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Nutandhar Sharma and Richard Widdess

Introduction

1 The Kathmandu Valley of Nepal is known for its wealth of cultural traditions, including many genres of music and dance performed in its streets and temples with traditional instruments (surveys include Hridaya 1952/53; Ballinger and Bajracharya 1960; Hoerburger 1975; Wiehler-Schneider and Wiehler 1980; Grandin 1989; Wegner and Widdess 2001; Wegner 2023). The predominant traditional music in the Valley is that of the Newar ethnic group, who are Hindu and Buddhist by religion, and speak a language of the Tibeto-Burman family. From the thirteenth to the eighteenth century, a dynasty of local kings, the Mallas, ruled over three rival city states in the Valley – Kathmandu, Lalitpur and Bhaktapur – producing distinguished visual arts, literature, architecture and performing arts. The conquest of the Valley by King Pṛthvīnārāyan Śāh of Gorkha, in 1768–69, ended Newar hegemony, while making Kathmandu the capital of a Gorkhali empire, later known as the Kingdom, and now the Republic of Nepal; but despite political suppression of the Newars by subsequent regimes, many Newar cultural traditions, including music and dance genres, continued to be practised in the towns and villages of the former Newar kingdoms, down to the present day.

2 Given the transitory nature of musical sound, and the absence of written musical notation until recently, the premodern history of Newar music can normally only be recovered from iconography and literary or epigraphic references, going back to the Licchavi period (3rd–8th centuries CE) (Sharma and Wegner 1994). Manuscript treatises on music theory and collections of song poetry are abundant from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (Widdess 2013: 40–47). But survivals of historical instruments are

extremely rare. It is possible that some instruments still in use today, or consigned to a temple or storeroom, are of historical interest; but in general, instruments are subjected to intensive use, especially in devotional, ritual and processional contexts, and are therefore likely to have a limited lifespan. Iconographic representations suggest that many Newar instruments have changed little over the centuries: it would therefore be difficult to date an old instrument, unless it bears an inscription giving a date or the name of an identifiable historical person. Some years ago, a conch-shell trumpet (*śankha*) came to light, inscribed with the name of Pratāp Malla, king of Kathmandu 1641–74.[1] This was presumably used by the king himself in royal rituals; the inscription giving his name may have aided the instrument's survival. In Bhaktapur, a pair of large *nagarā* kettledrums was dedicated to his lineage goddess (Taleju) by King Jitāmitra Malla in 1690, according to an inscription; they continued to be used until the 1960s and were restored in 1992 (Wegner 2023: 249–52). Rare though such survivals are, we are now able to report an analogous case: a ritual *ḍamaru* drum bearing the name of Jagatprakāśa Malla (king of Bhaktapur 1643–72), the date 1671 and images of the king and other figures. This drum provides evidence of the close connections between sacred and secular authority and musical sound, in Newar civilisation of the seventeenth century.

The *ḍamaru* in South Asia

3 *Ḍamaru* is the Sanskrit name applied to various types of hourglass-shaped pellet-drums, with or without a handle, played widely across the Indian subcontinent, from Sri Lanka in the south to Tibet in the north. In the Kathmandu Valley, the instrument is called *ḍamaru* in Nepali, or in the Newar vernacular, *dabudabu* or *dabadaba* (Wiehler-Schneider and Wiehler, 1980: 105–7, Wegner 2023: 302). All these names appear to be onomatopoeic in origin.

4 A typical *ḍamaru* has a shell in the shape of two truncated cones, of identical size, joined at the apex; the two cones form an hourglass profile, constricted at the waist and expanding symmetrically towards the open ends. The cones may also be more or less bowl-shaped, or formed of two bowl-shaped objects, such as human crania (Hoerburger 1975: 18). A straight wooden handle may be attached to the waist of the drum; alternatively, the drum is held around the waist, or the hand grasps the free ends of a cloth band tied round the waist (see figs 10 and 11 for this method of holding). The material of the shell may be wood, clay, coconut, bone, or metal – commonly brass or copper. The open ends are covered by heads of skin, attached to the shell with a thin leather strap woven around the drum (V-lacing) from one drumhead to the other. Another leather or cloth strap constricts the lacing around the waist of the drum, tightening the lacing and hence increasing tension on the drumheads. Two cords are attached to this central strap at opposite sides of the drum, each with a small pellet of some hard material attached to the free end. The cords are of such a length that rapid rotation of the whole drum, end to end in alternate directions, causes the pellets to swing in the direction of rotation, striking both heads in the centre simultaneously; they then bounce off and swing in the opposite direction to strike the other head, and so on as long as the rotation is repeated. The sonic result is a drum roll, which can be varied as to speed, duration and volume; the pitch can also be altered, by varying the

speed of rotation, or the tension on the lacing (Hoerburger 1975: 19). By modulating the wrist action, it is possible to create accents and a variety of rhythmic patterns.

5 A significant feature of this type of drum is that it requires only one hand to hold and play it: the fingers grasp the drum by the centre of the lacing (or by the handle or central strap), and the wrist is turned rapidly through 180 degrees, one way then the other. The player can thus use their free hand to hold another implement or instrument, for example a bell, or to carry out other functions. In the Kathmandu Valley a pair of hourglass pellet-drums (*dabadaba*) can be played together, one in each hand (Hoerburger 1975: 19, Wiehler-Schneider and Wiehler 1980, Wegner 2023: 302).

6 According to Marcel-Dubois's classic study of Indian musical iconography (1941: 70–71), pellet drums appear in Indian art from the bas-reliefs of the Buddhist sites of Sanchi and Bharhut (second–first century BCE) onwards. Drums of this type are used widely in South Asia today for a variety of functions, both religious and secular. Helffer notes that 'in India as in Nepal, a *damaru* with laced heads appears as the attribute of various categories of renouncers, mendicants, entertainers, snake-charmers, bear showmen [etc]...whose special devotion to Shiva has often been noted' (1994: 233).

7 As an iconographic attribute, the *ḍamaru* is shown in the hands of various deities, both Hindu and Buddhist; but most famously, it is played by Śiva in his role as Naṭarāja, Lord of the Dance, who plays it while dancing the universe into and out of existence. The image of Śiva Naṭarāja dancing with a *ḍamaru* in one of his several hands appears in a sixth-century sculpture at Badami, in Chola bronzes (tenth century onwards), and ubiquitous later images.

8 The *ḍamaru* is also played by Bhairava, the terrifying aspect of Śiva, and various warlike female deities; the latter are regarded as emanations of the great goddess Durgā, and as consorts of Śiva or Bhairava. In Buddhism, the *ḍamaru* is played by various deities, including Avalokiteśvara, Mahākāla and Cakrasamvara (Marcel-Dubois 1941: 112, 118, Helffer 1994: 239–240); in Tibet it is associated with fierce protective deities, heroes, divine messengers, and religious masters (Helffer 1994: 239).

9 Beyond associations with deities, the *ḍamaru* is the subject of various symbolic interpretations. According to Marcel-Dubois, drums in general were associated with speech in the Brāhmaṇas (Vedic scriptures of the eighth–ninth centuries BCE); ritual drums, she argues, 'are explicitly identified with divinity...the ritual allows one to act on it [divinity] through them' (1941: 10). Drums thus share the power of vocal sound to communicate with and control supernatural forces. The link with language is maintained in most membranophone types in South Asia, of which the different sonorities and rhythmic patterns are assigned mnemonic syllables. The *ḍamaru* is no exception (for examples of mnemonic syllables see Sharma 2022: 71, Wegner 2023: 116, and below, § 73–74). According to a well-known story, the syllables of the sacred language, Sanskrit, originate in the sounds of Śiva's *ḍamaru* (Bernède 1997).

