

The Unfolding of *Kaavad*: a study in structure, performance and narrative discourse

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Dedicated to **my parents**

Mukand Sabnani

&

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Approval Sheet

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Abstract

Keywords: *Kaavad*, *storytelling*, *portable shrine*, *Kaavad design*, *identity construction*, *performance*, *symbolic pilgrimage*, *sacred space*.

The *Kaavad* storytelling of Rajasthan is an important part of the oral tradition of the regions of Mewar and Marwar. A portable, painted, wooden shrine, it is made by the *Kaavad* makers (*Basayati Suthars*) of Bassi, Chittor, for the storytellers (*Kaavadiya Bhats* or *Ravs*) of Marwar. The storytellers unfold the multiple panels of the *Kaavad* as they recite stories and genealogies of their patrons (*jajmans*) spread across Rajasthan and adjoining states.

The choice of the *Kaavad* storytelling phenomenon provides a unique opportunity to study an object which has multiple societal and design functions, as well as to examine the intersections between the *Kaavad* object, the storytelling, performance and its reception. In addition it occasions the documentation and understanding of an important living oral storytelling tradition that has received little attention. The question is what purpose does the *Kaavad* serve and what it means to the community concerned? The *Kaavad* recitation includes the narration of stories and genealogies for the patrons by the storyteller simulating an experience of travel; a journey not unlike a pilgrimage. As he recites their genealogies, in a myth making exercise - elevates their status by connecting them to ancestors who are heroes with connections to the divine. The aim of the study is to arrive at an understanding of the role of the 'designed' object, and to investigate how its design contributes to the experience of a pilgrimage and the construction or elevation of identity.

Fieldwork and visual ethnography including film and photography inform the study along with ethnographic methods of observation, interviews and field notes. Three-fold multidisciplinary route and approach to fieldwork is influenced by visual research methods used in design. Fifty-four stories elicited from one storyteller and translated in English indicate a close connection between the stories and lives of the carriers of the *Kaavad* tradition. Performances by three storytellers recorded in their natural settings offer rich data as do information on methods of making and painting by the makers.

A structural and semiotic approach is used for analyzing the physical, visual and narrative structures of the *Kaavad*. The analysis reveals a strong connection between the *Kaavad* recitation and the experience of a pilgrimage; manifested and delivered by the 'designed' *Kaavad* object and mediated by the storyteller.

Organization of Chapters

The first chapter introduces the *Kaavad* and its location in storytelling, specifically within the oral tradition of Rajasthan. Oral tradition often employs visual devices such as symbolic artifacts, portable shrines, painted scrolls and performance to enliven the telling of tales. A brief introduction to some of the traditions is followed by an overview of the *Kaavad*, its practice, its origins and its practitioners today. The chapter outlines our motivation to investigate and describes the relevance of this study. It ends with defining the aims and objectives of the study which is to examine the intersections between the *Kaavad* object, the narratives, their painted images, the storytelling and its reception, to arrive at an understanding of the role of the ‘designed’ object and narratives in the *Kaavad* recitation.

The second chapter surveys the existing literature around the *Kaavad* and other portable shrines to identify similarities and differences between them and the *Kaavad*. An examination of the literature on storytelling practices using objects and images in India follows historical references to *Kaavad*-like practices and storytelling traditions within Rajasthan. Although the focus is on the *Kaavad* object and its narratives we see it in the context of a larger body of work on its social structure, *Jajmani* system, religious life, caste identity and the Rajasthani way of life. This allows us to understand the *Kaavad*’s cultural and socio-economic context within Rajasthan. The chapter concludes by summarizing findings and identifies the gaps and emergent questions around the role of *Kaavad* within its community.

In chapter three we discuss the fieldwork undertaken in the practitioners’ natural settings and the visual ethnographic material brought together. The ethnographic model is extrapolated to include visual methods such as film¹ and photography in addition to interviews and conversations. Detailed descriptions about the maker, storyteller and patron, follow; including their home and work environment, their village and everyday work life and the *Kaavad*’s role within it. Origin myths that connect them to each other and their practice are documented. In the case of the makers and tellers processes by which they transfer their knowledge to the next generation, their perceptions and point of views about the tradition, the purpose it serves and its

¹ A short documentary film ‘Makers of Tales’ has been created by this investigator to support the fieldwork and the collection of data on the ethnographical information of the narrators.

future are reported. Practitioners also discuss the past and present patronage and how they interact with each other. Recordings of a *Kaavad* performance in its natural settings form a part of this chapter. The patrons also discuss the significance of a *Kaavad* recitation in their lives.

