

New Year's Day of Nepal *Samvat* and Other Related Festive Days of South Asia : Discerning the Vedic Concept of *Samvatsara* in the Newar Culture of the Kathmandu Valley

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On the basis of the information derived from Vedic literature, here we will endeavour to decipher the original significance of the Newar ritual of the autumnal New Year celebration in the Kathmandu Valley, with special attention to a fruit worshiped during the ritual as a deity identified as Jambhala or Kubera. This may sound unconventional because the Newars are non-Vedic people and speak a Tibeto-Berman language. In our earlier works,¹ however, we have demonstrated that Vedic literature contains not only Indo-Iranian but also some elements of South Asian culture. The latter is distinct because it is directly related to the geography of the subcontinent (the height of the Himalaya, the flow of rivers from north to south) and climatic phenomenon (the monsoon rains). Likewise, traditional Newar culture still contains some archaic components of ancient South Asian culture of the time when the inhabitants of the subcontinent, particularly those residing not too far away from the southern slopes of the Himalayas, were cowherds.² For these cowherds, the lush vegetation of the rainy season, a rich food source for their cattle, was more important than any other commodity. Just like the Vedic people, the ancestors of the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley were cattle breeders. Even after the Newars became rice planters, they never completely abandoned the age-old rituals and festivals related to the cow. Thus, it is possible for us to decipher here the Vedic or pre-Vedic concept of gestation of the sky mother (or mothers visualized as a cow or cows) in the non-Vedic ritual of the Newar New Year celebration. In order to explain our finding, we will begin with

an introductory remark on the above mentioned deities. Then in the context of Vedic concepts we will investigate the significance of the autumnal New Year celebration of the Newars with some remarks on the symbolism of the main attribute of the deities, the citron fruit, a mandatory object in the New Year ritual. This will be followed by an attempt to find the reason for the popularity and purpose of the Śuṅga Period clay figurines of Kubera-like yakṣa found in several archeological sites of North India. We will conclude with a remark on the mongoose, the other attribute of the gods.

Jambhala and Kubera and their Identity

Both Kubera and Jambhala are gods of wealth. They are sometimes considered to be identical. At other times, they are portrayed as rivals, as exemplified by the *Sādhana-mālā* (292, 294), in which Jambhala is delineated as trampling Kubera. Although the concepts related to Jambhala are almost certainly as old as that of Kubera or perhaps even older, we do not find the former mentioned in ancient texts. Kubera, on the other hand, is described in pre-classical-period Sanskrit and Pali texts as the king of the yakṣas, the prosperous inhabitants of Alakāpurī described in both Buddhist and Hindu legends as the fabulous capital city located in the north above the clouds in the vicinity of Heaven. Jambhala, in contrast, presides over a fruit signifying the cosmic germ. As we will see shortly, he is associated with the pre-Buddhist, pre-Hindu concept of *apāṇi garbha*, 'the fetus in the water', rather than the legend of Alakāpurī of Kailāsa. Despite such differences, the medieval period images of both these non-Vedic divinities hold similar attributes, a citron and a purse, because of which it is sometimes difficult to distinguish them with certainty.

Although after the rise of Hinduism and Buddhism, the ancient cult of yakṣas waned not only in India but also in Nepal. Even now, both Hindu and Buddhist households worship the yakṣas for prosperity and a successful harvest. If fruit trees and plants do not put out new leaves seasonally, it is interpreted that the yakṣas are not happy and that they may even destroy the entire harvest, including the fruit harvest of the autumn. Yakṣas protect children, but they also



Fig.1 : Jambhala/Kubera, Nepal/Tibet,
15th/16th century, Rubin Museum of Art (HAR 65796)

sculpture and painting as corpulent, pot-bellied gods. An excellent example of Jambhala/Kubera is an eleventh-century metal sculpture (Fig.1) from Nepal or Tibet in the collection of the Rubin Museum of Art, New York. The god is shown here seated on a large lotus pedestal in a royal position called *lalitāsana*. He wears a multi-crested crown exposing his hairline, annular earrings, two necklaces, armbands, wristlets, and anklets. His lower garment, a *dhotī*, is decorated with horizontal stripes and flowers, but his diagonally worn shawl is simple and devoid of any designs. As usual, a citron and a mongoose, in his right and left hand, respectively, are delineated here as his main attributes.

