Introduction to the texts

Part Two of this monograph is devoted to the presentation of forty-five Thangmi texts. None of these oral documents originated in a written form, nor, to my knowledge, have any been committed to paper before now.

A wide range of speaking styles and registers are represented in these oral narratives. Some are simply conversations between two villagers, while others are monologues or fables narrated by Thangmi friends. Those readers familiar with Nepali folklore will notice certain well known motifs, particularly from Newar folk tales which remain popular throughout the kingdom. Magical or superstitious events occur frequently, and kinship relationships and marriages are particularly salient elements in many of these narratives.

The oral texts which follow were recorded in the field and thereafter transcribed and translated in Kathmandu or Amsterdam. For the first stint of fieldwork, a SONY Professional recorder was used to record narratives and tales on analogue audio cassette. During later research trips, the author had access to a SONY handheld video camcorder with an external stereo microphone, providing high quality audio and video tracks. Some of the most culturally interesting texts will be hosted on a website in the future, together with glosses and an English translation.

When they form part of an example, loan words from Nepali are transcribed according to the local pronunciation provided by the speaker. Borrowed forms with an identical meaning in the source language are indicated by italicising the English gloss. Naturalised loan words or borrowed forms with a variant indigenous meaning, such as Thangmi guru ‘shaman’ (from Indo-Aryan guru ‘spiritual guide, mentor, teacher’), Thangmi name ‘name’ (from Indo-Aryan nâm ‘name’) and Thangmi dese ‘village’ (from Indo-Aryan des’ ‘place, quarter, region, province, country, nation’), are not italicised in the English gloss.
Getting married to a young girl

1 di uni, ulam-te cawa-ŋa-du beryaŋ, di-ka apraca camāica
one day road-LOC walk-1s-NPT that.time one-HNC good woman

khalam-u-n-uy. 2 apraca ni-tuŋ-le, to nama kutaleŋ
meet-3P-1s→3-1s→3/PT good see-1s/TPP-PCL that with when

ciŋyaŋ-sa unŋa tha-ŋa-n. 3 tyuŋ to li bi li bi cawa-ŋa-n, ciŋyaŋ-sa
speak-INF like be-1s-PT then that after after walk-1s-PT speak-INF

ma-thaŋ-u-n-uy. 4 to nama ciŋyaŋ-sa-kāi, di uni to-ko
NEG-be.able-3P-1s→3-1s→3/PT that with speak-INF-PM one day that-GEN

kherte ya-ŋa-n. 5 to-ye lak-te cabuh-ŋa-du menca ulam-te
near go-1s-PT that-ERG hand-LOC carry-SAS-3P-NPT bag road-LOC

ros-ŋa-an, gā-ye ‘sewa’ ŋa-tuŋ-le, to-ko menca
fall.from.level-SAS-3P/PT I-ERG salute say-1s/TPP-PCL that-GEN bag

kum-sa-kāi kokorok-si-ŋa-n. 6 to woi to beryaŋ
pick.up-INF-PM bend.over-REF-1s-PT that also that that.time

korg-si-ŋa-la-le, to-ko kapu nama gāi-go kapu
bend.over-REF-SAS-IPP-PCL that-GEN head with I-GEN head

ṭhyoko-ŋa-an. 7 li bi to-ŋaŋ ni yo-siy-i-n,
bump.against-SAS-3P/PT after that-inside we look.at-REF-1PPS-PT

nuŋ-i-n. 8 tyuŋ nama nama caway-i-n ‘naŋ-ko name hara?’
laugh-1PPS-PT then with with walk-1PPS-PT you-GEN name what

ŋa-to-le, gā-ye ŋaŋ-u-n-uy. 9 tyuŋ to-ye oste-ko name
say-TPP-PCL I-ERG say-3P-1s→3-1s→3/PT then that-ERG self-GEN name

1 One day, while walking along the road, I met a beautiful woman. 2 Seeing that beauty, I wondered when I might speak with her. 3 Then I followed her, but was unable to speak. 4 In order to speak with her, one day I went up really close. 5 The bag that she was carrying in her hand fell onto the road, and I, saying ‘good morning’, bent down to pick it up. 6 At that time she also bent over, and her head bumped against mine. 7 Then, right there, we looked at each other and laughed. 8 And then we walked together and I asked her ‘what’s your name?’ 9 Then she told me her name and I told her mine.