musicians are invited through turmeric powder by the different local communities of Bimital, Gouro, Dhol Khond, Maali or KKulta in order to perform in their villages. Thus, the music of the Ganda musicians connects local communities, places and religious concepts. The ganda baja can be considered as an inter-village orchestra, representing a force of relatedness, connection and communication between different villages and communities. The ganda musicians play the role of ritual and social mediators, linking tribal and semi-tribal local groups and mediating local values as well as local power configurations. The Ganda baja orchestra thus plays a double role: On the one hand the baja transcends local communities in its function as a ritual inter-village orchestra. On the other hand, through its musical expression of transcendence, the baja creates a sensual experience of the local community in terms of communication with a holy sphere and the manifestation of the powers of local goddesses.

In former times, musicians were engaged and patronized by local rajas or landowners (zamindar) of Rajbora Sambar Kingdom (later Padampur). Local power holders employed village musicians for the performance of politico-religious rituals, legitimating their social and symbolic power during such events as dusshara, the festival of the goddess Durga, and of the clan goddess Patneshwari. A proverb describes the ritual relationship between musicians and the local king: "ager baja, poche raja" - in front of the local king, there should always march the village orchestra. While performing in front of the raja or the zamindar the musicians had to wear colourful and extravagant clothes, a tradition that can still be traced today in the multicoloured clothes and longer than usual hair of village musicians. The performance of the politico-symbolic powers of the power holder was designed to be a cheerful event, associated with public entertainment and joyful festivities.

Ganda baja music and goddess-embodiment:the boil ritual

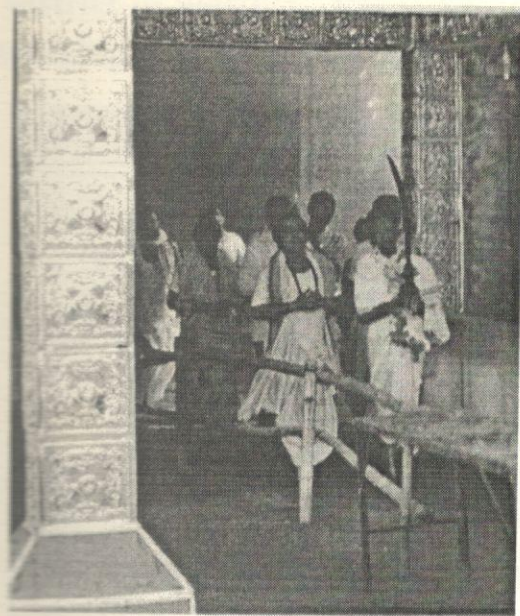
The instrumental orchestras of the Ganda musicians play a central role in the boil rituals of goddess embodiment and ritual healing . Every Monday during the worship of the Goddess Durga,the Goddess will appear in the body of her priest: "boil" comes upon the pujari . The ganda baja orchestrates the act of possession with specific rhythms. The goddess manifests her self in the dance and speech of the priest. This weekly boil tradition is an artistic ritual healing performance which integrates dance,music,and ritual speech in order to heal patients (kosti). Once a year during the festival of dusshara or Durga puja in honour of the goddess Durga,which takes places during the month of dusshara (October),boil rituals gain a special intensity.At this time,the sprit of the goddess comes with a particular power and efficaciousness upon her prist(pujari),who becomes her trance medium -boil.



Photograph 7 : A ganda baja orchestra from village Kalenda in its festive costumes for dusshara.

Goddess embodiment and the sixteen rhythms

The goddess spirit possession boil is musically symbolized by a specific sequence of rhythms, the sulapar, or 16 holy rhythms. These rhythms are named after 16 different goddesses and are said to express their speeches and characters. As different rhythms (par) are beaten, different goddesses manifest themselves in the body of the possessed trans medium. The concept of bol, the rhythms, plays a crucial role both in structuring the rituals performance of the trance medium boil, as in the healing of patients (kosti). Sulapar, the sixteen possession rhythms, represent the polyrhythmic and polyglot interacting of the different goddesses with each other. The musicians aurally recognise the identity of the specific goddesses and rhythms. As the structure of 16 rhythms is a core element in all boil rituals, I would tentatively describe it as a rhythmic sound liturgy within the ritual of goddess embodiment.



Dashera at Padampur Town.