The Symbolism of Citron, Autumnal New Year and the Concept of Cosmic Fetus

In Sanskrit and Prākṛta, the citrus fruit is called *jambhīra* and *ambhala*, respectively, and has been identified by modern Sanskritists as a citron. In

inflict epidemics of child diseases. Thus, the yakṣas are believed to be both divine and demonic. Although their capital city is Alakāpurī, they are omnipresent and most of the times remain invisible. In fact, the unseen presence of the benevolent yakṣas makes the human residence the same as Alakāpurī. The inhabitants of the Kathmandu Valley chant a popular song, *alakāpurī kāntipurī nagarī* - “The city of Alakāpurī is Kāntipurī” (= an epithetic name for Kathmandu).

A well-nurtured, plump body being the symbol of prosperity and abundance of food, both Kubera and Jambhala are regularly delineated in

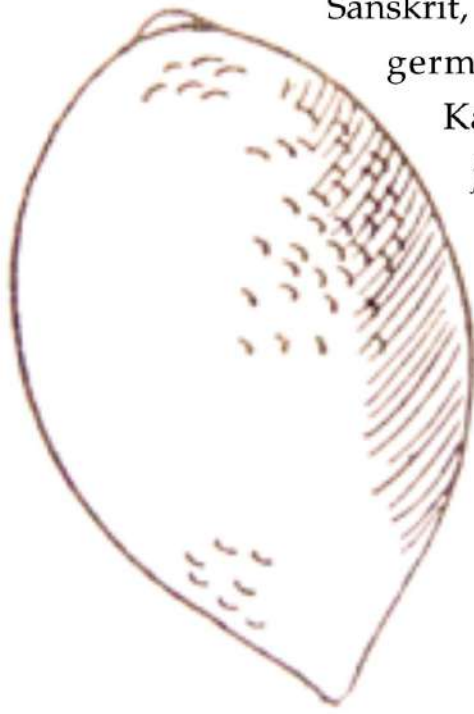


Fig.2 : Citron fruit, identified as *jambhara*
(Photograph : *The Iconography of Tibetan Lamaism*)

Sanskrit, the fruit is also known as *bījapūraka*, 'supplier of germ/seed'. According to the Newars of the Kathmandu Valley, the Newari word for citron is *jhambhsi* (=jambhala fruit). But they are of the opinion that the fruit held by Jambhala/Kubera is not exactly citron because it is much larger than a regular citron. It is known to them as *taḥsi*, 'large fruit', which ripens in the autumn and is available locally only around that season. Certainly it is a larger variety of citron, which is becoming more and difficult to find growing in the Valley. In Tibetan and Newar art manuals, the fruit is shown as an oval citrus fruit and in the label it is identified

as Jambhara (Fig.2).³ The nomenclature of

the god of wealth after this autumnal fruit cannot be the invention of the Newars of the Valley because it is a popular name of the god in the works of various Indian authors collected in the *Sādhnamālā*. This fruit is mandatory for the autumnal *pūjā* ritual of the Newar New Year's Day, which is celebrated on the first day of the bright half of the *Kārttika* month (Fig.3). The Newars of the Valley are familiar with the fact that this fruit represents either Jambhala or Kubera. However, a logical



Fig.3 : The *Pūjā* Ritual of the New Year Celebration (Photograph : Prashant Shrestha)

answer to the question why the fruit the deities and why it is so important for the ritual of the New Year's Day is missing in present day Newar interpretations.

Autumnal New Year's Day was popular not only in Nepal but also in ancient India, because of which *śarad*, the Sanskrit word for autumn, became synonymous with an era. But the autumnal ritual of the Newars in the Valley provides us with the original significance of the New Year. This autumnal New Year's Day is known to Nepali-speaking people as *Gorutihār*, 'Bull Festival'. On this day Newars perform solemn rite called *Hmapūjā*, mistakenly, understood as 'Body-Worship' or 'Self-Worship'. We would like to find out the real meaning of this rite. A Sanskritist, insensitive to Newar culture, finds the performance of such a solemn rite on the day of 'Bull Festival' amusing and does not mind using it as an offensive ethnic joke. For us it is not a joke, but an invaluable source of information to investigate the significance of this important day for the Newars as well as the ancient people of South Asia. Unfortunately, Newar intellectuals are not interested in such investigations. A well-known Newar scholar, following a folk etymology, has explained the Newari name of the day as referring to the worship of the physical body *hma* as well as the individual soul (*ātman*).⁴ It would not have been too difficult to accept this explanation of the honourable, almost hundred-year-old scholar if we were not aware of the fact that the Newar New Year celebration is the continuation of the pre-Hindu, pre-Buddhist custom of celebrating the conception of the primordial divine fetus as the beginning of time, the New Year. Our investigation indicates that *Hmapūjā* or *Mhapūjā* is actually the *Mompūjā*, 'worship of a fetus'. In Newari, *hma* and *mom* are often interchangeable and, according to the fourteenth-century Newari translations of the *Amarakośa*, *mom* is the classical Newari word for fetus.⁵ As we will see in the following discussion, this classical Newari word, rather than the folk etymology, is more closely related to the Newar New Year's Day.