10 Stutely and Stutely (1977, s v *ḍamaru*) assert that in Hinduism, the *ḍamaru* 'denotes primordial causal sound (*nāda*)'; when played by Śiva, its drumbeats 'symbolize the rhythmic pulsing of the creative forces as the universe unfolds'. In Tibetan ritual the sound of the trumpet is used for controlling demons, the bell for dominating the *mātṛkās* (dangerous goddesses) and the *ḍamaru* for pacifying ghosts, while different rhythmic formulas played on the *ḍamaru* also empower the stages of ritual and meditation (Helffer 1994: 248). Among the Hindu ascetics known as Nāth Yogī, the

ḍamaru (or *dabara*) is associated with Śiva, Bhairava and Gorakhnāth, and played in ritual along with bell and trumpet (Tingey 1994: 204–5, Bouillier 2016: 75, 169, 304, 305).

11 It is not only the sound of the instrument that can be interpreted symbolically. The shape of the *ḍamaru* has been associated with that of the human body (Marcel-Dubois 1941: 7). Stutely and Stutely claim that

> the upward and downward pointing triangles of the *ḍamaru* represent the two aspects of creative force, the *liṅgam* and *yoni* [male and female sexual organs] respectively. The meeting point of the triangles is the point 'from which creation begins'. When separated, the dissolution of the world occurs. (Stutely and Stutely 1977)

12 In Tibetan Buddhism, the shape and construction of the *ḍamaru* represent oppositions between male and female, left and right, father and mother etc (Helffer 1994: 246); and more abstractly, the shape of the instrument symbolises the mutual interdependence of all phenomena, whereas its sound calls to mind their impermanence (Cupchik 2013).

13 The *ḍamaru* as an instrument type thus clearly affords many associations and symbolic interpretations, but not all such meanings necessarily apply in a given context. We shall return later to the possible associations and meanings of the particular instrument to be discussed here, in the context of Newar culture (see *infra*).

A *ḍamaru* from Nepal

14 In the 1980s, while researching Newar religion and culture in Bhaktapur, the anthropologist Prof Anne Vergati purchased a *ḍamaru* for a small sum.[2] Apparently old, but of unknown date, the drum was unusual for the occurrence of human figures decorating the upper half of the shell, and two indistinct inscriptions. In 2022, she showed this instrument to Widdess, and generously put it into his hands for further investigation. Widdess consulted Sharma, with whom he was working on another project. With the help of other scholars (see Acknowledgements) we deciphered the inscriptions and explored the background to what turned out to be a historically significant musical object (fig 1). In the following account, we present the physical data first, before outlining our findings, interpretations and provisional conclusions.

Fig 1: The *ḍamaru* of Jagat-Candra. Copper, with repoussé decoration, skin heads, leather straps and cotton cords. Dated 1671.

Photograph by Richard Widdess, 2024.

Physical description of the instrument

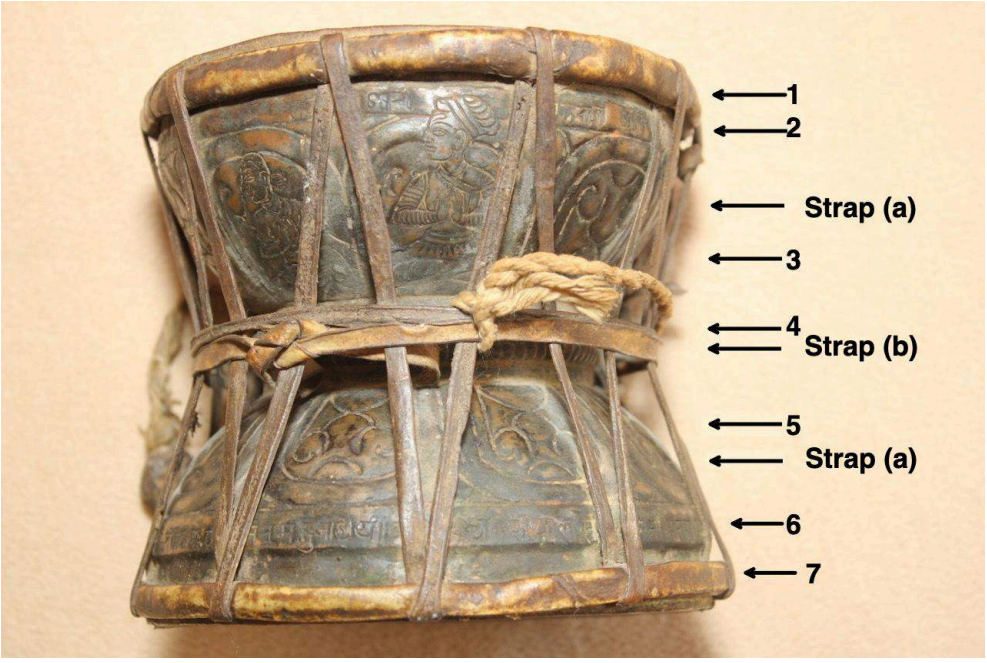
15 The drum measures 12.5–13.0cm from head to head; the diameter of the heads, which are not quite perfectly circular, varies between 13.5–14.0cm. The heads and lacing are present, but the lower head has split over a short length along part of the rim of the shell; the upper head has a short (c 5mm) slit near the centre. At the circumference of each head, the skin is formed into a rim, presumably by wrapping it around (and thus concealing) a hoop fitting tightly round the open end of the drum. The heads are laced together with a leather strap about 4mm wide, which passes through the rim of each head at nine equidistant points around the circumference (the number nine may be significant). On completing the lacing, the maker has tied the two ends of the strap level with the waist of the drum. The free end of the strap was then taken part way round the drum at waist level, outside the lacing, and again tied at the same level. As this strap (strap (a)) was not long enough to go right round the drum, a second strap (strap (b)), slightly wider than the first, has been added, and makes a complete turn round the drum, again outside the lacing and at waist level; it was then pulled tight to constrict the lacing and tighten the heads, and tied to strap (a). Two short lengths of cotton cord have been tied to straps (a) and (b), at opposite sides of the drum. One, approx 10.0cm long, ends in a small irregular lump (c 2–3cm) of some hard material. The other has broken near the free end and the pellet is missing. It is unclear whether the heads and straps are original to the drum or later replacements; the pellet-cords look recent.[3]

16 The shell of the drum has the shape of two opposed hemispheres, joined by a short waist that is about half the diameter of the heads. The material is metal, apparently copper, with what appear to be traces of silver on parts of the surface. Most of the visible surface is dark brown in colour, and in places corroded; this may be partly the result of oxidisation of the silver coating. Bright copper can be seen in a number of places where the lacing strap has protected or abraded the surface of the metal.

17 The shell is embellished with repoussé decoration: in this technique, which was highly developed by Newar metal-workers, shapes are defined by incised lines, and lightly pressed out from the reverse (*repoussé*). The surface is divided into seven bands, as follows (starting from the top):

1. A plain band, blank, approximately 1.3cm high, partly covered by the roll of the head.
2. A raised, plain band, approximately 6–9mm high, on which lettering in Newar script is inscribed (see below, § 31).
3. A decorated band, approx. 5.0cm high, extending from band 2 to the waist of the drum. The decoration comprises eight lotus petals of similar size. On five of the petals, the image of a seated figure has been added by the same repoussé method. We will discuss the figures below (§ 19–29).
4. The waist section of the drum, cylindrical, about 2.0cm high, and about half the diameter of the heads. This is decorated in high relief with the body of a snake (*nāga*) which encircles the whole drum at this central level. The head of the snake, facing towards the viewer's left, is raised onto one of the lotus petals of band 3, and behind it the tail intertwines with the body.
5. A decorated band, about 3.8cm high, corresponding to band 3 on the upper half of the drum. There are eight lotus petals as in band 3, but no human or other figures.
6. A raised, plain band, about 9mm high, corresponding to band 2. Band 6 is similarly inscribed with lettering (see below, § 32).
7. A plain, blank band, approximately 1.5cm high, partly covered by the rolled edge of the drum-head, corresponding to band 1.