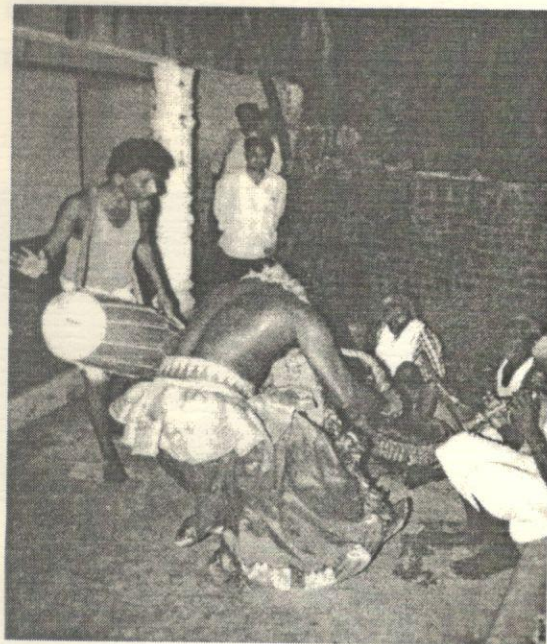
Drums and the goddess

Rodney Needham has pointed out that "there is a connection between percussion and transition" and that "practically every where it is found that percussion is resorted to in order to communicate with the other world ..." (ibid:610). In the Bora Sambar region, the drums dhol, Nisan, and tasa are directive for inducing trans. These membranophones are identified with local goddesses and they are simultaneously equated with goddess embodiment. The dhol drum plays a

crucial role in communicating with the goddess. By means of the dhol, a musician proves his strength (shakti) in order to detract the goddess' power of embodiment from himself and to direct it towards the priest. On multiple layers of meaning the drum is instrumental for mediating and transforming and directing the power of the goddess as well as it self identified with the divine entity.

Boil and dance

As well as the percussion centred sound of the ganda baja orchestra, the dance of the trance medium boil signifies the appearance of the goddess. She dances in the body of the possessed priest, who hence becomes a dancing goddess himself. In the dance patterns of the boil ritual the traditional elements of dalkhai, the most popular folk dance style in the Sambalpur district of western Odisha, are integrated into the performance of goddess worship. The dalkhai dance is traditionally associated with



Trance medium boil dancing, sargibahal Village.

puberty rituals for unmarried girls preparing young women and girls for their social and biological maturity. It is generally conceived as an expression of sensuality and a symbol of erotic attraction. Integrated into boil performances, dalkhai patterns indicate the intimate dialogue of the trance medium and the goddess. The trance medium boil is conceived as the divine dancer-the scared dancer of the goddess Durga-referring both to

his ritual activity and power. The erotic power of the dance symbolizes the power of fertility ascribed to all boil rituals and its trance mediums.

Boil and ritual speech

A third element of the boil ritual besides the rhythms of ganda baja and the priest's dance is the ritual speech of boil. For the most part, it consists of spontaneously created poetries sung by the trance medium. The rhythmic and repetitive uttering of the names of Gods and goddesses intertwines with a specific melody only known to the trance medium boil. The melody of the ritual speech whispered by boil is a personal characteristic of the trance medium. It may express the affiliation to his guru or boil's own personal note. Here, the medium of dance interconnects with the medium of music and rhythmic speech to form an intermedial ritual. The ritual incantation of boil shows a repetitive linguistic and melodic structure that can be described as a balancing of pairs of successive syntactic unities. This is the kind of "parallelism" highlighted in the ethno-linguistic discussion about "talking in paris". A parallelism, according to Roman Jakobson, is an



Trance medium boil speaking in paris, village Romedega.

elementary operation of oral communication that consists of a "coming together of two element..(...). By this definition, parallelism is an extension

of the binary principle of opposition to the phonetic, syntactic, and semantic levels of expression"

For Jakobson, even the rhetoric figures of comparison and metaphor were semantic variations of parallelism. Fox collects observations attesting to the dual structure of ritual language in many cultures, which he calls "dyadic language". The parallelism of sentences is considered by Fox to be a characteristic of poetic language, understood as a special vocabulary that is rarely used in other contexts. Parallel sentences and word constructions, the ordering of words and sentences in an alternating, repetitive form are characteristic for the ritual language of oral societies. Boil's trance song with its parallelism of sentences and alternating repetitions seems thus a pertinent example of ritual poetry.

Photograph : Trance medium boil speaking in Paris, village Romedega,

Practices of asceticism

Boil rituals are embedded in cycles of interconnected micro-rituals including temporal ascetic practices. The boil ritual on dusshara/durga puja is preceded by a preparatory phase of sixteen days. During the sula puja which starts from the celebration of puojuntya-the festival of mothers who celebratebrate their sons, the local priest (Pujari) fasts for 16 days until the day of nowomi, the ninth day and the day before the day of dusshara. During this time the priest may not rest on any wooden bed (kotha) but he sleeps on the ground. He is supposed to take a bath three times a day as well as to perform the worship of the sixteen goddesses three times daily; in the morning hours (sokale), at 12 a clock (bara baje) and in the evening (sandhya bele) hours. With these ascetic practices of cleansing and control of body and mind, the priest prepares himself for contact with the goddesses during the boil performance on durga puja.