The key word in this discussion is *saṁvatsara*, a Vedic Sanskrit word that literally means 'endowed with fetus'. Thus, it is also used to mean 'period of gestation'.⁶ Although already in early Vedic texts *saṁvatsara* had become synonymous with the twelve-month-long annual year, when it is used in the

context of the gestation of a domesticated cow or the atmospheric mother (visualized as a cosmic cow), the word always means the ten lunar months from autumn to the rainy season.⁷ This is the time when a cow as well as the sky mother or the atmospheric mothers called *āpas*, who later became known as *deva-mātrkāś*, 'cloud mothers', are expected to conceive, delivering the baby or babies at the onset of the monsoon.⁸ The rain babies are not only the calves but also all living beings, including human babies.

It is true that a cow can conceive at any time of the year. However, people in ancient South Asia, including the Vedic people, believed autumn was the perfect time for a cow to conceive. With this view, the cow-breeders of ancient South Asia kept their bulls in separate stalls and released them in autumn either in the month of *Āśvina* or *Kārttika* with the performance of a ritual designated in Vedic literature as *Vṛṣotsarga*, 'release of a bull'.⁹ We would like to find out if this pastoral ritual of autumn has anything to do with the autumnal Cow Worship (*Sāpūjā*) and the following day celebration of *Hmapūjā*, the Newar New Year, also known as *Gorutihār*, 'Bull festival'.

The gestation period of a cow, like that of a human being, is approximately ten lunar months (280 days for a human, 283 days for a cow). Accordingly, an autumnal conception ends with the birth of a baby during the rainy season when plenty of vegetation is available for the mother cow and the calf. The Vedic ritual 'release of a bull' was indeed based on such practicality of pastoral life. Thus, for our investigation, it becomes highly important to pay attention to the time difference between the above mentioned autumnal ritual and another cow-related festival celebrated annually in the Valley during the rainy season. The latter is called *Sāyā* in Newari and *Gāijātrā* in Nepali. Both these words literally mean 'the procession of cows'. On this day, Newar children, adorned with basket-like headgears decorated with the face of a cow, ritually turn into calves and participate in a procession together with real cows and calves (Fig.4). In Bhaktapur, we see an additional feature in the procession. Local people carry images of golden bulls in a highly decorated open palanquin. In India people celebrate *Rākhī* and *Śrāvaṇī* one day before the Calf Festival of the Valley.



Fig.4 : A Newar child during *Sāyā* - the procession of cows

However, to my knowledge, nowhere in India is such a cow-related festival currently observed during the rainy season.

Before we continue our discussion, we would like to present here a list of the Newar rituals and festivals related to our investigation. Nepal *Samvat* follows the *amānta* system in which a month ends on the last day of the dark half of the moon. According to the Nepal *Samvat* calendar of 1137, which corresponds to the CE 2016-2017 calendar, the seasonal rituals and festivals are celebrated from October to August on the following days:

October 30, 2016 (Āśvina Kṛṣṇa Amāvasyā)

Cow Worship (Newari *Sāpūjā*, Nepali *Gāitihār*, Sanskrit *Lakṣmīpūjā*).

October 31, 2016 (Kārttika Śukla Pratipadā)

New Year Celebration (Classical Newari *Mompūjā*, 'Fetus Worship', Nepali *Gorutihār*, Sanskrit *Govarddhanapūjā*, 'Worship for the Proliferation of Cows', Vedic Sanskrit *Vṛṣotsarga*, 'Release of the Bull', beginning of *saṁvatsara*, 'Period of Gestation').

November 6, 2016 (Kārttika Śukla Ṣaṣṭhī)

Chaṭha Parva (celebration of the Sixth Day after the Conception as Real Birth of Life) (Approximately 290 days later).