Figure 2. The *ḍamaru* and its seven bands of decoration. Band 4 is concealed by straps (a) and (b). The drum is shown in its original condition before cleaning.



Photograph by Richard Widdess, 2024.

18 Apart from the damage to the heads mentioned above, the instrument appears to be in relatively good condition. In order to investigate the inscriptions and figures, these were lightly cleaned with a weak solution of mild soap; the rest of the instrument was

dusted but otherwise left untouched. Some letters of the inscriptions were hidden by the lacing strap (strap (a)), which was tight and difficult to displace sufficiently to see behind it. For this reason, the central strap (strap (b)) was untied in order to loosen the constriction of the lacing strap (strap (a)). This made it possible to read all the letters previously hidden by strap (a).

The figures

19 The human figures include three individuals, two males and one female. There are also two combined figures, in each of which a single body is given two heads, in profile, facing in opposite directions. These combined figures are almost unique in Newar art (below, § 48, 51). Starting from the lotus petal immediately to the right of the head of the *nāga* (band 4), we find the following (note that except where stated otherwise, the directions 'right' and 'left' refer to those of the viewer, not those of the figure concerned):

Fig 3: Lotus Petal 1: human figure A.

Photograph by Richard Widdess, 2024.

20 Petal 1: human figure A (fig 3). A combined figure, having two conjoined male faces in profile. The left face wears a moustache, the right is clean-shaven. A four-pointed crown rests across both heads.[4] Short hair is visible under the edge of the crown on each head. The single body is seated in lotus-position and the two hands are joined in the *añjali* gesture of respect. The figure wears a Mughal-style *jāmā* (a long hanging dress from neck to knee, fastened on the wearer's left side, and secured at the waist with a belt).

21 Petal 2: no figure.

Fig 4: Lotus Petal 3: human figure B.

Photograph by Richard Widdess, 2024.

22 Petal 3: human figure B (fig 4). A combined figure. The left face, male, wears a moustache, a Śaiva *tilaka* on the forehead[5] and an earring. He also wears a three-pointed crown, in which the central point is itself a trident (*triśūla*), an emblem of Śiva. The right face of the figure appears to be female, with hair tied up into a topknot; it is smaller than the left face, and has a more rounded chin, perhaps signifying femininity, and/or a youthful appearance. The shared body wears a necklace with central jewel, and a single armband on each upper arm and wrist. No garment is shown on the upper body. The two hands are in *añjali* position, obscuring the chest; hence the torso appears gender-neutral. The figure is seated in half-lotus position; the lower garment is plain on the left, male half, exposing the lower leg, but on the right, it covers the leg and is marked with folds. This difference again implies a difference of gender.

Fig 5: Lotus Petal 4: human figure C.

Photograph by Richard Widdess, 2024.

23 Petal 4: human figure C (fig 5). A female figure, the face in profile facing left towards figures A and B. The hair is tied back into a bun at the back of the head. She has a circular forehead-mark (*bindi*). This figure is smaller than the other figures, lacking any headwear. The woman wears a sari, with bodice (*colī*) exposed on her right shoulder. She wears a single armband on each upper arm and wrist, and the hands are in *añjalī* position. She sits with her left knee raised; the folds of the sari around both legs are depicted.

Fig 6: Lotus Petal 5: human figure D.

Photograph by Richard Widdess, 2024.

24 Petal 5: human figure D (fig 6). A male figure, the face in profile facing left. He wears a Mughal-style turban and *jāmā*, and a Śaiva *tilaka* on the forehead like that of figure B (left face). The hands are in *añjali* position and the legs in half-lotus position.

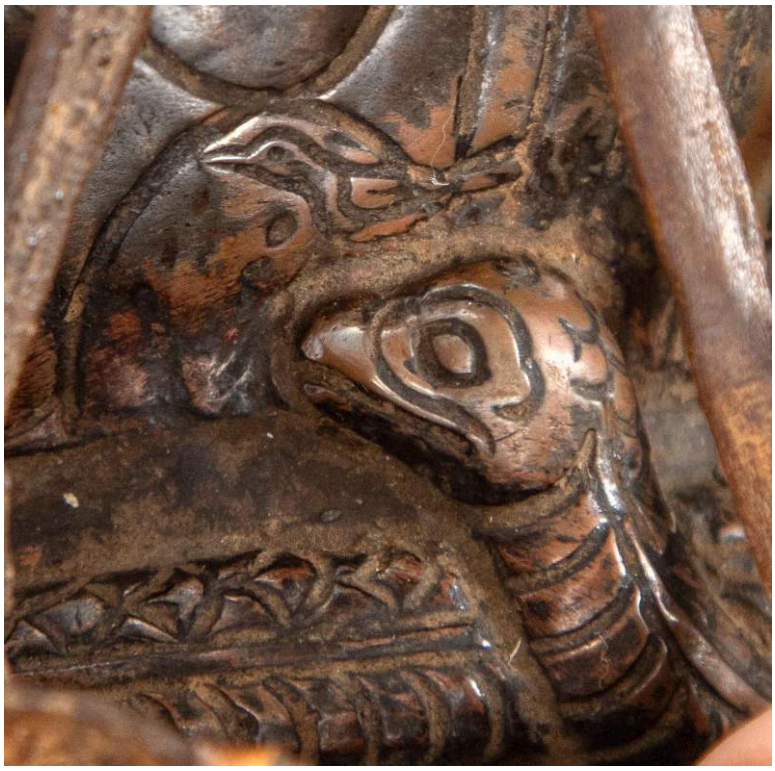
25 Petal 6: no human figure.

Fig 7: Lotus Petal 7: human figure E.

Photograph by Richard Widdess, 2024.

26 Petal 7: human figure E (fig 7). A male figure. Unlike the other single figures, this one faces right, ie towards figure A on petal 1. Figure E is also not in the centre of the lotus petal, as are the other figures, but is displaced to the viewer's right, on the edge of the petal, emphasising the direction of gaze. The man wears a Mughal-style turban and Śaiva *tilaka* on the forehead, and is dressed and seated like figure D. This figure is partly obscured by the lacing strap.

Fig 8: Lotus Petal 8: head of the *nāga* in band 4. Note the incised small bird standing on the snake's head.



Photograph by Richard Widdess, 2024.

27 Petal 8: no human figure. The head of the *nāga*, extending upwards from band 4, facing left, projects onto this petal. A small bird, appearing to stand on the snake's head, is incised onto the lotus petal, also facing left. (Fig 8)

28 The depiction of the five human figures is thus quite detailed given their size, allowing some inferences to be made about them. The reversal of figure E's face indicates that the pair of figures A and B is the central subject of the drum's decoration, towards which the figures on either side direct their view.

29 We may also note that three of the male faces wear sectarian marks denoting their allegiance to Śiva; one (the left half of figure B) also wears a trident – a symbol of Śiva – on his crown. We may infer that there is a religious context in which the worship of Śiva is relevant. The dress of three of the male figures resembles that of the Mughal court of India, which was adopted in the Newar courts in the seventeenth century (Pal 1978: 127, 139, 157–8).

The inscriptions

30 The two inscriptions provide an unequivocal date, a set of names and an account of the circumstances in which the *ḍamaru* was made. In both, the script is *Pracalit Lipi* and the language is Sanskrit.