Marginalized musicians

The ganda baja musicians who are orchestrating the boil performance are without exception male and originate from a subaltern impoverished Harijan Caste, called Ganda or Pano. Besides their activity as *musicians the traditional trade of the landless Ganda was the weaving of*

simple cotton clothes used as underwears. With the emergence of a cotton industry in Orissa/Odisha over the last 50 years, this trade fell in decline and today many Ganda earn their living as agricultural day-labourers. The indigenous term "Ganda" which literally means "the bad smelling" refers to the activity of tanning the leather for drums but also expresses the socio-cultural concept of untouchability or pollution of the Ganda musicians, from the perspective of the local culture, Ganda musicians are considered to be untouchable (schua) for two reasons. First, because their drums are made from cowhide and second, because by playing the oboe mohuri, they touch their own saliva while creating sounds. The direct physical contact with cowhide and saliva classifies them as extremely impure and thus "untouchable". But it is exactly this "untouchability" that qualifies the Ganda baja musicians for contact and communication with the divine sphere of the local goddesses. Here, the paradoxical character of the Indian category of "untouchability" or "pollution" becomes visible in the shape of a ritual inversion. In the ritual performance, the socially marginalized become spiritually powerful by communicating with the sacred powers of the goddesses. The ideological notion of being "untouchable" is, so to say, prerequisite for successful contact with the "untouchable"- the intangible, immaterial, prohibited sphere of the sacred. The power of performance of the goddess is thus transferred to the socially most powerless performers who, during the ritual performance, take in and transmit the divine powers of the goddess. That the socially powerless have physical and spiritual power inverse to their social status is a widespread notion all over India. Thus by their marginal status they are qualified for ritual specialization and the handling of strong, uncontrolled, divine power feared by others.

In the boil performance of the Borasambar region, the symbolic and musical powers of the orchestral instruments, their sounds and rhythms, unite with the ritual strength of the socially marginalized musicians. Thus an indigenous theory of power takes shape, based on the empowering effects of music in a ritual context. The ritual effectiveness of music furthermore hints to indigenous media theory where polyrhythmic music is socially and culturally considered as a crucial vehicle and message of the otherworldly. The marginalized status of the musicians directing the boil performance plays a substantial role in the inner logic of the ritual. The polyrhythmic music of the village orchestra musician is generally

understood as an "untouchable" sacred entity, expressing notions of the divine as a wild, uncontrolled power, manifesting itself in the rhythms of the instruments and in the dance of the possessed priest. The instruments mediate and manifest the other world of the goddesses, while the subaltern social status of the musicians, as we have seen, paradoxically qualifies them for communication with the divine world. But although it is the musician alone, who has the capacity to control the goddess, he remains socially marginalized even while interacting with her in contrast to the ritual priest and trance medium, Ganda musicians are not allowed to enter the inner sanctum of the dhunkel kutti alra, where the goddess embodiment takes place.

Boil as a healing performance:

A central aspect of the boil ritual is that of multi-sensory and inter-medial healing performance. The ritual dynamism of goddess embodiment in boil ritual reveals a strong healing power of music for the ritual participants and patients who seek spiritual cure for a psychological ailment. Music induces an enormous sensorial experience with a strong affective and psychological effectiveness.

"For healing to take place in this manner, aesthetic, distance be achieved (.....) The healing effects of performance are no one level caused by the catharsis that can occur when a patient's unresolved emotional distress is reawakened and confronted in a dramatic context". Alderman and Roseman point out. This aesthetic distance occurs in boil performance through the dramatically ecstatic rhythms which change a priest into a dancing goddess, embodied by her trance medium boil. The loud sound vibrations of the ganda baja drums create an exceptional atmosphere and tension perceived by all participants. The dynamic and dominant sounds incite the pulsating healing powers of the ritual.

The movements of boil, the trance medium, combine artistic patterns with an immediate physical, muscular presence. The boil ritual as a whole follows a dramaturgy of preparation, escalation and relief. The performance starts with a worship (puja) continued by the mediation and narrative accompanied by the dhunkel instrument. The music of ganda baja then enters a phase of escalation during which the goddess takes possession of the priest. A tense atmosphere of hope, fear and common excitement is

evoked by the orchestra's play. This escalation culminates in the ecstatic dance of the priest interacting with the beat of the dhol drum. Finally, the voice of boil whispering in the ears of the participants brings consolation and relief. In the course of the ritual the visual experience of the trembling, rhythmic body movements of the trance medium blends with the sensual experience of the touch of boil and his body covered with sweat, while the aural experience of the escalating music of ganda baja reinforces these impressions. This multisensual perception, in terms of Howes "Intersensoriality" as the "multidirectional interaction of the sense and sensory ideologies" seems to bring about psychological relief for the patients.

The ecstatic boil performance provides a possibility to touch the wilderness, which is considered to be the goddess. Everyone who has touched or was touched by the wild goddess returns consoled to his or her local social context. Satisfied about the concrete, sensual communication with the goddess, participants return re-integrated into their community. Many of those who attended boil rituals confirmed that questioning the embodied goddess gave them psychological comfort. They considered the words of the trance medium as a consolation and as expression of a divine truth: "Be quiet, Ma is with you," thus boil spoke to them. With these simple words the suffering and the barren were assured and strengthened in their hope and belief that afflictions will be cured, that the children they desire, will soon be born.