August 7, 2017 (Śrāvaṇa Śukla Pūrṇimā)

Śrāvaṇī, the full moon day of the Śrāvaṇa month, Newar ritual of 'Frog Worship', almost certainly identical with Ṛgvedic Frog Worship, which was observed at the end of *saṁvatsara*.

August 8, 2017

The procession of cows or calves (Newari *Sāyā*, Nepali *Gāijātrā*).

If we compare the sequence of these bull and cow related Newar festivals of the autumn and rainy season with the Vedic ritual related to *Vṛṣotsarga*, 'the release of a bull' and the original significance of *saṁvatsara* (= the period of gestation lasting for ten lunar months from autumn to the rainy season), it may not be too difficult to comprehend that the bull and cow related Newar rituals and festivals originated from the ancient pastoral lifestyle of the subcontinent. Note that *Sāpujā* (cow worship) and *Hmapujā* (the New Year's day of the Newars) take place in autumn approximately 290 days before the procession of cows (*Sāyā*) in the rainy season. This time period corresponds with the autumnal release of a bull (*Vṛṣotsarga*) and the final day of *saṁvatsara* when frogs start croaking at the onset of the rainy season.¹⁰ It is also in harmony with the real gestation period of a cow, which is 283 days. Thus, it is not surprising that *Hmapujā* is known to the Nepali-speaking people as *Gorutihār*, 'Bull festival'. This bull festival is indeed the vestige of the Vedic or pre-Vedic custom of the impregnation of cows. By the same token, the procession of cows, *Sāyā*, which is observed at the end of *saṁvatsara*, has to be the ritual celebration of calving. This is why Newar children participate in the procession of the cow festival as calves. Once we are aware of the original significance of these bull and cow related Newar rituals and festivals, we can

logically deduce that the original Newari nomenclature for the Newar New Year's day is actually *Mompūjā*, 'the fetus worship', rather than *Hmapūjā*. This is the day when cosmic mother or mothers conceived the primordial germ and creation began with the conception of life.

Due to the fact that these rituals and concepts are more than three millenniums old, both their original and extended meanings have been forgotten many generations ago. The Newars of the Valley are not the cowherds that their ancestors were.¹¹ Remarkably, however, even after their pastoral rituals went through multiple layers of development,¹² the association of their rituals with the seasons has remained intact. This is the main reason that on the basis of the information derived from Vedic literature we can still discern the hidden significance of the Newar ritual of autumn and its interrelation with the rituals of the rainy season.

At first glance, this observation may appear to be irrelevant to our study of the citron, the attribute of Kubera and Jambhala. But we need to examine the subject by carefully comparing Newar culture with available textual evidence. The authors of the *Sāadhanamālā* (289 and 395) describe the god Jambhala as *jalandra*, 'divine monarch (Indra) of water', and offering water to him is recommended in several other sections of the *Sāadhanamālā* (289, 290, 291). The god is also known as *Dhārājambhala*, 'Rain Shower Jambhala'. The Buddhist Newars of the Kathmandu Valley, in their daily ritual, express Jambhala's association with water more vividly by



Fig.5 : Jambhala depicted as child

keeping Jambhala's image continually immersed in water inside a deep and wide metal pot kept in their private shrines. To my knowledge, this is the only god treated in this manner. Let me explain why this ritual is significant for our investigation. The *Sādhanaṃālā* (295) states that the image of this water god should look like a five-year-old child. Besides, in a different section of the same text (*Sādhanaṃālā*, 291), the god is described as a baby whose earlobes are not yet pierced (*aviddhakarṇa*). This is why some images of Jambhala depict him devoid of earrings although he is richly adorned with many other ornaments such as necklaces and armlets etc. (Fig.5). More importantly, the authors of the *Sādhanaṃālā* (292, 294) repeatedly describe the god as a *dimbha*, 'fetus'. If we give attention to the fact that in South Asian art a fetus, such as the fetus of *Mahāvīra*, is regularly depicted as a child, it becomes abundantly clear why the god has to look like a five-year-old child.¹³ In fact, Jambhala is *apāni garbha*, 'the fetus of the waters', an ancient popular theory of cosmic fetus frequently described in Vedic literature. The most preferable date for the commencement of creating the image of this child god, including choosing a stone for making the image, is the full moon's day of the month of Kārttika (*Sādhanaṃālā*, 295). This explains why in the ritual of *Mompūjā* the egg-shaped citron represents Jambhala, the fetus god. As we mentioned earlier, in Sanskrit this fruit is also designated as *bījapūraka*, 'supplier of germ/seed'. This is indeed a meaningful word clearly indicating the concept of a 'primordial germ'. It is this germ that the sky mother, as a cosmic cow, or the rain rivers (clouds) as mother goddesses (*devamātrikās*) conceive in autumn and deliver in the rainy season.¹⁴ According to this belief, all of the creatures including human beings, are manifestations of the same 'primordial germ'. The Newar celebration of New Year's Day in autumn is actually a communal birthday, the day of conception being considered here the real birth.

