

## Rites of Passage: Flow of Gifts<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This paper aims to explore how gifts are connected with the *sanskars*, rites of transition or rite of passage. I have discussed how gifts are connected culturally in the context of rites of transitions, in order to systematically search for the different contexts that influence those who act out these events, where people are obliged to give gift as well as oblige to receive, if one does not receive it becomes insult of giver and develops conflicting relationship. Giving gift in this context follows the generalized reciprocity, and flows in a certain direction, but its latent meaning is to keep strong social bond between kin groups and ancestors. Obligation for giving gift and return are closely associated with distance of kinship. Gift is obliged to give and receive sometimes not necessarily return immediately, which also depends upon kin ties. Most obligatory gift should be made to sister and their children. Rites of passage is not only associated with *liminality* and unstructure social status also with flow of gift. Giving gift in ritual context is to avoid inauspiciousness. Important dimension of gift giving, receiving and returning all are matter of morality, honor, and prestige. Rituals and women are medium of exchange of gift. In general gifts and forms, material condition and social relation of exchange are linked to kinship rank and in the context of ritual.

**Keywords:** reciprocity, Argali Magars, sanskar, rituals, morality

"Giving gifts brings a great virtue. Every good thing is secured by giving gifts. It is a charity that enables us to go to heaven. Hence, a man must make liberal gifts".

- Garuda Purana

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### 1. Introduction

This paper is based upon material I collected in 1998 where mostly I focused on the material from the Magar of Argal, Baglung, Nepal. However I have brought some contexts and examples from other communities living in same area. This paper not only discusses the relationship between nature and types rituals and gifts but also place where people like to offer gift. Some places are considered sacred or meritious to make gift such kind of benevolent gift people prefer and some places are obligatory beside their specific characteristics. People should offer gift in the place where a person died. This paper mostly elaborates association among ritual mainly rites of passage, place and gift.

#### 1.1 Rites of Transition: Liminality and Transition of the Place

Van Gennep (1960) has defined "rites de passage as rites which accompany every change of place, state, social position and age". He has shown that all rites of transition are marked by three phases: separation, margin (*liminal*), and aggregation. The first phase of separation comprises symbolic behavior signifying the detachment of the individual or group either from an earlier fixed point in the social structure or a set of cultural conditions (a "state"); during the intervening *liminal* period, the state of the ritual subject (the "passenger") is ambiguous; he passes through a realm that has few or none of the attributes of the past or coming state; in the third phase the passenger is consummated (Turner, 1967:94).

Liminality and inauspiciousness are the principle character of transitional rites, in Argal among the Magars. As the individual status changes after performing a particular transitional rite, at the same time statuses of the places also change. Sacred places are created temporarily at home in order to perform transitional rites. Sacred places are created with the means of purification by smearing places in most cases with cow dung, placing the sacred objects and establishing a fire place. Thus, during the performance the places are considered as sacred. But after the transitional rite, the sacred place changes back into normal place.

In most societies, the social identity and duties of the individuals are established or recognized in rituals, and they are the rich symbolic contents. Rites of passage performed in any society make difference and separate those individuals who have undergone the rituals from those who have not, because it creates a hierarchy of legitimate distinctions and social practices (Bourdieu, 1996: 27-28 cited in Ostigaard, 1998).

The rites of passage are associated with an individual's achieved status. These status differences are expressed in the funeral ritual and thereby in the archaeological material (Ostigaard, 1998:44). During the transitional rites, neophytes are not only structurally "invisible" (though physically visible) and ritually polluting, they are very commonly secluded partially or completely from the realm of culturally defined and ordered states and statuses (Turner, 1967: 98). What is unclear and contradictory (from the perspective of social definition) tends to be regarded as (ritually) unclean.

Ostigaard (1998:56) argues that it is possible to trace all the orthodox life cycle rituals (*samskaras*) in the mortuary remains. Whether the dead will receive grave goods as gifts or not, and whether the dead will be cremated or buried, depends upon the ritual performed during his/her life.