Photograph 11 : Trance medium boil, Sargivahal village

While the ecstasy of the trance medium boil and the collective excitement during the ritual of goddess spirit possession can be conceived as the manifestation of a wild and to certain extent uncontrolled power both without and within the community the boil ritual as a whole has a reconfirming , integrative function. This becomes especially visible in the role of the dhunkel instrument and the narrative songs performed to its sounds. The dhunkel singer remembers and repeats collective metaphors, values, ideas and stories. The meditative recollection of the local world view reconfirms the collective ideas and values of the local community, thus ensuring a cultural continuity.

Music as transformation

In the boil performance it can be observed that the media music, dance, and language interweave effectively for healing. This intermediality illustrates how music opens a human for transformation into a divine being. The ritual music which is embodied in the playing of the dhunkel and in the music of the ganda baja orchestra touches the priest and his body. While dancing, the priest becomes boil, the manifestation of the Goddess. Finally, boil touches the suffering patients whose hope will be strengthened and whose pain will be eased. Performing arts in ritual operate as media of transformation on a theological, psychological and sociological level. They integrate a distraught member of a local community and console him or her through sensuality .It may be assumed that the healing power of boil ritual music, sance, and speech.

Thea-phony in Borasambar against the background of pan- Indian Goddess worship.

Manifold correspondence can be traced between the thea-phonic structures in the Borasambar region, which I have outlined in this chapter and pan-Indian phenomena of Goddess worship in rural contexts. Besides the powerful male gods of the Indian religious traditions-for example Vishnu or Shiva-multiple local Goddess are worshipped all over India. They are generally called Devi or Ma. The Devi or Ma is considered to be the creator as well as the destroyer of the world and the cosmos. She is omnipotent and associated with the idea of Shakti. This Indian concept of

religious power has an extremely ambivalent as the Goddess at the same time embodies a creative and destructive power: She can kill and she can create. In rural as well as in urban regions of India cults of Goddesses are often powerful. The worship of the Goddess has an important impact on the life of her believers manifest for instance in pilgrimages, although personal devotion levels differ between rural or urban context. Altars of local goddesses are scattered everywhere: at crossroads, under trees or in plain fields on the earth. To her believers, the local Goddesses manifest themselves in anionic form: as stones, as quarries, as eruptions of the earth, as waterfalls, rivers or other natural phenomena. Goddesses are often worshiped under a number of different names. Frequently, local cults of Goddesses are integrated into the pan-Indian worship of Goddesses like Kali or Durga. The Goddess is held to exert an enormous influence on the life of her believers: In her manifold manifestation she is responsible for one's fate: she gives and takes life; she can change its course benevolently through advices given in dream or she can change it through destructive intrusions in the form of dangerous illness, as for example chicken pox. The life-giving and life-taking power and energy of the Goddess is conceived as an uncontrollable, wild force but it can nonetheless be appeased and positively influenced by means of the correct worship. India, the agency of human trance mediums, as I have described it in the boil ritual of the Borasambar region, is a widespread mode of communication with a Goddess. Ritual Goddess embodiment is generally characterised by trance, ritual language, often ecstatic of a specialized male or female priesthood. Exorcisms of Goddess embodiment or Goddess spirit possession are regularly accompanied by music, performed exclusively by initiated male musicians on highly symbolic instruments which at the same time provokes and indicates spiritual transformation. Goddess-spirit possession is specific to non-Brahmin social groups and mostly found in rural regions of India.

Boil as a theory of the Sacred

To conclude this chapter, I would like to argue that the thea-phony of boil can not only be described as a ritual performance but in the same right as an indigenous theory of the Sacred or Sublime. An oral/aural culture as that of the local population of the Borasambar region implies that local value and meaning systems are enshrined and transmitted in acoustic or visual

media as speech, song, music, dance or acting. The boil tradition of the Borasambar region shows a local meaning and belief system which is based upon the central idea that the goddess is the system of sounds mediated through music and embodiment. A sonic sensual and intersensorial approach to sacrality thus shapes cultural ideas and mediates them in a specific way. The musically conceptualized sacred is on the one hand intangible as manifested in the sounds of ganda baja, on the other hand embodied in the trance medium boil, sacralising thus the message and the medium itself.

Third Chapter: Dance and Ritual as Idioms of Affinity and Alliance

During the goddess embodiment ritual boil, the possessed priest, representing the goddess through his dance, dances forms of the traditional dalkhai dance. In the Borasambar region the dalkhai performance is another crucial form and medium of cultural and religious expression as well as of local meaning and value transmission. In the dalkhai dance and the corresponding rituals, the values of marriage in terms of affinity and alliance are re-enacted within a multifaceted ritual dance play whose principal actors are pre-pubescent girls.