Chapter four explicates the Design and Structure of the *Kaavad*. The *Kaavad* anatomy includes the physical/material structure, the visual structure, the narrative structure and the navigation through the *Kaavad*. Samples for studying the physical and visual structures include *Kaavads* from storytellers, extant ones in Indian museums and from the *Kaavad* makers. For the narratives we examine transcripts of performances from three storytellers. This chapter concludes with a short discussion on the relation between the structures and the unfolding of the *Kaavad*.

In chapter five the methodological approach is discussed in relation to the investigation of the *Kaavad*. The *Kaavad*, a folklore object may be examined from the perspectives of oral narratives, material culture, social customs and as performance. The rationale for using a structural and semiotic approach is described and discussed. Brief introductions are given about key figures related to structuralism and semiotics with an emphasis on Vladimir Propp and the binary discriminations of Lévi-Strauss. Proppian methods are discussed in detail as well as the work of contemporary Indian scholars who have used these methods with success. The concluding discussion integrates the approaches of semiotic, structural theoretical analysis and visual ethnography in strengthening the inquiry and analysis of the *Kaavad* as a symbolic pilgrimage. A sample analysis illustrates the use of methods.

In chapter six analytical tools are used to examine the similarities between the *Kaavad* recitation and the journey undertaken by a pilgrim. Proppian analysis is used to identify the key functions in the *Kaavad* stories, *Kaavad* performances and that of a pilgrimage followed by a comparison between both. The binary discriminations of Lévi-Strauss further explain the narratives within the *Kaavad* and semiotics analysis explains the role of images and restricted code in the *Kaavad* narration. With the findings it is argued how the *Kaavad* comes to be a ‘pilgrimage’ in space and an ‘identity’ in time.

Chapter seven summarizes and discusses the findings from the previous chapters. The significance of pilgrimage and recitation of genealogies is explained with reference to its role in the lives of the *Kaavad* communities. Unique characteristics of the *Kaavad* phenomenon that contribute to creating the experience of pilgrimage are identified and elucidated. The chapter concludes with a discussion on the implications for design and designers.

Appendix I has fifty four stories elicited and collected from one storyteller that have been translated and organized with their concerned images from the *Kaavad*. These are arranged with the corresponding image and their specific locations in the *Kaavad*.

Structural analysis of 54 individual stories using Proppian methods is included in Appendix II. Each story is analyzed separately and then collated together for a comparison.

Appendix III has three performances by three different storytellers recited for three different patrons. They have been transcribed in Hindi and translated in English although many more performances were recorded in the field. These performances were recorded on location in the presence of patrons with their permission. We accompanied the storytellers to the residences of their patrons in the desert regions of Jodhpur, Barmer and Jaisalmer districts.

Appendix IV is a glossary of terms used in the thesis and the stories. The glossary explains their meanings in the context of the *Kaavad* tradition.

Other appendices include an illustrated book “Home”, published papers, and a 23 mins ethnographic film titled: ‘The Makers of Tales’.

List of Tables

Table. No.	Captions	Pg. No.
4.1	Description of <i>Kaavads</i> Examined	98
6.1	Syntagmatic Analysis of Individual Stories	139
6.2	Significant Proppian functions in the <i>Kaavad</i> Tales	141
6.3	Significant Recurring functions in the <i>Kaavad</i> Tales	143
6.4	Proppian Analysis of the <i>Kaavad</i> object with its narratives	146
6.5	A comparison of the Performances/Recitations	152
6.6	Proppian Analysis of a recitation of the Open or <i>Khul paat</i>	160
6.7	Proppian Analysis of a Pilgrimage	162

List of Figures

Fig. No.	Caption	Pg. No.
Chapter 1		
1.1	Storytellers with their <i>Kaavads</i> : Seturam, Kojaram Rav	8
1.2	Relation Model	12
1.3	The Context and Framework for Study	16
Chapter 2		
2.1	Egyptian portable shrine, with wooden pegs on the door	22
2.2	Portable Shrine, Nepal	22
2.3	<i>Stupa</i> Shrine from Bhutan	22
2.4	Edo Fan with pilgrim carrying a portable shrine	23
2.5	Ethiopian Icon	24
2.6	Lord Jagannath comes to meet people	24
2.7	<i>Biman</i> , portable shrine, Orissa	25
Chapter 3		
3.1	Study diagram	39
3.2	The districts of Rajasthan and location of makers in Bassi	42
3.3	Marwar region of the storytellers	43
3.4	Ghanshyamji Suthar with family at their home in Bassi	46
3.5	Satyanarayan Suthar at work in his home	47
3.6	Mangilal Mistry and family in their home at Udaipur	48
3.7	A sketch showing the probable evolution of the <i>Kaavad</i> form	50
3.8	Map of Bassi with Nalla Bazaar	51
3.9	Suthar Bhotlall at work	51
3.10	<i>Bheda ki Guwadi</i> , the ancestral home of the Bassayati Suthars, and their <i>Sati Mata</i> , Bassi	52
3.11	The Suthar Genealogy	54