### 1.2 The Gift: A Cycle of Obligatory Return

Rites of passage are performed in every society (Van Gennep, 1960). Every rite of passage is accompanied by the exchange of ritual gifts. A gift can be looked upon from a perspective of exchange of goods and services in economic terms. In many societies, exchange follows the principle of reciprocity. Mary Douglas (1990: Viii) argues that in the history of human civilization, the major transfer of goods has been marked by the cycle of obligatory returns of gifts. A gift is given in the ritual context and the ritual places are used to avoid inauspiciousness of the neophytes. In this context, the gifts are used in very obstructive situations. The obligation to receive, and the right to give is clearly defined. The gift is seen as a bridge to the *liminal* state of the neophytes.

In Argal, most of the rituals are performed in public places. There are hardly seen any rituals without gifts. The gifts are given according to the socio-economic status of an individual. Giving gifts means raising one's own socio-economic power and prestige. Mary Douglas (1990: xiv) writes that gifts are given in a context of public drama with nothing secret about them. It is directly linked to public esteem, the distribution of honor and the sanction of religion. The gift is to wish the well-being and auspiciousness *suva* of the giver and the village through the transferral of *pap*, sin; *kasta*, afflictions; *dos*, faults, *asuva*, and inauspiciousness to the recipient. People say that *dan*, the gift is always given to remove inauspiciousness in the proper ritual contexts. Through gifts, all negative substances come out of the donor and may then have their effect on the recipient in the form *rog*, of disease diminishing of *sakti* or *tej*, power or fiery energy or in the form of a general decline of his family and lineage. The recipient must either digest the evil and inauspiciousness contained in the gift by himself or he must give it onward in the form of further prestations, often to wife-receiving affinities (Raheja, 1990:82).

The gift has social, cultural and ritual meanings and it is seen from a perspective of time and space. In Hindu ideology there are four different ages, viz.: the *satya* or first golden age (covers 1,728,000 years), the *treta* or second age (covers 1, 296,000 years), the *dwapara* or third age (covers 8, 64,000 years) and the *kali* age or present time (covers 432,000 years). From the last creation people have already passed in total 3,903,000 years and this also includes 5,000 years of the present age. In all these ages, the importance of gifts is remarkable. The Hindu religious text has mentioned that Hindu people extolled penance in the *satya* age. They extolled knowledge in the *treta* age. They extolled sacrifices for charities in the *dvapara* age and gifts in the *kali* age" (Garuda Purana, ch 34.2: 889). Thus, the importance of the gift is widely observed. Marcel Mauss (1990) summarizes the basic idea of how the Hindus look at gifts. According to him, the thing that is given produces its rewards in the present life and the next life. For example, if someone offers gifts to others, it is certain that same gift will be returned sooner or later. In other words, if someone offers food in this world, the same food will be returned to the giver in the series of his incarnations. But it may increase its volume or quantity. The gift of water, wells,

and springs ensure the satisfaction of thirst. The gifts of clothes, gold, and sunshades and sandal allow someone to walk on the scorching-hot ground. The gift of land yields its harvests for others (Mauss, 1967:55). Thus, the gift is a social and religious transaction which focuses on three obligations: to give, to receive, and to reciprocate (Ibid: 37).