I am quite aware of the fact that the *Sādhanaṃālā* is a work of the medieval period of Indian history. Undoubtedly, however, Jambhala's association with water, fetuses and the month of Kārttika mentioned in the text echo the ancient concept of gestation. This concept is not transparent by any means, but it is omnipresent in Newar festivals and rituals, as exemplified by the popularity of the

dance of conception of mother goddesses, which begins in autumn and ends with the death of the goddesses on an important day of the rainy season.¹⁵ Thus, we can conclude that Jambhala is reminiscent of 'the Fetus of the Waters'. Water, however, means not only life, but also fertility and prosperity. Accordingly, ancient people in South Asia identified the fetus god with wealth.

Brother Worship and Images of Kubera

An observation of the Newar ritual of *Kijāpūjā* (Sanskrit *Bhāṭṛ-pūjā*), 'worship of brothers by sisters', which takes place one day after the autumnal New Year's Day, also deserves special attention in our study for two different reasons. First, the ritual of the worship of brothers next to New Year's Day cannot be accidental. Judging from the idea that a child is not much different from a fetus, the custom of the worship of brothers is actually the second day of gestation. This becomes evident if we pay attention to another ritual related to brothers and sisters that is celebrated during the rainy season. It is called *Rākhī*, which takes place on the eve of the above mentioned calf festival of the rainy season (see the list of rituals and festivals). Although traditionally Newars do not celebrate *Rākhī*, this is the day when they worship frogs. As we mentioned in our earlier publications, Newar frog worship is reminiscent of Ṛgvedic frog worship. Both in Newar and Vedic traditions the croaking of the frogs indicates the beginning of the rainy season. Thus, the ritual of frog worship is performed exactly at the end of the atmospheric gestation, *saṁvatsara*.¹⁶ Evidently, both of these rituals of brother worship are directly related to the concept of *saṁvatsara*. A sister's desire to have a brother or her appreciation for having a brother is actually a reflection of the desire for and appreciation of a male child by the parents.

According to traditional South Asian calendar, the celebration of *Chāṭha-parva* takes place six days after the autumnal New Year's Day celebration. Although this festival is more popular in Bihar, India, than in the Kathmandu Valley, it cannot be other than the *Ṣaṣṭhī* ritual, which is performed six days after the birth of a child. Etymologically, *Chāṭha* is cognate with *Ṣaṣṭhī*, 'sixth day'. Thus, following the ancient notion that conception is not different from real birth, *Chāṭha-parva* is actually celebrated six days after conception as the *Ṣaṣṭhī* ritual.

This supports our view that the autumnal New Year celebration signifies the first day of conception, as *Mompūjā*, 'fetus worship'.

Second, the autumnal ritual of the worship of brothers explains the significance of the pre-Gupta Period clay images of yakṣas found profusely throughout northern India. An image such as the one that I studied closely is in the collection of the Santa Barbara Museum of Art (Fig. 6).¹⁷ It depicts a Kubera-like yakṣa with some sense of humour. The yakṣa is so obese that his short, fleshy neck prevents him from looking downward. Due to his large, swollen belly his legs are almost invisible. His elaborate hairdo resembles a conch shell (*kaparda*). *Kaparda* is a Vedic Sanskrit word. But in post-Vedic Sanskrit literature, the word *śaṅkha* became a more popular synonym for the conch shell. This is why a Kubera-like yakṣa is sometimes designated as *Śaṅkhacūḍa*, 'endowed with a conch-shell-like hairdo'.¹⁸

The metal crown that we see in the representation of Jambhala/Kubera (Fig.1) is a development of the Gupta Period. Earlier than that, we do not see divine or royal figures wearing such crowns. Likewise, in the Nepali example the moneybag is replaced by a mongoose, which we will discuss shortly. Just as in many other early representations of Kubera-like yakṣas, the citron is not expected to be represented as his other attribute either. Instead, the god is shown here gently caressing his voluminous abdomen with his small left hand. To my knowledge, the citron is never depicted as an attribute of a Kubera-like yakṣa in early clay figures.