Fig. No.	Caption	Pg. No.
3.12	Temple complex in Bassi, Interior painted by Jamnalal Suthar from Bassi	56
3.13	Carpentry work: <i>Ghadna</i> and <i>Thokna</i> , first step to learning, Susheela and Asha Suthar preparing and finishing	60
3.14	Ghanshyamji Suthar taking instructions or ' <i>aida</i> ' from storyteller Shera Ram in Nagaur	62
3.15	Kojaram Rav with family outside their house in Kumhara	65
3.16	Pappuram Rav with family outside their house	67
3.17	Kundana Bai	70
3.18	The Rav Bhat genealogy of Kojaram Rav	71
3.19	Narsinh Rav's family setting up <i>Dera</i> in Asarlai, Jodhpur district	73
3.20	Bhanwruji Rav reading out a <i>Bahi</i> in <i>Modhi Padhai</i>	74
3.21	Kaavadiya Narsinh Rav with patrons in Balao, Jodhpur district	75
3.22	Upside down donors	78
Chapter 4		
4.1	Kojaramji carrying his <i>Kaavad</i>	87
4.2	Non-ritual or commercial <i>Kaavad</i> from Bassi, Chittor	88
4.3	<i>Marwari Kaavad</i> closed and open position	89
4.4	The ticket on the outer shrine doors	90
4.5	Entry pass carried by the storyteller	90
4.6	<i>Kaavad</i> parts as identified by the makers	91
4.7	Outer shrine with Vishnu/Krishna and Kundana Bai in the hidden or <i>Gupat paat</i> , Inner shrine with Ram Sita Lakshman, reached through the open or <i>Khul paat</i> and donation box or <i>daan peti</i>	92
4.8	Closed or <i>Bund paat</i> recited for new patrons	92
4.9	Hidden or <i>Gupat paat</i> recited for anonymous patrons/ <i>jajmans</i>	93
4.10	Open or <i>Khul paat</i> recited for regular clients	93
4.11	<i>Kaavad</i> from the Sanskriti Kendra	94
4.12	<i>Kaavad</i> from the National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum (NHHM), New Delhi	95

Fig. No.	Caption	Pg. No.
4.13	<i>Kaavad</i> RC-M/Raj from NHHM Museum, New Delhi	96
4.14	<i>Kaavad</i> from the L D Museum, Ahmedabad	96
4.15	Kojaram Rav's <i>Kaavad</i>	97
4.16	Champavati from Chaurpanchashika, Mewar	100
4.17	Different kinds of grid formats in the <i>Kaavad</i>	100
4.18	Yellow lines divide the frames	101
4.19	Panel 1 and 2 outer shrine doors with <i>Poliya</i> or guardians of <i>Kaavad</i>	101
4.20	Panel 1 <i>Surya</i> or Sun and 2 <i>Chandrama</i> or Moon on the reverse side of <i>Poliyas</i> or guards	101
4.21	Panel 3 Snake or <i>Naag paat</i> , on the reverse side are Patrons or <i>Jajmans</i>	102
4.22	Panel 4 <i>Dashrath ka paat</i>	103
4.23	Panel 5 <i>Raavan ka paat</i>	103
4.24	Panel 6 <i>Pandavas ka paat</i>	104
4.25	Panel 7 <i>Bhaktimala ka paat</i>	104
4.26	Panel 8 <i>Badrinath ka paat</i>	105
4.27	Panel 9 and 10 Duti Bai and Raja Harishchandra	105
4.28	Panel 9 and 10 Karma Jatni and Shravan Kaavadiya	106
4.29	Panels with patrons and deities in the centre	106
4.30	Moon and Sun panels	107
4.31	Patron panel with Vishvakarma in the centre	108
4.32	Kojaram Rav getting ready to recite in Sadhu Bheel ki Bassin	110
Chapter 5		
5.1	Metaphoric diagram by Terence Hawkes	128
Chapter 6:		
6.1	Panel 1 and 2 (front) Guardians or <i>Poliyas ka paat</i>	143
6.2	Panel 1 and 2 (back) Sun or <i>Suraj ka paat</i> Panel 3 Serpent or <i>Naag paat</i>	143