### 1.3 Types of Gift

In every ritual, certain material items are given to the persons who deserve them or who are obliged to receive them as gifts. All the gifts are connected with the merit for the next life. Life-cycle rituals are culminated by the giving of gifts. Many of these rituals are concerned almost exclusively with the marking of such prestations, the present. Thus, birth, marriage, and death are fraught with the possibility that inauspiciousness would erupt and this inauspiciousness is removed through the numerous gifts that are given on these occasions (Raheja, 1990:85-86). Gifts are given to other people or caste for mutual relationship (Raheja, 1990). The recipients are not only other groups of people, but they are also one's own kinsmen, such as *chelibeti*, (daughter and sisters), *juwaichela* (nephew and brother-in-laws, son-in-laws) and *bhanja bhanji* (sons and daughters of sisters). The gift is also given in the name of gods or goddesses, at house, shrines and temples. Such gifts are related to a request or thanking after fulfilling the wishes. In most cases the gifts include: food items, cows, metal, land, clothes and money. Food is offered to the gods and goddesses, and is also given to relatives and neighbors. Argali people believe that there is no gift better than the gift of food. The *pinda*, rice balls are offered to the ancestor. The most common animal gift is a cow, which is the sacred animal. The cow is given in most of the rituals to either the priest or the sister's son. Metals like gold, silver, copper and iron are associated with the gifts. The Argali Magars make the gift of copper and iron made of implements and utensils to the son in-law in death purification rituals. The gift of land is given in death rituals. The gift of clothes and money is given to daughters, nieces, sisters, nephews, son in-laws and priests after completing every ritual.

## 2. Various Transitional Rites and Exchange of Gift

Rites of transitions are associated with the cosmic landscape. According to Hindu ideology, transitional rites have to be necessary to be performed. In a cosmic landscape, where the vertical hierarchies of the places are recognized, the top of the hierarchy is considered the most sacred place. To reach the most sacred place, religious activities need to be carried during life. The transitional rites are performed to legitimate the neophyte.

### 2.1 Birth: From Physical to Social Transition

Birth is seen as a physical as well as a social transition. The separation of the child from the mother's womb is a physical transition. The child changes its space of survival i.e. from the womb space into the earthly space. Cutting off the umbilical cord not only separates mother and child as two living beings, but also offers the way the mother feeds the child. Birth as a transition is looked upon as a dangerous or difficult period since during delivery anything may happen which could cause the death of either the mother or the child or both. These dangers are seen as inauspiciousness or a burden to the child and the mother from those who are involved in and helped during the delivery, cutting off the umbilical cord, bathing the child and mother and washing up the clothes. Such inauspiciousness is avoided by giving gifts either in cash or kind to those who work during delivery, is commonly known as *sudeni*, *midwife*.

The naming of the baby is an important custom of purification. It is associated with the state of *liminality*. At first, the Magars give name their newborn baby without consulting the village astrologer. However, they consult village priest or astrologer and use the astrologic calendar to give a name later. The naming ceremony is considered one of the important ceremonies, because 'name' is the primary means of social intercourse. It brings merits and it is the root of fortune. From name, man attains his/her fame. Therefore, the naming ceremony is very important (Pandey, 1969: 78).

Unlike the Bahuns and Chhetries who observe birth pollution for 11 days, the Magars observe birth pollution only for 3 days. During

these three days, the patrilineal family is defiled and cannot perform any auspicious rituals. Purification rites are not completed without washing clothes, cleaning the house and sprinkling cow urine on all the patrilineal family. These activities purify the polluted house and the family members for ritual purposes. After the naming ceremony the child will enter into the ritual world. This transitional period between the birth to the naming of the child is a *liminal* period, which is characterized by pollution and danger. The seclusion of the mother and child during the *liminal* period is related to the avoidance of evil spirits, which may harm the baby and the mother when they are in a weak position.

The name giving ceremony is marked as the incorporation of the new born baby into the social world, because it legitimates the lineage and ancestry with natural and spiritual substances of blood and the moral code of conduct called dharma. The *phupoo*, father's sister of the new-born baby plays an important role in the purification ceremony. First, she washes the clothes and bathes both mother and baby. Then she sprinkles the cow's urine on the mother's bed and family's houses as well as the patrilineal family's house. She also gets especial gift for performing all rituals in naming.