Upper Inscription

31 The upper inscription, on band 2, comprises a list of personal names; there is also a date. The inscription begins immediately to the right of figure A and ends just to its left. The crowns of figures A and B and the turbans of figures D and E project into band 2 so there are gaps in the inscription to accommodate them. There are also two blank areas in the inscription; there appear to be some traces of letters in the blanks, implying that text may have been erased in these locations. The inscription reads:

> *śrī śrī jagatcaṃdra* (blank) *[jāṃ?]*[6] *śrī kīrttirāja śrī nārāyanī* (blank) [kula?][7] *śrī ratneśvarī śrī jayantarāja śrī rarītā devī mātā śubha* || *śrī umāpatirāja* || *saṃ 791 mārgga śudi 1* ||

Translation:

> *Śrī Śrī* Jagat-Candra, Śrī Kīrtirāja,[8] *Śrī* Nārāyanī, *Śrī* Ratneśvarī, *Śrī* Jayantarāja, *Śrī* Lady Mother Rarītā.[9] [May it be] auspicious. *Śrī* Umāpatirāja. [Nepal] Saṃvat 791 on the 1st day of the bright half of [the month] Mārgaśīrṣa.

Lower inscription

32 The lower inscription, in band 6, is written continuously, without gaps, and exactly fits the circumference of the shell. It begins immediately below the head of the *nāga* in band 4. The Sanskrit contains some peculiarities of spelling and grammar which may reflect local usage at that time and in that place, or may be writing errors. In either case, the meaning is not entirely clear, and the translation is therefore tentative. The last two sentences (from *jagatcando* to *parinirmmitā*) constitute a couplet in the *anuṣṭubh* metre, one of the standard metres of Sanskrit verse.[10]

> *1 svastī* || *eta*[11] *kheṭaturagairmmite śake maitrabhe sahamāsasya gīṣyateḥ (?)* | *vāsare pratipadi sthiraṃ site* | *sthāpayaḍ*[12] *ḍamarumadgunaśriyaṃ*[13] ||
> *jagatcando mahīpālą sa[vi]dhāyam*[14] *ājñā sadā* |
> *upādhyā kīrttirājeną ḍamaruṃ parinirmmitā*||

Translation:

> Prosperity! It is announced (?) in the lunar mansion Anurādhā of the month Mārgaśīrṣa in the year 79[1?]. In the morning, the first day of the bright fortnight. One should present [or establish] a ḍamaru resplendent with good qualities [read *ḍamaruṃ saḍguṇaśriyaṃ*].
>
> King Jagat-Candra having given [this] permanent command,
>
> [This] *ḍamaru* was created [read *parinirmitaṃ*] by Kīrtirāja the preceptor (*upādhyā*).

Interpretation

Date

33 The date in the upper inscription, Nepal Samvat 791, would have fallen in December, 1671 CE. In the lower inscription, the year is given in the form of a chronogram (words encoding numbers): *kheṭa* ‘planet’ stands for nine, and *turaga* ‘horse’ stands for seven. *Eta* may be a writing mistake for *eka* ‘one’. The order of the encoded numbers has to be reversed, giving 791, as in the upper inscription. The month and day also agree with the upper inscription; the first day of the bright lunar fortnight, ie full moon, is an auspicious day in the Newar calendar.

Names

Jagat-Candra

34 The name Jagat-Candra appears in both inscriptions and clearly refers to a king. In the upper inscription, 'Śrī' is an honorific for a respected person, male or female; 'Śri Śrī' denotes a king. In the lower inscription, 'Jagatcando' is a vernacular variant of Jagat-Candra; here he is described as *mahīpāla*, 'great king'.

35 'Jagat-Candra' was the pen name of King Jagatprakāśa Malla of Bhaktapur (r 1643–72). It is a combination of his own name with that of his beloved friend and prime minister, Candraśekhara Siṃha. The two had such a close personal relationship that, following the death of Candraśekhara in 1662, the grief-stricken king combined his own name with that of his late friend, and continued to be known as Jagat-Candra for the rest of his life (see further discussion below). Jagatprakāśa himself died in 1672, so this *ḍamaru* was evidently made in the penultimate year of his reign. As the lower inscription tells us, it was made at his personal command.

Other names

36 The name Kīrtirāja appears in both inscriptions, and evidently denotes an important person. In the upper inscription, this name immediately follows that of the king. In the lower inscription, it is stated that he was an *upādhyā*, a royal priest, who was responsible for carrying out the king's command that the *ḍamaru* be made.

37 The suffix *-rāja* ('king') and the title *upādhyā* ('preceptor') were used by the royal Brahman priests (*rājopādhyāya*) of Taleju: the lineage deity of the Malla kings, the supreme goddess above all other goddesses, the source of power (*śakti*) not only of the king, but of Śiva himself (Vergati 1979). In Bhaktapur, as in Patan and Kathmandu, Taleju's temple is contained within the former royal palace. We infer that Kīrtirāja was the chief priest of Taleju, and hence *guru* to the king.

38 The two remaining male names also end in *-rāja*, again denoting priests of Taleju. We further discuss the identity and significance of the *rājopādhyāya* below (§ 55–56). The three female names may be the wives of the three priests: they would have had an important role to play in Tantric ritual as the *śakti* (power-source) of the male priests. The 'Lady Mother' Rarītā seems to be a senior woman, of particular significance. But as yet we have no confirmatory evidence for the female members of the Rājopādhyāya caste at this period.

Human figures

39 It would be logical to assume that the seven names given in the upper inscription refer in some way to the five figures in band 3. The names are not positioned directly above the figures – whose crowns and turbans in most cases project into band 2, on which the inscription is written – but to the left or right of them. By taking into account the relative position and the gender of each name and each figure, it would be possible to correlate the names and figures as follows (Table 1). According to this hypothesis, the Lady Mother Rarītā is named but not represented.

Table 1: First identification of the human figures.

Figure	Gender	Name
Figure A	M/M	Jagat-Candra
Figure B (left face)	M	Kīrtirāja
Figure B (right face)	F	Nārāyanī
Figure C	F	Ratneśvarī
Figure D	M	Jayantarāja
(No figure)	F	Rarītā
Figure E	M	Umāpatirāja

40 This correlation of names with figures, logical as it appears, nevertheless entails some significant difficulties. First, the male face of figure B, interpreted in Table 1 as Kīrtirāja, is wearing a crown. Buddhist priests (*Vajrācārya*) wear a crown in certain rituals; but Hindu priests do not. We have it on the authority of the current Rājopādhyāyas of Bhaktapur that they do not wear such a crown, even in secret rituals, and we are not aware of any evidence that they would have worn one in the past.[15] Secondly, this face has the same moustache and general appearance as the left face of figure A, also wearing a crown, suggesting that they represent the same person.[16] Thirdly, figures D and E are wearing the turban that constituted court headwear at the Malla courts in the seventeenth century, having been adopted from the Mughal court of India. But this style of headdress is not worn by the current Rājopādhyāyas, and we know of no evidence that it was worn by them in the past.[17] On the other hand, figures D and E exactly resemble the kings, princes and courtiers represented in paintings of the period.

41 We therefore conclude that figures B to E do *not* represent the priests and their female relatives named in the upper inscription. Then who *are* the individuals represented by figures B to E? And why are the names of the Rājopādhyāyas inscribed on the drum, but not those of the individuals depicted?

42 One thing appears certain, namely that figure A represents ‘Jagat-Candra’. The combination of two male persons into a single body with two faces has few precedents in South Asian art, but it is an image that Jagatprakāśa Malla adopted (see below, § 48). The single crown worn by both heads clearly signals the complete identification of the king with his former minister, and this is confirmed by the name Jagat-Candra in both inscriptions.