Fig. No.	Caption	Pg. No.
	Panel 2 Moon or <i>Chandrama ka paat</i>	
6.3	Binary System in <i>Kaavad</i> stories	172
6.4	The <i>Kaavad</i> Object and its symmetry	174
6.5	Binary System in the <i>Kaavad</i> Object	175
6.6	Panel 4 <i>Raavan paat</i> Binary System in <i>Kaavad</i> images	176
6.7	Kundana Bai hidden behind a sliding panel	179
6.8	The panels recited for patrons	179
6.9	Sireeyade saves kittens	183
6.10	Ginka Bai with parrot, and patron with parrot	184
6.11	Codes for patrons on the patrons' panels	184
6.12	Frontal figures of Kabir, Dashrath, Kundana Bai, Badri Narayan , the guardian <i>Poliya</i> , Vishnu and Krishna	185
6.13	Paradigmatic Analysis	187
Chapter 7		
7.1	The closed or <i>Bund paat</i>	198
7.2	The Open or <i>Khul paat</i>	198
7.3	The Hidden or <i>Gupat paat</i>	199
7.4	Panel with patrons and Lord Vishvakarma in the centre	202
7.5	Summary diagram	205

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Organisation of Chapters	iii
List of Tables	vii
List of Figures	ix

Chapter 1: Introduction: Unfolding of the *Kaavad*

1.1 Unfolding of the <i>Kaavad</i>	1
1.2 Stories and their Functions	3
1.3 Locating the <i>Kaavad</i> in Indian Storytelling Traditions	6
1.3.1 Overview of the <i>Kaavad</i> Phenomenon	9
1.3.2 Origin Stories of the <i>Kaavad</i> Phenomenon	11
1.3.3 The Situation Today	12
1.4 Aims and Objectives of the study	13

Chapter 2: Review of Literature: Portable Shrines and Oral Narratives

2.1 Introduction	17
2.2 Rajasthan: the socio-cultural milieu of the <i>Kaavad</i> phenomenon	18
2.3 Oral Narratives	20
2.4 Portable Shrines	21
2.5 Pilgrimage and Religious Practices in Rajasthan	26
2.6 Storytelling traditions using Portable Shrines in Rajasthan	28
2.7 Historical References to <i>Kaavad</i> -like forms and objects	30
2.8 Scholarship on <i>Kaavad</i> tradition	31
2.9 Conclusion	33

Chapter 3: Fieldwork: The *Kaavad* Community

3.1 Introduction	37
3.2 Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Approach	38
3.2.1 Use of Film as a Data Gathering Tool	40
3.3 Defining the field, locating the <i>Kaavad</i> Community	42
3.3.1 Rapport Building and Compensation	44

3.4 The World of the Suthars - Makers of <i>Kaavad</i>	45
3.4.1 Brief biographies of the <i>Kaavad</i> Makers	46
3.4.2 Home and Location: Village Bassi and its environs	50
3.4.3 Community of Makers in the Village, Identity and Origin Myths	55
3.4.4 Cycle of seasons, means of livelihood, and distribution of work	57
3.4.5 Worship and Pilgrimage	58
3.4.6 Learning and Transfer of Knowledge	60
3.4.7 Patronage past and present	61
3.4.8 Interaction with the Storytellers	61
3.5 The Tellers of Tales: <i>Kaavadiya Bhats</i>	62
3.5.1 The <i>Kaavadiya Bhat</i> Community	63
3.5.2 Brief biographies of Storytellers: Kojaram Rav	65
3.5.3 Brief biographies of Storytellers: Pappuram Rav	67
3.5.4 Myths and multiple identities of the <i>Kaavadiya Bhats</i>	68
3.5.5 Storytellers home and location	72
3.5.6 Itinerant existence	73
3.5.7 Role of a <i>Kaavadiya Bhat</i> : genealogist	74
3.5.8 Transfer of knowledge and the training of a storyteller	75
3.5.9 Interaction with Suthars and the patrons/ <i>Jajmans</i>	76
3.6 The Patrons: <i>Jajmans</i> of the storytellers	77
3.6.1 The relationship with the storyteller	77
3.6.2 Community of patrons, home, location, means of livelihood	78
3.6.3 Significance of a <i>Kaavad</i> recitation	78
3.6.4 Significance of the recitation of genealogies	79
3.6.5 Wish-fulfillment and the <i>Kaavad</i> recitation	79
3.7 Performance of the <i>Kaavad</i>	80
3.7.1 The recording of <i>Kaavad</i> recitations	80
3.7.2 Narration or <i>Kaavad Baanchana</i> and the sequence of a performance by Narsinh Rav from Bassini Hari Sinh Ki	81
3.7.3 Narration or <i>Kaavad Baanchana</i> and the sequence of a performance by Pappuram Rav from Kumhara	83
3.7.4 Narration or <i>Kaavad Baanchana</i> and the sequence of a performance by Kojaram Rav from Kumhara	84