### **2.2 First Time Rice Feeding (*Pasni*): Transition From Milk to Solid Food**

*Pasni* or *bhat khuwai*, the first time rice feeding ceremony, is very common among all the ethnic groups of Nepal. After this ceremony the child enters into the world of solid food. A child's dependency of a child on breast feeding to solid food changes him/her ritually. The ceremony is performed at the age of six months for boys and five months for girls. An auspicious day is fixed by an astrologer for this ceremony. This ceremony is also important for blessing purposes, because this is the first day the elder people start blessing to the child by giving a *tika*, mark on the forehead. The Magars feed the baby with rice and fish during *pasni*. The new baby also receives a set of new clothes during this period. *Cheli betis*, married daughters and sisters are invited for a ritual feast.

### **2.3 Joy of Birth (*Putputai*): Transition of the Lineage**

The *putputai* also called *putbadhai* is performed especially by the Magars to express happiness on the birth of the first male child of a couple. All Magar lineage groups living in Argal perform this ceremony immediately after the purification rites for the dead and the digging of ancestral land are over. Thus, this ritual is associated with the development of patrilineality and transition from a hunting-gathering life to a sedentary life. As soon as the purification rite is over, the Magar people begin singing and dancing. The song is related to a legendary prince named Gopichan and his dead father Manichan. The singers and dancers visit every house and receive gifts from them. According to Hindu religion, gifts called *dan* given to others in the month of Kartik avoids all inauspiciousness of the family and brings fortune to the baby in the future. Therefore, there is no age limit for this ritual, but the ritual is performed only after the 26th of Kartik (Nov.) each year. At the end, the singing and dancing groups bless the boy.

### **2.4 Hair Shaving (*Chewar*): Transition from Boyhood to Adulthood**

The first time a boy's hair shaving ceremony is called *chewar*. This ceremony is mainly for the male child at the age of three or five. Bhanja (sister's son) or *muljawain* (elder son in-law) are the principal persons who cut the boy's hair for the first time. Usually, the term *bhanja* or *muljuwai* signifies the same person. Because the daughter's husband is also called *bhanja*, and among the Magars, the sister's son is the potential husband of the mother's brother's daughter, if he marries mother's brother's daughter he becomes *muljuwai*. So in many cases, *bhanja* and *muljuwai* is the same person. But in other cases they might be different persons. In any case, *muljuwai* plays the central role of priest during auspicious as well as inauspicious rituals (see Oppitz, 1982; and Gurung, 1996 for a detailed role played by *muljuwai* for death ritual of Magars). The *muljuwai* makes leaf plates in which the family puts some rice and money as a gift. After the hair shaving, the hair is put at one of the cross-roads. After this ritual, the Magar boy is transformed physically from a boy to an adult. Ritually, the boy can legitimately perform all types of rituals.

### 2.5 Marriage: Transition of the foreground landscape to the background landscape

Marriage has both biological and social importance in Magar society. From a biological perspective, the marriage offers an opportunity for both boys and girls to have sexual relationships and produce offspring. Generally, no one is supposed to have sexual relationships and give birth to a child before marriage. In other words, sexual reproduction is determined only by marriage. However, the Magars practice co-habitation before formal marriage and gets child.

The couple takes socio-economic and ritual responsibilities only after marriage. As mentioned earlier, marriage involves some of the most important and emotive transformations in people's lives. According to Sax (1991:71), these transformation are (1) the culmination of parent's duties and responsibilities by shifting them toward daughters as in-laws, (2) the establishment of mutual duties of husband and wife, (3) the transfer of the bride from one place to another, and (4) the creation of a new set of relations between two lineages. Marriage also allows girls to participate in many other ritual activities. This changes her ritual status as well.

The transformation her natal lineage to her husband's lineage is another important change for a woman. Since she moves to her husband's house or place, she also changes her foreground landscape to her background landscape. The creation of the sacred place is done in a similar way as other ritual performances.