43 Figure B is also a conjoined figure, with a male (left) and female (right) face. The left face, as we have noted above, closely resembles the left face of figure A, and similarly wears a crown. We suggest therefore that the left faces of figures A and B both represent Jagatprakāśa Malla. Given the intimacy of the relationship implied by the conjoined body, the female face of figure B, which has a distinctly youthful appearance, would most naturally belong to his wife. We suggest that it represents Annapūrṇalakṣmī, the daughter of Candraśekhara, whom Jagatprakāśa married in 1667, to enable his late friend’s soul to attain the heavenly abode (Kitada 2023).

44 Regarding figures C, D and E, we note the tradition in Newar art of representing the donor or patron of a religious gift or ceremony together with members of his immediate family, presumably to share with them the spiritual benefit of his piety.[18] It would be logical therefore to interpret these figures – one female, two male – as members of the royal family. The female figure C looks like an older woman. She may be the mother of Jagatprakāśa, or a senior wife. Figures D and E could be younger relatives of the king, for example his two sons, Jitāmitra (who succeeded him in 1672) and Ugra Malla. Figures D and E could therefore be interpreted as the two princes, and figure C as their mother, sitting between them and the king. This interpretation of the five figures is summarised in Table 2 (we do not know the name of Jagatprakāśa's senior wife).

Table 2: Second identification of the human figures.

Figure	Gender	Name
Figure A (left face)	M	Jagatprakāśa Malla
Figure A (right face)	M	Candraśekhara Siṃha
Figure B (left face)	M	Jagatprakāśa Malla
Figure B (right face)	F	Annapūrṇalakṣmī
Figure C	F	Senior wife of Jagatprakāśa
Figure D	M	Prince Jitāmitra Malla
Figure E	M	Prince Ugra Malla

45 We therefore suggest that the figures B to E are most likely to represent the king and his immediate family members. The purpose of representing them in this way would be to share with them the spiritual benefit of a religious act; this act appears to have been to commission the making of the *ḍamaru* itself, and its presentation, presumably to Taleju. We are not told the purpose of this donation; evidently it was a *guptadāna*, a gift expressing an undisclosed wish or vow, which is considered more efficacious than one that is disclosed. It is similarly more efficacious to conceal the names of the donors: this would explain why the figures, apart from Jagat-Candra, are not identified.

46 The inclusion of Candraśekhara's daughter as Jagatprakāśa's wife could indicate the wish for a son to be born from this relatively recent marriage. While such a wish would be very normal, in this context it would specifically provide for the perpetuation of Candraśekhara's line, and hence the welfare of his soul in heaven. It was for this explicit purpose that Jagatprakāśa married Annapūrṇalakṣmī in 1667.[19] However, it is possible that one son had already been born to Annapūrṇalakṣmī, as we note below.

47 This initial interpretation of the physical features of the *ḍamaru* can be refined with reference to further contextual evidence, including other artworks, documents, and the cultural associations of the *ḍamaru* in the Kathmandu Valley.

Contextual evidence

The image of Jagat-Candra

48 The combined image of Jagat-Candra on the *ḍamaru* (fig A) is rare, but not unique. At least two other examples are known. A painting in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London, dated 1670, includes a combined, named portrait of Jagat-Candra as donor, together with members of the royal family (Guy 1992) (see fig 9). This evidence enabled Guy (ibid) to identify a similar, unnamed representation of Jagat-Candra in the form of a sculpture in wood (undated) in the National Museum, Kathmandu. It is possible that further examples await identification.

Fig 9: Jagat-Candra and family members. Detail from painting: 'View of the Jagannatha Temple, Puri', Bhaktapur, 1670 CE.

© Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Accession number IS.64-1985. Reproduced by permission.

49 The Victoria and Albert Museum painting represents the temple and images of Jagannātha in Puri, Orissa. An inscription in Newar script records that Jagat-Candra performed an *ananta dharma* ritual in the year 790 (1670), the year before the making of the *ḍamaru*. The same inscription includes the text of a song in Maithili incorporating the name Jagat-Candra. The painting may have been made in Puri, for sale to pilgrims, but the donor portraits and inscriptions in Newar script must have been added in Bhaktapur.

50 This evidence confirms that we are correct to identify figure A on the *ḍamaru* as Jagat-Candra. In both the painting and figure A, and also on the National Museum statue, the left face wears a moustache, while the right is clean-shaven and appears younger. Guy shares our view that the left face is the king, while the right is Candraśekhara.[20] Where both faces share a crown in figure A, in the painting and statue they share a peacock-feather headdress.

51 The combination of two male figures into one may be intended to recall Hari-Hara, the combined image of Viṣṇu (Hari) and Śiva (Hara). Similarly, the combination of male and female figures in figure B evokes the image of Śiva Ardhanārīśvara ('The Lord who is Half Female'). In the Kathmandu Valley, Śiva in the form of Nāsaḥdyaḥ, worshipped by both Hindu and Buddhist musicians, is sometimes depicted as half male and half female (fig 10).[21] Thus the concept of 'two persons in one', at the level of divinities, is not at all foreign to Newar culture. But its application to human figures, one living and one dead, or one male and one female, appears to be an innovation of Jagatprakāśa Malla.

Fig 10: Nāsaḥdyaḥ. The white half is male, the red half female. Note the *ḍamaru* in one of his right hands, and the Newar crown.

Painting by Madhu Chitrakar (Bhaktapur). Collection and photograph by Richard Widdess, 2024.

The family of Jagatprakāśa Malla

52 According to the names inscribed above the figures in Newar script, the depicted donors of the Jagannātha painting (fig 9) are, from left to right:

a. Jagat-Candra

b. a prince, name illegible, presumably Jitāmitra Malla

c. the prince Ugra Malla, Jitāmitra's younger brother

d. Annapūrṇalakṣmī, holding a spray of red flowers

e. two children, a girl (Mandirā, or Nandinī?) and an older boy (Ghelavā)

f. two senior women, names illegible.

53 This is the same set of people that we have identified in figures A to E on the *ḍamaru*, in a different order, and with the addition of two children and a female adult. This similarity supports our identification of the figures on the *ḍamaru* as Jagat-Candra, Annapūrṇalakṣmī, Jitāmitra, Ugra Malla, and a senior female relative (probably one of the two included in the painting). Unique to the *ḍamaru*, however, is the combination of Jagatprakāśa and Annapūrṇalakṣmī in figure B, in the same way that the king had already combined his image with that of Candraśekhara. This can only mean that he had come to regard his relationship with Annapūrṇalakṣmī as similarly intimate and inseparable. In both the *ḍamaru* and the painting, Annapūrṇalakṣmī is given pride of place over senior female relatives; in the *ḍamaru* she even precedes the two adult

princes. Her status at court in 1671 may have increased since the painting was dedicated the previous year.

54 The two young children included in the painting, but not on the *ḍamaru*, are presumably younger children of Jagatprakāśa. Their mother seems to be Annapūrṇalakṣmī, behind whom they sit. If so, his marriage with Annapūrṇalakṣmī had already had male issue. But they cannot have been more than three years old in 1670. At this age they would not have been initiated to Taleju, and this may explain their omission from the *ḍamaru*. Alternatively, one or both may have died in the previous year.

The priests of Taleju

55 Documentary evidence confirms our identification of Kīrtirāja, Jayantarāja and Umāpatirāja as priests of Taleju. A *thyāsaphu* (folding manuscript) transcribed by Regmi (1966: 110) records the name 'Śrī Kīrttirāja Upādhyā' with reference to the year 1675. The same document states that Jayantarāja and Umāpatirāja took Tantric initiation in 1668 (Regmi 1966: 108). A genealogy of the Bhaktapur Rājopādhyāyas discussed by Witzel (1976: Appendix 3, part II) indicates that Kīrti[rāja] was the father of 'Ayanta' (surely a writing error for Jayanta) and Umāpati. So the male priests named on the *ḍamaru* were closely related, and we may infer that the female names are from the same family; thus 'Lady Mother' Rarītā may have been Kīrtirāja's senior wife or mother, and mother or grandmother of Jayantarāja and Umāpatirāja.