3.8 Conclusion.....	85
---------------------	----

Chapter 4: The *Kaavad* Anatomy: Design and Structure

4.1 Introduction	87
4.2 The <i>Kaavad</i> Anatomy.....	89
4.3 The Physical Structure.....	91
4.3.1 Comparison of <i>Kaavads</i> from various sources.....	94
4.4 The Visual Structure.....	99
4.4.1 The Painting Style	99
4.4.2 The Visual structure and layout.....	100
4.4.3 The Panels	102
4.4.4 Colour and the representation of figures	107
4.5 Narrative Structures	110
4.5.1 The <i>Kaavad</i> narratives.....	110
4.5.2 The Navigation	112
4.6 Conclusion.....	113

Chapter 5: Theoretical Framework and Methodology

5.1 Introduction	115
5.2 The Study and Analysis of Folklore: A Background	117
5.3 Structuralism and Semiotics	120
5.3.1 Vladimir Propp).....	122
5.3.2 The Functions and Dramatic Personae	123
5.3.3 Claude Lévi Strauss	125
5.3.4 Algirdas Greimas	127
5.3.5 Roland Barthes	127
5.4 Material Culture and Ethnography	129
5.5 The <i>Kaavad</i> ‘Text’.....	130
5.5.1 The Object	130
5.5.2 The Image	131
5.5.3 The Narration and the Narratives	132
5.6 A Proppian approach applied to Indian Tales	133
5.6.1 A sample analysis using Proppian methods	133
5.6.2 A sample analysis using Lévi-Straussian methods.....	134

5.6.3 A sample analysis using Semiotic Analysis.....	135
5.7 Conclusion.....	135

Chapter 6: A Structural and Semiotic Analysis of *Kaavad* and its Discourse

6.1 Introduction	137
6.2 Syntagmatic Analysis.....	138
6.2.1 Syntagmatic Analysis of Individual Stories	139
6.2.2 Proppian Functions in <i>Kaavad</i> Stories	142
6.2.3 Syntagmatic analysis of the cluster of stories on panels	143
6.2.4 Proppian Analysis of the <i>Kaavad</i> object and its narratives	146
6.3 Structural Analysis of a <i>Kaavad</i> Recitation or Performance	149
6.3.1 Narration or <i>Kaavad Baanchana</i> and the sequence of a performance.....	149
6.3.2 A Comparison of <i>Kaavad</i> Recitations.....	150
6.3.3 Proppian Analysis of a recitation of the Open or <i>Khul paat</i>	160
6.4 Pilgrimage	162
6.4.1 The Sequence of a Hindu Pilgrimage.....	162
6.4.2 Similarities between functions in <i>Kaavad</i> Narratives, Performance and Pilgrimage	164
6.5 Paradigmatic Analysis.....	164
6.5.1 Binary systems in individual <i>Kaavad</i> stories	166
6.5.2 Binary systems in <i>Kaavad</i> stories across panels	171
6.5.3 Binary Systems in <i>Kaavad</i> Narration	172
6.5.4 Binary Systems in the <i>Kaavad</i> Object.....	174
6.5.5 Binary Systems in the <i>Kaavad</i> Images.....	176
6.6 Semiotic Analysis.....	177
6.6.1 The Images and their Narratives	179
6.6.2 The Signifiers and the Signified.....	182
6.7 Conclusion	188