Hindu religious text places much more emphasis on girl's virginity. According to one text entitled Gyana Mala, there are several stages of virginity. This book mentions that four year old girls are like Parvati (wife of Lord Shiva). When girls are six years old, they are *devakanya* (girls of god). Until nine years, they are *kanya* (virgin girl) and this is the perfect age for marriage. If parents are able to arrange the marriage of their daughter at this age, they will then receive a high degree of religious merit. After the age of twelve or fourteen, girls are not virgins anymore and no merit is gained after their marriages, instead, parents will accumulate the sins. The idea

of virginity is further illustrated by Narad in another ritual text when Gaura married to Lord Shiva at the age of fourteen or fifteen:

"when Gaura's parents gave Narada all the materials to make his food and he went off to the nine-spring pool to fetch water. He washed and bathed, returned, spread cow dung in the courtyard (to purify it), and made his food. After he'd eaten, *Mainuli*, who had been watching all this, said, "this is the land of sages. There's no pollution here. Why have you gone to so much trouble cleaning up? This is Uttarakhanda." Narada replied, "After twelve years, the land is polluted from a girl's (menses). If an unmarried girl stays in the house after twelve years, the earth is polluted. Her father goes to hell. You have a fourteen years old girl here. Your golden land has been polluted. That's why I did so much purification. Don't be angry with me, but this land is defiled. You have to arrange marriage of Gaura somewhere else"(Sax, 1991: 68).

The above example is important for at least three reasons: the gift of virginity, sins or inauspiciousness connected with the transitional rites, and transformation of the quality of a place from sacred to profane or vice versa. However, nowadays girls are mostly married after the age of eighteen. The perception of sin after being unable to arrange the marriage of their daughter in time still exists among the Bahuns and Chhetries. So, in order to avoid possible sin, the Bahuns and Chhetries give a cow to the groom as gift.

The Magars hardly care about the gift of virginity. But they are conscious about the auspiciousness which is associated with fertility. So, local traditional musical groups called *damai* are asked to walk in front of the ritual and religious procession. They believe that these groups can bring auspiciousness.

Marital relation is not just the social relation and kinship relation, but blood relations between two different families as well. The purity of the blood is maintained by avoiding inter-caste marriage. Therefore, the Magars of Argal marry within the *gotra* or clan. But they do not marry within the *thar* or *pad* (lineage). They are clan endogamous and lineage exogamous. They also practice the matrilineal cross-cousin marriage system. The popular saying among the Magars of Argal village is "*mama ko chhori khoji khoji*", meaning the boy tries to marry to the daughter of his

maternal uncle at any cost. It is not possible among the Bahuns and Chettries.

Although Magar girls enjoy the freedom to choose their husbands, the parents of the boy usually approach the girl to propose the marriage of their son. If the girl's parents agree with the proposal, they will accept the gift of bread and liquor from the boy's side. The agreement is shown by accepting liquor as a gift from the boy's family, which is called *chhinaune khane*. The real marriage ceremony takes place only after these rituals. The real marriage is not only elaborate, it is equally expensive. This is called *balbagai khane*. All patrilineal kinsmen of the bride's parents gather to eat and drink. Then they take the girl to the husband's house. To enter into the husband's house and the use of women's power of kitchen or hearth, they must have a permit from the girl's parents. The further exchange of gifts between the groom's family and the bride's parents takes place on this occasion. This is called *changra khane bibaha*. On this occasion, all types of relatives from the girl's parental family receive their share of gifts. This type of marriage is performed only by those who are economically better off.

In different marriage rituals gifts are given to different levels of families in order to strengthen the relationship with the girl's parents and their kinsmen. This also shows the good relationship between groom and bride. The groom gives gifts to the bride during the marriage in order to own the bride.

Blessing is another important aspect of marriage. The Magars focus more on the blessing as an important gift of the girl. Giving *tika* by elders is the expression of blessing. They also teach about the responsibilities after marriage. They say "*pahile kathako juwama thiyeu, ahile phalamko juwama pareu*" meaning earlier you were in wooden yoke or you were enjoying relatively freedom of life, now you come under iron yoke or you are bind with social and cultural norms and values which are very powerful. This is also related to the increased responsibilities of the couple. Other blessings concern the general wellbeing, fertility of the womb (birth), fertility of the hands (grain and cattle) and fertility of the feet (land).