56 Note that the relationships between the three male Rājopādhyāyas parallel those that we have proposed for the images of the king and princes, ie father, elder son, younger son, in that order. This may be a deliberate attempt by Kīrtirāja, who 'created' the *ḍamaru*, to assert an equivalence between the royal family and his own; this equivalence may extend to the Rājopādhyāya women, whose names, and perhaps family relationships, parallel the royal women represented in the figures (Table 3).[22] There was evidently no royal equivalent of the 'Lady Mother' Rarītā.

Table 3: Correspondence between royal and Rājopādhyāya families.

Figure	Gender	Royal family	Inscribed names
Figure A (left face)	M	Jagatprakāśa Malla	Jagat-Candra
Figure A (right face)	M	Candraśekhara Siṃha	
Figure B (left face)	M	Jagatprakāśa Malla	Kīrtirāja
Figure B (right face)	F	Annapūrṇalakṣmī	Nārāyanī
Figure C	F	Senior wife of Jagatprakāśa	Ratneśvarī
Figure D	M	Prince Jitāmitra Malla	Jayantarāja
	F		Rarītā Devī Mātā
Figure E	M	Prince Ugra Malla	Umāpatirāja

57 We have argued that the figures on the *ḍamaru* represent the king with members of his family. Why, then, are the names of the royal priests and their family members

inscribed on the drum, not those of the persons represented by the figures, apart from the king? We surmise that the names inscribed on the *ḍamaru* were intended to refer to the participants in the ritual consecration of the drum. In the Hindu concept of ritual, the patron (*yajamāna*) cannot perform the ritual by himself, but must employ one or more ritual specialists (*kāmin*). The spiritual benefits (*phala*) of the ritual, however, accrue to the patron. Here the figures represent the beneficiaries of the ritual; the inscribed names are those of the king as *yajamāna,* and the *kāmins,* without whom the ritual could not have been performed.

58 The identification of Kīrtirāja as priest of Taleju, and his personal responsibility for carrying out the king's command, points to the cult and temple of Taleju as the context for which this instrument was created. The Taleju Rājopādhyāya Brahmans were domestic priests (*purohit*) and preceptors (*gurus*) of the king (Levy 1990: 346–352 etc; Vergati 2002: 118–19 etc; Toffin 1995, 2008: 49–74); they were also 'priests (*pujārī*) of the goddess Taleju, tutelary divinity of the rulers from at least the fourteenth century and a crucial figure in the symbolism of Malla power' (Toffin 1995; 2008: 53). In the latter role, they had the highest level of initiation to Taleju, higher than that of the king himself (Levy 1990: 240), and could bestow on him a *dīkṣā mantra* that 'enabled him to summon the goddess and win her favours' (Toffin 1995; 2008: 53). The Rājopādhyāya, assisted by their wives, were thus essential intermediaries, allowing the king access to the source of his own spiritual and earthly power.

59 Their role could be even more extensive:

> The *rāj guru*, spiritual preceptor of the king and highest religious authority of the kingdom...sometimes combined his office with that of priest to Taleju and played a crucial role in the kingdom...He came immediately after the 'prime minister' (*cautārā*) in the hierarchy and could on occasion replace him. The *rāj guru* also acted as a witness when the king made a *pious gift* of land and when there was a peace treaty between sovereigns. (Toffin 1995; 2008: 53; emphasis added.)

60 It may be significant that Kīrtirāja as *rāj guru* held a similar rank at court to that held by the former Prime Minister, Candraśekhara. While we cannot know the exact reason for the making of the *ḍamaru*, it is clear from the lower inscription that the king and his *guru* acted in close collaboration, and that Kīrtirāja was witness to carrying out the king's 'pious gift' of the *ḍamaru*.

The songs of Jagat-Candra

61 Jagatprakāśa Malla was a prolific composer of poetry, songs and dance-dramas, including the first surviving dramas in the Newar language, in addition to many in Maithili (Brinkhaus 1987, Kitada 2022). Ongoing research by Makoto Kitada has revealed that the king's voluminous output includes many songs that express his seemingly obsessive love and grief for Candraśekhara. These songs articulate two themes that are relevant to our understanding of the *ḍamaru*'s significance: the union of two persons in one; and the importance of Śiva or the Goddess as the source of Jagat-Candra's earthly power. In some cases, the Goddess is addressed as Taleju.

62 The songs explicitly refer to Jagatprakāśa's adoption of the joint name Jagat-Candra following Candraśekhara's death. But this posthumous union was clearly not imagined as a union of name only, but also of body and spirit. In one particularly telling line, Jagatprakāśa writes:

> Jagat-Candra have become one body. [It is] the supreme hero (*paramao vīra*) just [because] the body [is shared] half-and-half.[23]

63 This verse could almost serve as a caption for figure A on the *ḍamaru*, where Jagat-Candra is shown as having a single body with two faces, wearing a shared crown. In the verse, 'supreme hero' alludes to an adept at an advanced stage of Tantric practice *(vīra)*, in contrast to a non-Tantric, Vedic practitioner (*paśu*, 'beast') (Bharati 1965: 229 ff.). We infer that this union of the living and the dead was intended not only to express the king's personal grief, but also to confer on him spiritual and earthly powers.

64 Jagat-Candra's powers are of divine origin. Another song requests:

> May God Śiva make the two persons, Jagat[prakāśa] and Candra[śekhara], into one person, and make him attain the four aims of life (ie *puruṣārtha*).[24]

Although in this song the union of two persons into one is ascribed to Śiva, in several other songs the king attributes it to the Goddess:

> The name [Jagata-Canda] was given by Goddess Taleju. The love between the two persons is well-known by the world (*jagata-na*).[25]

And:

> Jagata-Canda says: I am a couple ('the union of the two'). Please let my heart resort to the Goddess's feet![26]

Thus, both Śiva and the Goddess (in one case identified as Taleju) are involved in Jagatprakāśa's assumption of dual identity.

65 The power sought by Jagatprakāśa in combining himself with the soul of Candraśekhara may have included a kind of immortality. We suggest that the small bird incised on Lotus Petal 8 (fig 8), which appears to stand on the head of the encircling *nāga*, represents the soul of Jagat-Candra. A statue of Yoganarendra Malla, ruler of Lalitpur 1684–1705, shows a *nāga* resting on the king's head, and a bird standing on the head of the *nāga*. Tradition asserts that the king is alive for as long as the bird has not flown (Slusser 1982: 159).[27] A similar conception may be expressed by the *nāga* and bird on the *ḍamaru,* in relation to the combined spirit of Jagatprakāśa and Candraśekhara.

The *ḍamaru* in Newar culture

66 For present purposes we consider 'Newar culture' to be a continuum, a shared heritage, extending across centuries and across society. We recognise that changes and divisions have arisen within that continuum, and that the Newar-speaking community itself has diverse origins and identities. In music, for example, many genres and instruments are specific to particular Newar castes or communities. But historically, musical repertoires, instruments and practices have often crossed such internal boundaries, especially from the palaces of the rulers to local communities: this is shown, for example, by the concept of *rāga* among farmers (Grandin 1997; Widdess 2013: 142–187), and by the royal patronage formerly afforded to *dāphā* devotional singing groups and *naubājā* instrumental music (Widdess 2013: 31–55; Wegner 1987). The use of the *ḍamaru* for ritual purposes at many levels of society is another common factor.