Two Examples from Fieldwork

Duduki Jaria Village

In the Duduki jaria Village dalkhai is performed during the time of dusshara puja or Durga Puja, the veneration of the goddess Durga, on osthomi, the 22nd day of the month dusshara and on the days that follow. Osthomi is also the day of bhai juntya, the ritual veneration of brothers by their sisters. Thus in one sense, dalkhai is a dance of sisters who dance for their

brothers. The dancers are mainly girls aged between 3 and 13 years, led by an elder female lead dancer. Sometimes the dalkhai it is also danced by young married women, as the custom prescribes that every married girls has to return her mother's house on the occasion of the Durga Puja.

On osthomi, the worship of Dalkhai is performed in front of the dalkhai kurti (altar of Dalkhai), which is simultaneously named durga kurti and dhanke kurti. The dalkhai girl dancers offer rice, paddy (chaulo) and incense to the Goddess and pray for their brothers. During the day of the dalkhai puja all girls are fasting. After the girl dancers have performed the puja inside the Durga kurti, they become boil-trance medium embodying the Goddess Durga or Dalkhai. This happens without the involvement of any local priest the girls are from now on addressed as Ma and are consulted by suffering patients searching relief for their personal sorrows and pains. The girls are also asked to forecast rain. While dancing, they are supposed to represent and embody the purity and beauty of a devi, a goddess.

The second day of the dalkhai ritual is the day of bhai juntya. The dancers put the offering, which they have given the before to goddess Dalkhai/ Durga, on their head and wish their brothers well. Sisters bind a thread around the right wrist of their brothers.

On the third day of the ritual cycle, the brothers give clothes to their sisters. Then the brothers provide for musical accompaniment of the dalkhai dance by hiring ganda baja musicians from their own or from a neighbouring village. From the following morning on, which is the fourth day of the ritual, the young girls start to dance outside the village. The Gandabaja musicians accompany them with special dalkhai rhythms. When performing the ritual, the girl dancers dance in one or two lines of two six dancers facing each other, their bodies stooped, with moving steps. The movement of the dancers does not follow any prescribed choreography; it is spontaneous but never uncontrolled or wild. Their dance seems rather monotonous, rhythmically responding to the music of the ganda baja orchestra, which guides the dance. While the girl-dancers sing the dalkhai geet-the song of ritual, which often has an erotically provocative character. The song is intended to tease and ridicule those who encounter the group of dancing women on their way. The whole day long, the girls fast and dance outside their

village, accompanied by the ganda baja party. As there is no rigidly fixed time schedule for the ritual dance, the dalkhai dance might sometimes start on an earlier day, before the ritual of bhai juntya.

Ambahalli Village

Another village where dalkhai is practiced is the Ambahallia village, situated among the Ghandamardhan Hills of Borasambar region. The area is populated by communities of Dhol Khond, Goura, Harijan, Boria/Binjhal, and patro(Paika). The village God (Gran Devta) of Amnahalli is the goddess Wari Devta Ma, the goddess of the Earth. At a crossroads, the Durga and Dalkhai altar are placed nearby the Ma Mati Devta altar, which is a triangular shaped natural stone under a tree. The altars of the Goddesses Durga and Dalkhai are represented by similarly shaped stones. The priest(pujhari) of the dalkhai kutti belongs to the Dhol Khond community. Only once a year, during bhai juntya-the celebration for brothers by their sisters-he performs the dalkhai puja, the worship of the goddess Dalkhai. For this occasion, the priest himself paints images of goddess Durga on a wall of a house near by the central place the village with colours which the girls have collected from the other villagers. While he is painting, boil-the spirit of the goddess-comes upon him and under her inspirations he draws the divine images. The place of the images of the Goddess Durga and Dalkhai is also called thr Dalkhai/Durga Kutti.

From around 10 in the morning to 4 in the afternoon, all young girls of the village dance the dalkhai dance. The polyrhythmic gand baja the stooped dancing movements of the girls. While dancing, the girls carry a saris and cover their arms with a small untailored cotton cloth. The girls approach all houses of the village in order to collect money for the musicians of the village orchestra, which accompanies their dance. Together with the musicians, the group of girls then starts to dance outside the village and to move around on the roads leading to the village. They demand money from passers-by who cross their way. Often they are led by an older woman, who dances in front of the young girls and invents rhymes teasing the passers-by . The dance is always accompanied by teasing, provocative lyric full of sexual allusions. Inly after a donation of 10 to 100 rupees, the traveler, who encounters the group of girls dancers, is allowed to move on. The older woman leading the dance is called the " teaching

teacher". The girls learn the dance by watching and imitating her movements and thus also call her dekha-guru" the teacher to look at". The girls dance dalkhai only outside their village. Only outside " behere", they do not feel ashamed while dancing, since their dance is considered to be of sensual and erotic character. Before dancing and going outside, the girls offer to the Goddess Dalkhai a mohuli donation of wine and small bowls made of banana leaves filled with uncooked rice. The burning of incense sticks and high screaming sounds called hurli hurli, created by a vibration of the small singer's tongues, accompany the puja. The goddess Dalkhai/Durga is considered to protect the girls who become her dancers and worshippers. The girls dance is on the hand conceived as a ritual to make the goddess happy; on the other hand the goddess herself is identified with dance of the girl children.