The changing social position of the bride and bridegroom is manifested in color symbolism. As mentioned above, the Magars take the girl to the groom's home before the formal marriage, but she joins the marriage procession with the bridegroom to the home of the bride's parents. During the procession both bride and bride groom are dressed in white clothes that symbolize their male identity. When the procession reaches the bride's natal home, she dressed in red clothes, which are a symbol of female identity.

### 2.6 Elderly Worshipping (*Chaurasi Pooja*): Transition to Living Ancestor

Elderly worshipping *Chaurasi* rite is done to honor elderly people. This rite is performed for both male and female if they have lived until the age of 83 and some months or a thousand full moons. According to Hindu religious philosophy, there are four stages, *asramas* of life. The first stage is as a celibate student *brahmacharya*, the second is as house holder *grishastha*, the third is as forest dweller *banaprastha*, and the fourth is the wondering ascetic *sanyasa*. *Chaurasi* is performed at the last stage of life. Magars do not consider themselves as Hindus, but they have adopted these general principles of stages of life in ritual context. This rite is mostly related to worshipping the elders. After this ritual, elder people are respected as living ancestors like a god or goddess. Various gifts are given to priests as well as own daughters and sisters, and nephews and son in-laws. This ceremony is common for all people of Argal regardless their ethnic and caste identity.

### 2.7. Death Rites: Transition from living world to spiritual world

Death as an event occurs in a place and is treated as sacred place. Death is understood as a transitional form directed towards ancestors. The gift to the dead is offered several places from death spot to on the way to funeral possession various context of rituals. The gift to the dead is reciprocated with the blessing and virtue for the heavenly place in the future. Whatever is done is done for the virtue of the ancestors and the performer as well. The sons are obliged to give the gift to the dead and the dead is obliged to

receive it and reciprocate with the blessings. Argali people believe that whatever gift is made during one's own life time, the person will receive it in the next life. Person who are not able to make any gifts during their life time, expect their sons and daughters to make the gift during their transitional phase in death. People believe that gifts given during this time are easily transformed to his soul. So, all living sons and daughters of every dead person try to give gifts to the deceased during this time. Usually, gifts are given before the physical bodies of the deceased transform into ancestral spirits. The first gift offering time varies from the day of the actual death of an individual to the third day after death. The second offering time is either or one year after the actual death. This depends upon the choice of the family of the deceased.

A person's physical body consists of five elements i.e. air, ether, earth, water and fire. The elements which a body contains are transformed after the physical death of an individual. Bodily elements, i. e. blood, flesh and bone (visible) change by the decomposition process directly into earth, both in cases of burial and cremation. If a person is cremated, the body will first be transformed into ash and later into soil. The soil is related to fertility or regeneration of life in which another form of being starts.

Local people believe that the death of a person in a village defiles the land, which is full of bad spirits. In order to be protected from bad spirits, people prohibit plowing and sowing when they learn about somebody's death in the village. They believe that the crops will have bad harvest if they cultivate the land on the day of somebody's death.

An important thing at that time is to perform the funeral rites of the dead. From every household a person should join the funeral procession regardless of caste. However, the participants from the other castes are not allowed to touch the corpse. Unlike other Caste women, the Magar women participate in the funeral procession. The place where a person died is made sacred by performing a ritual and offering all the sacred items and ritual symbols. This is the way the sacredness of land or a place is changed through the individual event. Funeral rites are performed at the sacred places

where the good spirits exist. At present there are seven grave yards where the Magars perform the funeral rite for their dead. In order to avoid contact with bad spirits, incense is lighted near the dead body, the corpse is secluded from birds, animals, and other caste people. The Magars of Argal do not use any sound to avoid the evil spirit. However, the Magars of Central Dhaulagiri use gunfire (Oppitz, 1982: 386).