67 Hoerburger distinguishes four types of pellet-drum, of similar construction, played in Nepal: one played in the Tibetan Buddhist monastic orchestra, one played by Hindus in the worship of Śiva, pellet-drums played in pairs (*dabadaba*), and small clay pellet-drums played by children (*kāntã-dabadaba*) (Hoerburger 1975: 18–19). In ritual, the

ḍamaru is played to accompany the priest's recitation of *mantras*, and sometimes to disguise the sounds of secret *mantras*.

68 The *ḍamaru* is not restricted to any one religious tradition. Buddhist musicians of the oil-presser caste play *dabadaba* in invocation of Nāsaḥdyaḥ (Wegner 2023: 84, 302). But, as elsewhere in South Asia, in Nepal the *ḍamaru* 'plays a large role in the world of religious music of the Hindus, in which it is nothing less than an obligatory symbol of the god Śiva, who for his part is preferentially venerated in Nepal generally[,] and especially by musicians' (Hoerburger 1975:18).[28] As Wiehler-Schneider and Wiehler (1980) note, many Śiva temples in the Valley display a symbolic *ḍamaru* along with a trident and other emblems of Śiva. The drum is believed to be played by Nṛtyeśvara, Śiva as Lord of the Dance, who is worshipped by musicians under the vernacular name Nāsaḥdyah (Ellingson 1990, Wegner 1992, Bernède 1997; cf above, fig 10). Until the 1980s, male members of the Kapālī (Jugi) caste, dressed as Śiva, would go from house to house singing a begging song with *kāntã̄-dabadaba* accompaniment (Ballinger and Bajracharya (1960); Wegner 2023: 116).

69 The *ḍamaru* is also associated with the warlike goddesses, who are are widely worshipped in the Valley. In iconography the *ḍamaru* can be seen in the hands of Durgā (Widdess 2013: 289). In Bhaktapur, the Navadurgā masked dancers, who are believed to incarnate the 'nine Durgās'[29] when they dance, use the sound of a pellet-drum to announce their presence when they process through the streets of the town (Gutschow and Basakula 1987; Levy 1990: 501–76).[30] Small clay kāntã̄-dabadaba are played in private households and by children at the festival of Mvahanī (Nepali: Dasā̃ī), the festival of the Goddess in her many forms (Hoerburger 1975, Wiehler-Schneider and Wiehler 1980, Wegner 2023: 302).

70 A *dāphā* song sung by groups of temple singers in Bhaktapur begins with the refrain:

> Victory to [the goddess] Caṇḍikā, protector of the king! She plays the *ḍamaru*: [it goes] *diṇḍima dṛma dṛma.* (Widdess 2013: 285–9)

71 The warlike goddess Caṇḍikā may be Taleju under an alternative name (Slusser 1982: 316), and is likewise called the protector of the king. The song explicitly states that Caṇḍikā herself plays the *ḍamaru*: the non-lexical mnemonic vocables here evoke the rattling sound of the drum, interspersed with accents.[31] The song attributes itself in the last verse (*bhanitā*) to king Jitāmitra Malla of Bhaktapur (r 1673–1696), the son and successor of Jagatprakāśa. This song thus demonstrates the close association, in seventeenth-century Bhaktapur, between the *ḍamaru*, the Goddess and the king.

72 A similar set of associations is portrayed in a seventeenth-century cloth painting from Lalitpur (Patan), illustrating a sequence of devotional songs composed by King Siddhi Narasiṃha Malla (ruled Lalitpur 1619–1661) (fig 11). At top left of the painting, we see the figure of Śiva Paśupati ('Lord of Beasts'), who is playing a *ḍamaru* with his right hand. The instrument is similar in shape and size to the *ḍamaru* of Jagat-Candra. Śiva is accompanied, according to an inscription, by his female consort Śivā (equivalent to Taleju), and these deities are being worshipped by the sacred bull Nandī, a royal priest (*upādhyā*), and attendants at right and left. According to local tradition, the figure of Śiva also represents the king himself; according to another view, the figure at the far right of the scene is the king (Verma 2023). Either way, we see here the *ḍamaru* associated with Śiva, his *śakti*, and the king, and the role of the *rājopādhyāya* priest as intermediary between the deities and the human world (fig 11).

Fig 11: (L to R) Śiva Paśupati (with *ḍamaru*), Śivā, royal priest, Nandī and King Siddhi Narasiṃha Malla. Cloth painting (detail), seventeenth century, Lalitpur. Patan Museum.

Photograph by Richard Widdess, 2022.

Conclusion

73 We conclude that this unique musical instrument was created on the order of King Jagatprakāśa Malla of Bhaktapur, and consecrated by the Chief Priest of Taleju, Kīrtirāja Upādhyā, in 1671 CE. The king is identified by his pen name Jagat-Candra, signifying a merging of his identity with that of his late friend and minister, Candraśekhara. The king is twice portrayed on the drum as a combined figure, once with Candraśekhara, and once with Candraśekhara's daughter, whom he had recently married. The remaining figures represent the king's immediate family, as witnesses and spiritual beneficiaries of his pious deed in presenting the *ḍamaru*. Also participating in that deed, and therefore inscribed by name on the instrument, are the *kāmins* – the royal priests and their *śaktis*. We do not know the purpose of creating and dedicating the *ḍamaru*, but it may have been an offering to Taleju in the hope of (further?) male issue from the marriage with Candraśekhara's daughter, in order to ensure the heavenly repose of Candraśekhara's soul. The bird standing on the head of the *nāga* also hints at the latter objective.

74 The choice of a musical instrument as an offering to the gods can be understood in the light of Newar musical culture. Jagatprakāśa, like several other Malla rulers of the seventeenth century, prided himself on his musical expertise: in one song collection he refers to himself as *gāndharvavidyāguru,* 'teacher of the science of music' (Paudel nd). He was indeed a prolific composer of songs and dance dramas. The *ḍamaru* is primarily a ritual instrument, however, not an instrument of art or entertainment music. Nevertheless, in Newar culture all musical instruments are believed to have sacred

power, and to be inhabited by Nāsaḥdyaḥ, the god of music and dance (Wegner 2023: 11, Ellingson 1990). Indeed, throughout South Asia, the sound of musical instruments is an auspicious channel of communication between men and gods. The *ḍamaru* is the embodiment *par excellence* of this power and auspiciousness, as it is believed to be played by Śiva himself, and by his female consorts Caṇḍikā, Durgā and other warlike goddesses.

75 We have seen that the *ḍamaru* has been endowed, in different traditions and regions of South Asia, with many different symbolic meanings or interpretations. Among these, the complementary halves of the instrument are often taken to represent analogous complementarities in the physical world or esoteric philosophy. In the present case, we may see in the *ḍamaru*, with its two symmetrically balanced hemispheres, heads and pellet-cords, an analogy with the two persons in one, the 'union of the two', namely Jagatprakāśa and Candraśekhara, the living and the dead. This analogy is inscribed on the drum itself, in the combined portrait of Jagat-Candra as a single body with two faces; and also in that of Jagatprakāśa and Annapūrṇalakṣmī, articulating the male–female or Śiva–Śakti complementarity.

76 Thus, this small drum is both an instrument of musical sound, and a document of social and cultural history; it illustrates the wealth of significance that a historical musical instrument can carry. It not only expresses the personal grief of a human monarch for his much-lamented friend, but also evokes the divine sources of his spiritual power and earthly authority: the goddess Taleju, and the supreme, *ḍamaru*-playing deity, Śiva. Like the *nāga* at the centre of the symmetrically balanced *ḍamaru*, the Newar king, through his intermediaries the *rājopādhyāya* priests, was the pivot between the interdependent human and divine worlds. The communication between king and gods would have been actualised in the sound of the *ḍamaru,* perhaps heard daily in the temple of Taleju, perhaps on occasion played by King Jagat-Candra himself.