Dalkhai Dance

Dalkhai in transition

Traditionally, dalkhai is suppose to be an Adivasi dance of the Soara, Bhojpal and Gour communities. In the course of tribal migration and the corresponding cultural transformation processes, it has spread to the urban centers of western Odisha and is performed today also in the guise of the urban Sambalpuri folk dance. As the Sambalpuri dance, it has become the most characteristic and popular dance style of the region and the core of various folk dances of western Odisha. Through public performances, the dalkhai dance has become one of the most important identity markers of Sambalpuri identity, synonymous with the regional identity of western Odisha with its core center Sambalpur town.

In its ritual form, the dalkhai dance is today only preserved in some very remote villages of the Borasambar region. As a common village dance tradition of the region, dalkhai is about vanish because most mothers do not want their girl children to dance in front of men and boys. Often, the villagers themselves have decided to abandon the dalkhai tradition due to its supposed sensual character. But what are the reasons for sudden cultural prudery? The ambivalent perception and assessment of the dalkhai dance can be explained as a reaction to the pejorative values of urban mainstream Hinduism. In urban Hindu society, the dalkhai dance is associated with the culture and lifestyle of Adivasi societies-hence with

people who are discredited as jungly, as having the stigma of being uncultivated, wild and sexually easily accessible. In minority and subaltern communities an interiorization of external prejudices is a sign of a violent alienation from one's own cultural heritage. In his essay on "Adivasi Knowledge and Aphasia" G.N. Devy has extended the medical term aphasia, designating the pathological loss of speech, to the loss of the cultural capacity to recognize one's own systems of knowledge and to the loss of the power of expression through one's own cultural knowledge techniques. For the fragile community of the Soara, Piers Vitebsky describes this process as a dramatic cultural "inarticulacy" and cultural forgetting". The abandonment of the traditional dalkhai dance and ritual can be interpreted as a self inflicted cultural aphasia and cultural forgetting, and thus as a sign of the accomplishment of a cultural hegemony of urban Hindu values, which persistently have been interacting with the indigeous traditions of the Burasambar region. Due to an urban process of retraditionalization and reinvented remembering, which has its centre in the town of Sambalpaur, the emergence urban Sambalpur folklore has, however, re- redefined the dalkhai dance: as folklore it has become an important political and regional identity marker.

Ethnological and metaphorical levels of the term dalkhai

The term dalkhai is considered to stem from dalo, the branch of the dalo tree. During the dalkhai dance, the people tell, the dalo branches are symbolically planted. The branch of the dalo tree in turn is the symbol of the goddess Durga, who is associated with shakti, the female power. Dalo branches also stand for brudhwood, evoking the picture of young shy girls dancing in the brushes. The dalkhai dance is thus considered a shy and sensual dialogue between girls and boys. Moreover, Dal and Khai also signifies eating rice, generally associating the goddess Dalkhai with rice. Some tell that the dalkhai dance is performed on dusshara days in order to prevent the paddy from insects. The vibration of the dhol drum of the gunda baja orchestra accompanying the dalkhai dance is believed to affect the air and disturb the flight of the insects, so they are fended off the paddy. The term dalkhai does not only designate the ritual dance and the local

goddess Dalkhai, in whose honour it is performed , but it may simultaneously refer to other goddesses such as the pan-Indian goddess Durga, Shakti Devi, the local goddess of power, Bandurga, the local forest-goddess, or Samley the regional goddess of the Sambalpur district. Indian Goddess worship often implies a polysemis inclusion of diversified goddess concepts. One goddess is regarded and venerated as an integral part of another. While displaying one personality she may simultaneously incorporate other manifestations of her divine identity.

The legend of dalkhai

Local narrations about the dalkhai dance relate the dance to stories of seven sisters and seven brothers venerated in the dalkhai or sula kutti, the altar of the goddess Dalkhai, also called, " altar of the sixteen. In order to explain the origin of dalkhai, an old priest of one dalkhai/sula kutti in the in the Borasambar region recounts the following story:

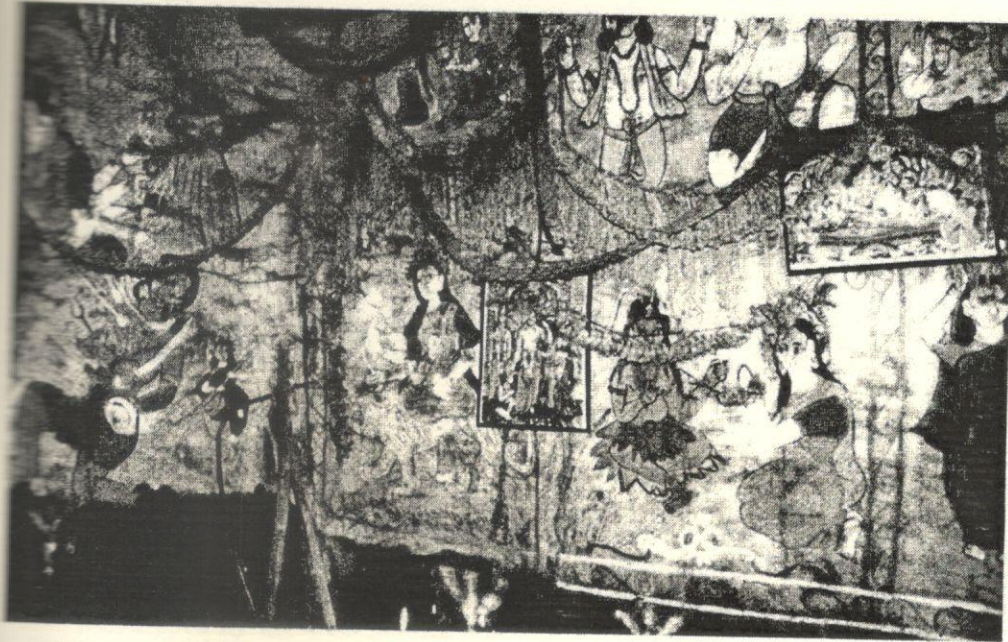
"Once upon a time a *rusi* [holy man] told the seven sisters: in case you can not bath in the Ganga, you will die. One time, the seven sisters could not find any water to bath during seven days and thus decided to commit suicide on the seventh day. But before they could carry out the deed, the seven brothers came to the jungle and rescued the seven sisters from suicide by marrying them. The seven brothers, who all where sons of a king (*raja putra*), then took the seven sisters to their kingdom. It took the seven brothers sixteen days to reach their kingdom with the seven sisters. When the seven sisters entered the kingdom they performed the *Kudrukuni puja* ("ussa"). Then they danced the *dalkhai* dance. *Kudrukuni* Goddess told them not to take any water and any meals before they had accomplished the goddess worship. If they could not resist eating something, they only were allowed to take a cake (*pita*) from seven leaves. After fasting (*upvas*) and after performing puja for the *Kudrukuni* goddess, the seven sisters performed first *Pankaldaki puja*, then the *Shiva puja* and then the *Durga puja*. All in all, the sisters performed sixteen pujas. When fasting, the sisters danced in order to forget the hunger."

Embedded in the complex configuration of the ritual sequence described, the legend highlights the value of marriage for individual and social continuity by depicting it literally as a life saving event. The legend also preserves a variety of names of local goddesses which over time have been suppressed in the general narrations about the *dalkhai* dance. Today, only the names of dominant trans-regional goddesses such as *Durga* are usually mentioned in connection with the *dalkhai* dance and ritual. The narration harbors the remembrance of certain local goddesses, who otherwise have completely vanished from the collective memory. The ritually based oral culture as well as the ritual itself acts as an indigenous archive of culturally specific meanings.

Dalkhai and sula kutti - the altar of the sixteen

Traditionally, no temple exists for the goddess *Dalkhai*. She is worshipped through the dance inside or in front of her altar, the *dalkhai kutti*. The *dalkhai kutti* which is also called *Durga kutti*, the altar of Goddess *Durga* or *sula kutti*, the altar of the sixteen, or *dhunkel kutti*, the altar of the *dhunkel* instrument, is mostly a quadrangular room within a mud house considered as a sacred abode. On the upper part of one of the room's walls, 16 images of

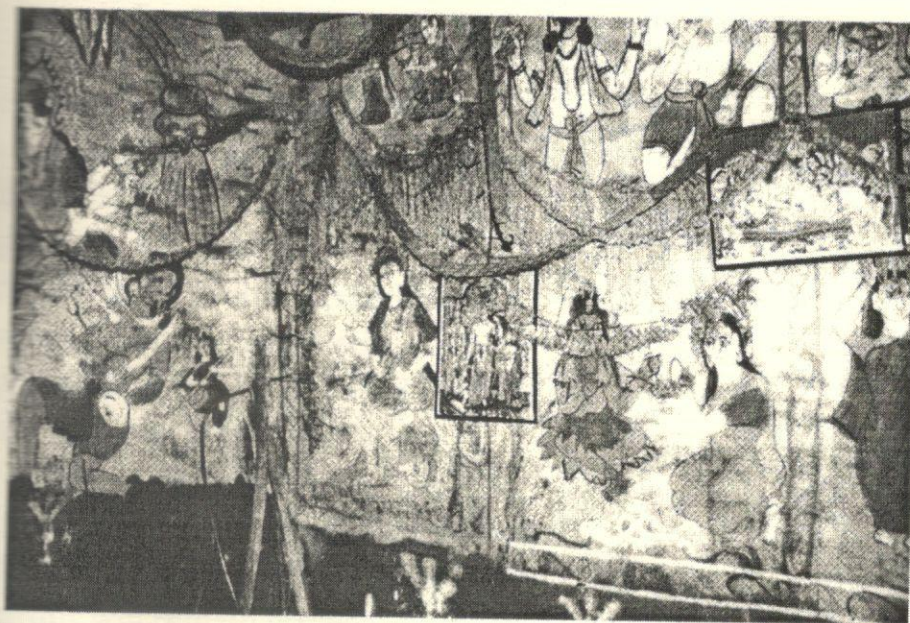
the goddess Dalkhai or Durga together with her seven sisters (*sato bhani*)⁶⁴, performing the *dusshara* ceremony⁶⁵, are painted.