Chapter 7: Conclusion

7.1 <i>Kaavad</i> as Pilgrimage	192
7.1.1 Place, Space and Liminality	193

7.1.2 Seamlessness of sacred and secular, myth and reality.....	195
7.1.3 Renunciation and Recognition	197
7.2 Time, Memory and the Construction of Identity	200
7.2.1 Polysemy and Polyphony	202
7.3 <i>Kaavad</i> performance and mediation.....	203
7.4 Memory, Imagination and Design	205
7.4.1 Implications for Design	207
Appendix I <i>Kaavad</i> Tales from Kojaram Rav	211
Appendix II Proppian Functions of <i>Kaavad</i> Tales	245
Appendix III <i>Kaavad</i> Performances and their Translations.....	273
Appendix IV Glossary of Terms	337
Select Bibliography	351
Acknowledgment	361

Chapter 1

Introduction: Unfolding of the *Kaavad*

1.1 Unfolding of the *Kaavad*

When we first encounter the *Kaavad* of Rajasthan, we are conscious of it being something more than an artifact. It has the appearance of a shrine but it also invokes a book, a pre-modern comic strip in wood, and a journey, inviting us to open it and discover spaces and images folded into each other. Its images remind us of paintings from Rajasthan; the images on its wooden panels bearing no references to locale but separated from each other by well-defined grids. Some figures are easily recognized as those of Hindu gods and goddesses because of their iconography, while others look away from us with identical expressions, challenging us to define them. Many figures appear to be on the move – in cars, jeeps, planes, carts, riding camels, horses and elephants. As we unfold the hinged panels we also discover sliding panels and secret doors that conceal other images. Why are these images concealed and what occasion reveals them? When we open all the panels from the left and the right of this highly symmetrical object we find three deities contained in the innermost spaces. Even before we have experienced the *Kaavad* performance, we sense not only something sacred and ritualistic but also an object that desires to tell stories.

The *Kaavad* reminds us of portable shrines, bioscopes, wooden puppets and pictorial scrolls and yet it appears to be very different; with a distinct quality that invites our curiosity about what it could be, and the purpose it serves its community. It appears to be highly structured with its symmetrical form and clear grids.

Its complex form seems to be 'designed' for a function. Is the object designed for a particular community? Is it used for ritualistic or public performances? Who owns the *Kaavad*? We may also question on the lines of Jean Baudrillard (1996) about experiencing objects as discussed in the *System of Objects*. He asks:

“...how objects are experienced, what needs other than functional ones they answer, what mental structures are interwoven with – and contradict – their functional structures, or what cultural, infracultural or transcultural system underpins their directly experienced everydayness.”¹

The *Kaavad* one may point out is made by a particular community but used and performed by another. This suggests a kind of collaboration that may have developed over time. What synergies are therefore involved to sustain the tradition? The *Kaavad* is of great design and anthropological/cultural interest because of its existence at the intersection of crafted object (with its own strict devices of pictorial narration) and the act of storytelling. We start with a designer's interest in a different 'local' form of storytelling – a story box different from bioscopic entertainment and film. The images are not self-explanatory and the narration cannot be understood without the images. The *Kaavad* performance or recitation involves not only storytelling but also the narration of genealogies. This makes the *Kaavad* a unique artifact and tradition that we seek to understand by placing it within its cultural context.

A creation of the oral tradition, the *Kaavad* as a portable shrine is neither used as a temple for personal worship nor is it a replica of an existing shrine or temple that is brought home after a pilgrimage. It is both a secular and sacred space; perhaps a performative one, for the narration of genealogies and stories from the epics and local legends. The disparate and seemingly unrelated multiple stories in the *Kaavad* are delivered by the storyteller in a particular order. Naturally the question arises here: What lies behind this ordering and what does it communicate? However, to answer this question, we first need to discuss stories in general and their functions.

¹ Jean Baudrillard, *The System of Objects*. (London, New York, 1996) p.4.

1.2 Stories and their Functions

In all ages and all places stories have been exchanged between people as they express the deepest desires and anxieties of a society, directly or through subversive means. Whatever be the reasons for storytelling, the narration of a story brings people together, be it situated in a street corner or a dark cinema hall. Story and narrative are often used interchangeably and storytelling is the oral delivery of a narrative. The term narrative has its roots in the Sanskrit term 'gna' which means 'know', and Latin 'gnarus' which means 'knowing' and 'narro' or 'telling' (Abbot, 2000). This knowing and telling then becomes a way 'for absorbing knowledge as well as expressing it'.²

Commenting on the ubiquitous nature of narrative, Roland Barthes states:

“Narrative is present in myth, legend, fable, tale, novella, epic, history, tragedy, drama, comedy, mime, painting..., stained glass windows, cinema, comics, news item, conversation. Moreover, under this almost infinite diversity of forms, narrative is present in every age, in every place, in every society; it begins with the very history of mankind and there nowhere is nor has been a people without narrative... it is simply there, like life itself.”³