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NOTES

1. The instrument was sold on the international art market. See https://globalnepalimuseum.com/objects/a-ritual-conch-shell/.

2. Prof Vergati informs us that the drum was bought at a curio shop near the Bhaktapur palace. It is now deposited at the Collège de France, Paris (accession number not available).

3. Strap (b) is composed of two short lengths tied together to make a longer strap. This ad hoc contrivance suggests that it is a rough-and-ready repair or replacement.

4. The crown has an unusually European appearance, due to the triangular points of equal height; but this is presumably coincidental. The artist seems to have simplified the typical Newar crown, in which the points are normally tear-drop shaped and unequal in height, the highest being at the centre of the forehead. The artist may have been uncertain how to adapt this traditional shape to the context of a person with two faces. The circular ends of the points are typical of Newar crowns.

5. The three horizontal curved lines on the neck of each face could be interpreted as the same Śaiva *tilaka*. They also occur in figures A and C. However, they are perhaps better interpreted as a convention to show the curvature of the neck, seen in some paintings of the period. This is confirmed by figure E where there are only two lines in this position.

6. Traces of erased letters?

7. Traces of erased letters?

8. The spelling with double *t* following *r* is an epigraphic convention.

9. Rarītā is a Newar form of the name Lalitā.

10. We thank Jonathan Katz for this observation.

11. For *eka-*?

12. For *sthāpayeḍ*? NB *ya* in Newar is often pronounced *ye*.

13. Jonathan Katz and Gérard Colas suggest *ḍamaruṃ sadguṇaśriyaṃ*, or *-śrāyam*, or *saḍguṇāśrayaṃ*.

14. The syllable *vi* is unclear.

15. We consulted Mr Niran Rajopadhyaya of Patan, who in turn consulted the current Rājopādhyāyas of Bhaktapur and other experts.

16. As argued by Vergati (2004), such representations of individual people are conventional at this period in Newar art, not realistic portraits.

17. A seventeenth-century painting in the Patan Museum shows a Rājopādhyāya wearing his hair in a topknot with no turban or other head garment (see fig 11); a painting from Kathmandu portraying a *tulādāna* ceremony held in 1664 shows two priests of Taleju with short or tied-back hair, and again no head garment (see Vergati 2004 for a reproduction and discussion of this painting).

18. See for example the Bhaktapur Viṣṇu-maṇḍala dated 1681 (Slusser 1982: 205, Pal 1985: 221, Vergati 2004: 102–3), and the fourteenth/fifteenth-century Sūrya-maṇḍala and Candra-maṇḍala paintings in the Metropolitan Museum, acc nos 2012.462 and 1981.465.

19. See Kitada 2023, citing Paudel. A manuscript source mentions that the daughter of Śrī Candraśekhara was taken to the Āgama (the Taleju temple) in 1667 to observe [the ritual] (Regmi 1966: 107).

20. Guy appears to have been unaware that Candraśekhara had already died, in 1662, before the painting was made.

21. Nāsaḥdyaḥ is normally aniconic, represented only by a triangular hole or a series of three holes, in the wall of his shrine (Ellingson 1990).

22. As noted above, there is some evidence that letters have been erased in band 2. This may reflect a change of plan regarding the names to be inscribed there.

23. *jagatacanda jura cha-guli śarīra, bachivana śarīra khe paramao vīra.* Trans Kitada.

24. *jagatacaṃda ne-mhā cha-mhā juyakāva, / pe-guli padāratha bio lācakāva.* Trans Kitada.

25. *jagatacanda pada taleju-na bīva, ne-mha-sa piriti-na jagata-na śīva //* Trans Kitada.

26. *jagata-canda bhana moya duhu jola, devi calana mana rāgavathu mola.* Trans Kitada.

27. A similar combination of *nāga* and bird can be seen below the statue of King Bhūpatīndra Malla (1699–1722) facing the entrance to the Taleju temple in Bhaktapur. According to G-M Wegner (pers comm), in Bhaktapur today birds, especially crows, are believed to embody the souls of the departed.

28. For a twelfth-century representation of a *ḍamaru*, in the context of an 'exaltation of Śiva', see Pal 2004: 15 (fig 8).

29. The association of the Durgās with the number nine may be reflected in the nine attachment points of the lacing strap to each head of Jagat-Candra's *ḍamaru.*

30. According to Wegner (2023: 302) this drum was made of human crania, like the Tibetan equivalent. But the *ḍamaru* currently in use is a metal drum, similar in shape and size to the *ḍamaru* of Jagat-Candra, but without decoration or inscriptions. We thank Shan Du for this information.

31. *Diṇḍima* is also the name for a kind of drum, so the meaning may be 'She plays the *ḍamaru*-drum: [it goes] *ḍrma ḍrma*'. These syllables are different from those given by Sharma (2022: 71): *tām tām lupcup tām*. The latter are associated with Śiva's playing of the *ḍamaru*: Sharma comments that the syllables for Pārvatī's playing (and those of other goddesses?) are unknown. The *dāphā* song of Jitāmitra Malla perhaps provides this information.

ABSTRACTS

Historical musical instruments are rare in Nepal. So far, a few examples of ritual instruments associated with former rulers have been identified. A previously unpublished hour-glass-shaped pellet-drum (*ḍamaru*) from seventeenth-century Bhaktapur is of special interest because it bears inscriptions and representations of human figures that indicate the date and circumstances of its creation. Particularly significant are the name 'Jagat-Candra' – the joint pseudonym of King Jagatprakāśa Malla (ruled Bhaktapur 1643–1672) and his Chief Minister Candraśekhara Siṃha (d 1662) – and a combined portrait of this pair. In the article we describe the instrument, translate the inscriptions, identify all names and figures, consider the possible purpose of the drum's creation, and assess the symbolic significance of the instrument with reference to the ritual purposes and religious associations of the *ḍamaru* in South Asia. The *ḍamaru* of Jagat-Candra demonstrates the close relationship in seventeenth-century Bhaktapur between sound, religious and royal authority, and the worship of Śiva and his consorts; it illustrates the richness of social and cultural significance that a historical musical instrument can carry.

Les instruments de musique historiques sont rares au Népal. Jusqu'à présent, seuls quelques exemples d'instruments rituels associés à d'anciens souverains ont été identifiés. Parce qu'il n'a jamais été décrit, étudier le tambour à boules fouettantes en forme de sablier (*ḍamaru*), provenant de Bhaktapur au XVIIe siècle, est particulièrement intéressant : il porte des

inscriptions et des représentations de figures humaines qui indiquent la date et les circonstances de sa création. Le nom « Jagat-Candra » - pseudonyme commun du roi Jagatprakāśa Malla (qui régna sur Bhaktapur de 1643 à 1672) et de son ministre en chef Candraśekhara Siṃha (mort en 1662) - ainsi qu'un portrait combiné de ces deux personnages sont particulièrement significatifs. Dans cet article, nous décrivons l'instrument, en traduisons les inscriptions, identifions tous les noms et personnages, examinons l'objectif possible de la création du tambour et évaluons la signification symbolique de l'instrument en rapport aux objectifs rituels et aux représentations religieuses du *ḍamaru* en Asie du Sud. Le *ḍamaru* de Jagat-Candra démontre la relation étroite qui existait à Bhaktapur au XVIIe siècle entre le son, l'autorité religieuse et royale, et le culte de Śiva et de ses consorts ; il illustre la richesse de la signification sociale et culturelle qu'un instrument de musique historique peut revêtir.

INDEX

Mots-clés: ḍamaru, musique Newar, histoire du Népal, Jagat-Candra, Jagatprakāśa Malla, Bhaktapur
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