An unexpected aspect of this clay figurine is the function of the work. This



Fig.6 : Rattle in the form of Kubera like Yakṣa holding a moneybag, Chandraketurgh, West Bengal, India ca.100 BCE, terracotta, 10.5 cm., Santa Barbara Museum of Art Gift of Stephen P. Huyler, 2008. 4.121 Photograph courtesy : Pratapaditya Pal

clay figurine is not a religious icon for worship but a rattling toy for a child. The original small pebbles are still tucked inside the figurine, and it does rattle as it was intended to do. It is this unusual combination of divinity and toy that reminds us of the Newar ritual of *Kijāpūjā*, 'worship of brothers by sisters'.

On this day elder sisters present their kid brothers with a variety of toys representing elephants, Lakṣmī bathed by elephants known in Sanskrit literature as *Gajalakṣmī*, or, more importantly, pot-bellied images of Jambhala or Kubera, which are, in terms of iconography, similar to our metal image (Fig.1).

Such toy figures of Jambhala/Kubera are made of crystal sugar; hence, the toys are collectively known as *cinīyā kisi*, 'elephants made of crystal sugar (*cīnī*)'. Children love it because it is edible in case it gets broken. This observation may be significant for understanding the meaning of the ritual of brother worship because not only the god Jambhala but also a brother symbolizes both a fetus and a child.

Crystal sugar was, however, introduced to the Kathmandu Valley only in the middle of the twentieth century. Thus, we can surmise that the toys might have been made of different media in earlier times of the Newar cultural history. Most probably, the medium was clay. This view is supported by the fact that in ancient South Asia toys were made of clay, as exemplified by the title of the well-known Sanskrit drama, *Mṛcchakaṭikam*, 'Clay Cart'. Further, a pile of broken clay figurines representing deities was discovered in an archaeological site, which was actually a dump-site of an ancient factory that made clay figurines, near *Dhuvārahī* in Kathmandu.¹⁹ Almost certainly, many of them were toys. Until the third quarter of the twentieth century, Newar children in the Valley played with the baked clay carts representing the chariot of the Buddhist god *Avalokiteśvara*, more popularly known as *Buṅgadya*. Certainly, the subject matter of the toys did not have to be secular but preferably religious. Thus, children's toys represented divine figures rather than heroic warriors brandishing weapons, as we see in toy stores around the world today. Because the rite of brother worship, *Bhāṭṭ-pūjā*, is an important annual event not only in Nepal but also in India, it is highly possible that the rattling clay figures of Kubera were presented to a child brother during the rite.

Mongoose

Our investigation into the attributes of Kubera and Jambhala will not be complete without a short discussion on their peculiar attribute, the jewel-vomiting mongoose, although this creature almost certainly has nothing to do with the concept of *saṃvatsara*. More than a century ago Getty expressed her view about this attribute in the following words: "The *nakula* . . . is merely a bag made of the skin of a mongoose, replacing the long narrow sack of the earlier images."²⁰

This view is in harmony with the brief description found in the Buddhist Sanskrit texts. According to the *Divyāvadāna* (124.2, 128.29, 133.23) and *Mūlasarvāstivādinayavastu* (1.241.8), wealthy people in ancient India carried a purse made of a mongoose's hide. Thus, the purse became the symbol of wealth. This is why in Jambhala/Kubera's iconography the mongoose is shown vomiting jewels. The mongoose that Jambhala/Kubera holds does not represent the creature alive but the purse made of the hide of the creature. It is not surprising that, as usual, the original significance of the mongoose did not remain intact for too long. Thus, the authors of the later period interpreted that the mongoose is the real possessor of wealth, because it controls the serpents, the protectors of underground wealth. What is surprising is that some art historians do not show any familiarity with the centuries-old discussion on this subject and, without hesitation, accept the secondary explanation as real and original.