The ubiquity of narrative or story can be explained by the various functions that the story fulfills for human beings. Stories have been used to: 'remember, argue, justify, persuade, engage, entertain and even mislead audiences' (Riessman, 2008). Functionally, sacred stories invoke faith and piety; listening to them is considered meritorious in many cultures, accruing merit by listening promises a higher realm of life after death. So strong is the belief that even when the listeners are unable to understand the language they are convinced that by the sheer act of listening they will gain 'merit, blessings and protection' (Mair, 1988). Sacred stories or myths often exist seamlessly with lived life as discussed by anthropologist Bronislaw Malinowski (1984). He remarked:

“Myth fulfils in primitive culture an indispensable function: it expresses, enhances, and codifies belief; it safeguards and enforces morality; it vouches for the efficiency of ritual and contains practical rules for the guidance of man. Myth is thus a vital ingredient of human civilization; it is not an idle tale but

² H. Porter Abbot, *The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative*. (Cambridge, 2002) p.11.

³ Roland Barthes, *Image Music Text*. (London, 1977) p. 79.

a hard-worked active force; it is not an intellectual explanation or an artistic imagery, but a pragmatic charter of primitive faith and moral wisdom.”⁴

A story may be sacred or secular, oral or literary, performed or enacted; it is one of the ways by which humans make sense of life by ordering events in time and space. In a story, sequence of events are organized together to construct meaning. The construction of meaning is not only created by the storyteller but also by the listener.

Roma Chatterji (1985) draws distinctions between sacred and secular stories; identifying secular stories as *Kahani* and sacred stories or myths as *Katha*. *Kahani* can be recited anywhere and anytime for any audience as opposed to *Katha*, which has definite ritualistic functions and is performed on specific occasions for particular purposes.⁵ Alan Dundes (1984) defines a sacred narrative as the one that explains ‘how the world and man came to be in their present form’.⁶ Theodor Gaster (1984) makes another distinction between story and myth. He says:

“The difference lies not in their subject matter nor in the credence that is accorded them, but in their function and motivation. A myth is, or once was, *used*; a tale is, and always was merely *told*.”⁷

Some stories are so old that they have acquired a life of their own and can be found in many forms all over the world. Stories are always enacted or told and in their telling they are transformed, each teller bringing something of their own that they belong to a whole community rather than a single teller, like the folktales.

For the believer, the sacred story or myth is an entry into sacred time, where in the act of listening s/he forgets their own current situation and ascends into an otherwise inaccessible place, which is on a ‘superhuman or suprahistorical plane’ (Eliade, 1991).

In story reality is simulated or reconstructed in space and time, but this space is not necessarily a real place or a tangible location. This space is often conceptual, appropriated

⁴ Bronislaw Malinowski, “The Role of Myth in Life” In *Sacred Narrative*. Ed. Alan Dundes. (Berkeley, 1984) p.199.

⁵ Roma Chatterji explains in great detail the differences between *Kahani* (‘the one that is made up’) and *Katha* (‘that which is true’) in terms of its content, function, performance, treatment of characters, time and space. See Roma Chatterji, *Folklore and the Formation of Popular Consciousness in a village in the Purulia District of West Bengal*. (Delhi, 1985) pp. 50-125.

⁶ Alan Dundes, *Sacred Narrative*. (1984) p.1.

⁷ Theodor H Gaster, “Myth and Story” In *Sacred Narrative*. Ed. Alan Dundes. (Berkeley, 1984) p.123.

and made accessible through the agency of imagination. Because it exists in the realm of imagination it remains concealed, unexpressed and therefore uncontested. Time too, in story is not bound by reality; it is either condensed or compressed where ages pass by in the batting of an eye-lid or a moment is stretched over eons or it simply stops, becoming timeless or 'non-temporal'. With the agencies of memory and imagination, time and space are ordered in story, by which we re-arrange and re-enact all that we wish or desire; lament our losses and reconcile ourselves to our given situations. We reconstruct a space in time and locate ourselves within that, giving ourselves the identity and destiny we perhaps seek; not the one that is given or imposed, but the fulfilling one we long and aspire towards.

In that sense, story is a 'liminal'⁸ space that we occupy at will and because we invest it with our aspirations and imagination it also becomes a mirror where our desired self is reflected.