If the dead person is a male and his wife is still alive, he will get his gift back from his wife which he gave during her marriage. She should live as a mourner for the rest of her life. Offering these gifts might have substituted the system of sati or widow-burning.

During the funeral procession the way food, mixed of a variety of grains such as maize, rice, *mas* black gram, *Phaseolus mungo*, barley, is thrown out along the way as a gift to the dead for the future. When the procession reaches the cemetery, a pyre is made faced to the north and south (north:heaven and south:hell). All participants in the funeral procession purify themselves by taking a ritual bath after the cremation. Cremation is looked upon as cosmogony, and an individual death is assimilated into the process of cosmic regeneration (Parry, 1982:76). Cremation as a way of disposing of the dead has similar meanings as a burial. There is no difference in the ritual performed to the dead whether a male or female being buried or cremated. The gift of cooked rice is also given to the pyre that is related to the regeneration of life.

All sons of the deceased should observe mourning for three days in the case of Magars and 13 days in the case of Bahun and Chhetries. The ritual involves cleaning, hair shaving, bathing and fasting. All members of the real family and lineage family should avoid certain food items, such as black gram and salt. The mourners are secluded from non-mourners and are prohibited from having sexual relations. The Bahun and Chhetries also have a ritual for the dead called *pinda dan* (the gift rice balls). It is a gift of rice balls to the dead spirit. It is offered on the tenth day after the death. Bahuns and Chhetries believe that on the 10th day either the dead spirit has taken birth somewhere else in the world or it has been incorporated into the ancestors. So, the Bahuns and Chhetries form a *dikuro* and (a tiny hill of soil) where they offer pieces of wool of sheep, *kush*,

sacred grass and grains of barley on the tenth day of death. The Magars perform a similar ritual which is called *kasapani*. But the common point is that this ritual is associated with the regeneration of life. For Bahun and Chhetri *dikuro* or *kasapani* for Magars represents the womb of the mother in which a baby grows to born. The soul acquires a new life just as the fetus does during ten months in the mother's womb. According to Garuda Puran, by offering rice balls on the first day, the head is formed. Eyes, ears and nose are formed on the second day. Cheeks, mouth and neck are formed on the third day. Heart, sides and stomach are formed on the fourth day, and waist, back and anus are formed on the fifth day. Thighs are formed on the sixth and ankles are formed on the seventh day. The calves are formed on the eighth day. Feet are formed on the ninth and hunger on the tenth day (Garuda Purana Part III 34.48-51: 893). If they do not offer rice balls and water libation to their deceased, they become ghosts and move in the air oppressed by hunger and thirst. The forefather blesses the performer with the birth of sons, grandfather with the cattle-wealth, great-grand-father with the coin of gold. Gifts are made to the priest and nephew to ward off impending calamity after the impurity period has expired. Gifts help the deceased attain release from the bonds of his previous actions. Foodstuffs, sandals, umbrella, clothes and other gifts are given to the priest for salvation from all worldly sins.

Death rituals are also occasions when numerous gifts prestations are made. The priest of the dead man's family is obliged to accept the most dangerous and inauspicious of these prestations, those that are made on the thirteenth day after death. The *dan* prestation consists of a large quantity of uncooked foodstuff, grain, clothes and cooking dishes. The giving of these items as *dan* to the priest is said to remove the *pap*, evil, *dar* terror and extreme inauspiciousness occasioned by the dead man's existence as a disembodied ghost *pret* for thirteen days after death (Reheja, 1990:86).

### 3. Conclusion

Economic values of gift have no significant in ritual context. However gift might have utility as economic goods. Gift made

during rites of passage are generalized reciprocity. Main gift is made in Magar and other communities also mainly goes to nephew as priority as moral person (Mauss 1967:3). One of the main purposes of gift is to avoid inauspiciousness. The medium of exchange gifts are women and rituals.

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