Photograph 12: *Durga kutti /dhunkel kutti /dalkhai kutti/sula kutti*, village of Dhumabatta, 2004, L. G.

⁶⁴ 1) Subkeshi, 2) Oholya, 3) Tulsabati/Irani, 4) Dohona, 5) Kisteirani, 6) Sirya 7) Onjona.

⁶⁵ 21 jars (*kolos*) brought to the *kutti* during *dusshara* are supposed to represent 16 goddesses and additionally the 7 sisters of Durga (*sato bhani*).



Photograph 12: *Durga kutti / dhunkel kutti / dalkhai kutti / sula kutti*, village of Dhumabatta, 2004, L. G.

The images themselves represent “the altar of the sixteen” (*sula kutti*). The painting of the pictures is part of the ritual cycle performed during the *Durga puja*. The first 16 pictures representing single goddesses will be painted and worshipped by the local painter artists of the Maharana caste on *ostomi*, the ninth day of the *dusshara* month. After the artists of the Maharana cast have painted a new *dalkhai / sula kutti* it is ready for the appropriate worship of the goddess Durga (*Durga puja*). At *dosomi*, the tenth day of the *dusshara* month, the double pictures representing goddesses in company of their seven sisters and their husbands will be painted and worshipped by the villagers. It is believed that all the goddesses and gods, the seven sisters and their married seven god-brothers reside in the *dalkhai kutti*. As mentioned above, the *kutti* is also the sacred abode of the *dhunkel* instrument.⁶⁶ Every year, a new

dhunkel instrument is brought into the *dalkhai kutti* while the old instrument is destroyed and thrown away. This is why the *dalkhai kutti* is simultaneously called the *dhunkel kutti*. Ideally, the *dalkhai / dhunkel / sula kutti* is supposed to be renewed every seven years, but factually the frequency of its renewal depends on the financial capacities of the particular village. This event is celebrated as *sasti*, the holy marriage of goddesses and gods.

The *dhunkel* instrument is used by the *dhunkel* singer and player (*dhunkelya*) to accompany his recounting of the *dhunkel bandana*, the story of the *dhunkel* instrument, and its relation to the worship of goddesses, the notion of sound and to the concept of *dalkhai*. The following song, performed during the *dalkhai* ritual, is an exemplary fragment of this sophisticated oral tradition:

Songs no- 3

ACHHA AAMAR GHARA HAEGO
Oh My dear you have arrived to our home.
TUMAKU DEKHINA LAAGE MADHURA
I feel glade to seeing you
AAMAR GACHHAR BURO APATA KASAA
The berry of our tree is so rustic;
AAMAR BURO GACHHAR UPUREN DHENTI,
The stem is on our berry tree
DISKO PHULI RABAR PHITA,
Disco modernizes items like rubber, ribbon
AAGO BABU JUGEN JUGEN THIBA KATHAA
Oh Dear this will remain forever,
TAMKUN KIE KALAA DURUJAA MANAA,
Who forbid you to come our gateway
SAJANAA GACHHARA CHHAAI (AAGO PILAA),
It is the shadow of drumstick tree
DINEN DEKHAA DELA NAAIN
But you never gave the opportunity of a single meet
AAMAR KHUSAA TALEN BHAMBARA BULE
The black bee files under our braided-hair,
UTAALI GHESAALI KUHAA NADIA,
The rotten coconut of to rivers
AAMAR KHUSAA TALEN DENGAI BHAAJI
Big and tall green leaves are under our braided-hair,
TEBE RAHI THAU JAATI KULA
So we should preserve our own community.
KHAAI DELEN DHARI DEBAA TANTI DEKHAA
You will be affected in your neck when you take it.
HAIGO BABU KHAAU THIBA BETI BETI.
Oh Dear you will collect the berry and eat.
Maten aani deba fudar alita
You will bring me the feet's red color.
AAGO BABU TUME DHARI ACHHA TULIA PINDHAA
Oh Dear, you have stopped at the courtyard.
BAATE GHARA KALIN TUMARI PAAIN
I build my home for you on the roadway
KHAJAA ACHHE BALI NURE
To find (search) sweet