Conclusion

Originally, Kubera and Jambhala were two different deities. They share their attributes because both of them symbolize fertility and prosperity. Jambhala's identity with a fetus and fetus-fruit as described in the medieval period texts is based on much earlier concepts prevalent in ancient South Asia. These age-old concepts also managed to survive both in the traditional Newar calendar and in the seasonal rituals of the Kathmandu Valley more vividly than in modern-day India. Thus, our attempt to understand the significance of the attributes of Kubera and Jambhala also reveals the meaning of *Mompūjā*, celebrated on the New Year's Day of Nepal *Saṃvat* with a view that conception is birth. After all, *Saṃvat* is the

abbreviation of *samvatsara*, 'the period of gestation'.

Reference & Notes

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6. Gautama V. Vajracharya, *Frog Hymns and Rain Babies*, 2013, pp.29-32.
7. *Ibid.*
8. Gautama V. Vajracharya, *Nepalese Seasons*, pp.17-18. See also the reference 13.
9. *Ibid.*, p.21.
10. The calf festival *Sāyā* is observed one day after the full moon day of *Śrāvaṇa*. It is true that in our time the monsoon rain is expected to begin not around this time but almost a month earlier. In the Vedic time, however, the end of the *Śrāvaṇa* month was indeed the beginning of the monsoon rain. See reference 15.
11. Kamal Prakash Malla, *op.cit.*, pp.5-23.
12. Subhas Ram Prajapati, 'From Gai Jatra to Gay Jatra: A Case of Cultural Conflicts in Kathmandu' (<https://www.academia.edu/28033712/>).
13. Douglas Barrett and Basil Gray, *Indian Painting*, New York, Rizzoli International Publications, INC. 1978, p.59.
14. When the rainy season begins is a big question. In Vedic time, the phenomena of monsoon

began around *Śrāvaṇī*, the full moon day of *Śrāvaṇa* or at the beginning of the following month *Prauṣṭhapada*. According to Vedic texts green grasses appear at this time of the year (See Kane, *History of Dharmaśāstras*, Vol.2, Part 2, p.806, footnote 1923). According to *Rāmāyaṇa* monsoon cloud begins to appear in the month of *Prauṣṭhapada*. In the Gupta period, however, such phenomena was observed not around *Śrāvaṇī* or *Prauṣṭhapada*, but at the beginning of the *Āṣāḍha* month, almost two months ahead; Kālidāsa describes the emergence of dark cloud of the monsoon on the first day of the *Āṣāḍha* (*Meghadūtam* 2). This is true in our time as well. Such discrepancy is partially associated with the two different ways of reckoning the month from the dark half or the bright half. Further, when the cowherds of India and Nepal gradually turned into rice planters, they became more concerned with pre-monsoon rain because for planting rice seeds they need some rainwater at least two weeks before the onset of the real monsoon rain. Thus, classical period Indians believed that the rain river Gaṅgā descends few days before the month of *Āṣāḍha*. This is different from Vedic concept because Vedic people thought that the rain river Sarasvatī descends at the end of *devayāna*, around the full moon day of *Śrāvaṇa* (Vajracharya, *Frog Hymn and Rain Babies*). We do see the reflection of this change in the dramatically reduced time of the atmospheric gestation from ten lunar months to the eight lunar months, as we know from the Gupta period text *Bṛhatsamhitā*. This seems to be the reason that the rain child Kumāra was born in the month of *Śrāvaṇa* or *Prauṣṭhapada* (See Vajracharya, *Frog Hymns and Rain Babies*, pp.175-178). But there is a divine child who was born around the full moon day *Śrāvaṇa*. He is no other than Kṛṣṇa, the son of thundering atmospheric drum, Ānakadundubhi, an epithetic name of Vasudeva (Gautama V. Vajracharya, 'Iconography and Images : A New Methodology'). I better save a detail discussion on this subject for a different occasion.

15. Gautama V. Vajracharya, *Frog Hymns and Rain Babies*, pp.150-151.
16. *Ibid.*, p.32.
17. Pratapaditya Pal, 'Reflection on Early Indian Terracotta Objects', *Sūtra Journal* (<http://www.sutrajournal.com/reflections-early-indian-terracotta-objects-by-pratapaditya-pal>).
18. Monier Williams, *Sanskrit English Dictionary* (<http://www.sanskrit-lexicon.uni-koeln.de/monier/webtc5/index.php>).
19. Some of the clay figures are published in Pratapaditya Pal, *Art of Nepal: A Catalogue of the Los Angeles County Museum of Art Collection*, Los Angeles, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, 1985, pp.89-90.
20. Alice Getty, *The Gods of Northern Buddhism, Their History and Iconography*, New York, Dover Publication, 1988, p.159 (first publication, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1914).