Storytelling in oral traditions relies primarily on the memory of the storytellers and listeners. To enable remembering, mnemonic devices are used by storytellers that help them recall the narratives. Often, oral renditions of stories are accompanied by images or performances. Storytellers use visual devices to enliven their telling that also serve them as *aides-memoires*. To cite a few examples: In Indonesia, the *Wayang* (theatre or shadow) is a general term for many kinds of story performances, using flat leather puppets as shadow play, picture scrolls and puppets. Some of the stories are from the Mahabharata. In Tibet, the storytellers of *Ma-ni-pa* *thankas* recited stories about Padmasambhava and other Buddhist tales in fairs, places of pilgrimage and in bazaars. The *Surat Khwan* of Iran, is the equivalent of the *Yammapatika* in India, where the storyteller tells his audiences about heaven and hell, about rewards and punishment on the day of resurrection. Similarly, the *Pien-wen* of China and the Japanese *Etoki* (explanation of/by a picture that is typically a hanging) also use images for a story narration (Mair, 1988). However, beyond the utilitarian function that a visual device may perform for storytellers and their listeners it fulfills the need to 'see' the story.

As pointed out by Kavita Singh (1995):

“Our need to *see* our stories is a fundamental, perhaps even a

⁸ Liminality comes from the Latin word *limen* which means threshold. A liminal state is a period in transition when normal differences are ignored, a temporary suspension of status quo. Victor Turner describes it as a place 'betwixt and between worlds'. For more details see Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*. (Chicago, 1969) pp. 94-129.

physiological, one. We never truly receive a narrative (or other communications, for that matter) as a purely verbal event. During a telling, one constantly imagines the story, and conversely, in seeing a visual, one is always reading into it a content.”⁹

This ‘seeing’ of a story or picture storytelling creates an experience of the events occurring in front of the listeners as noted by Patanjali in the *Mahabhashya*, a grammatical treatise. He discusses the appropriateness of the use of the present tense with regard to events even though they occurred a long time ago because the images accompanying the texts create a sense of the present moment unfolding in front of the devotees (Mair, 1988). In a sense picture storytelling offers its listeners an opportunity to enter this ‘liminal’ space and experience events as they occur within the narrative. Seeing is a form of validation as it creates a link between the text and the image.

1.3 Locating the *Kaavad* in Indian Storytelling Traditions

It is believed that ‘pictorial storytelling’ has been known in India since the time of the Mauryas¹⁰ (Mair, 1988). Various forms of storytelling using images are found in almost all parts of the country, ranging from pictorial scrolls to wooden and shadow puppets and painted shrines. Amongst those using pictorial scrolls there are several examples from Bengal, Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan. The storyteller unrolls the scroll little by little and reveals ‘the story in time’. The story scrolls from Bengal are known as *Patas*. These are vertical scrolls of paper or cloth that are hand painted by the *Patua* or storyteller himself. *Patas* are also found in Bihar, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. Stories told are from the *Ramayana*, *Mahabharata* and more recently on contemporary political issues such as Mahatma Gandhi’s *Satyagraha* and the freedom struggle, Indira Gandhi’s manipulation of freedom of the press and her transformation into a martyr etc. (Ghosh, 2003).

In Gujarat, the *Garoda* Brahmins used vertical painted scrolls *Garoda* depicting scenes from heaven and hell, epics, local themes and from the *Puranas*. A common trait between all of these is the use of vertical scrolls and the act of revealing the story a little at a time. In Maharashtra, painted story panels known as *Chitrakathis* were used to tell stories from

⁹ Kavita Singh, *The Pictures of Showmen*. (Chandigarh, 1995) pp. 11-62. This is an exhaustive study of forms of picture storytelling in the world and India in particular with excellent references to ancient literary documents.

¹⁰ For an expansive study of picture storytelling in India as well as Asia refer Victor H Mair, *Painting and Performance: Chinese Picture Recitation and its Indian Genesis*. (Honolulu, 1988) pp. 17-37. Also see Jyotindra Jain, *Picture Showmen*. (1998).

the epics and the *Purans* by a sub-group of Thakar community also known as *Chitrakathis*; a term comprising of *chitra* or picture and *katha* or a sacred story. The *Chitrakathis* occasionally use leather shadow puppets (Singh, 1995). Shadow puppets in leather evolved in Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka where stories from the great epics are enacted all night long by the storytellers behind a screen backlit with lamplights (Jain, 1998).

Rajasthan has a rich living tradition of pictorial and performance storytelling that includes the *Kathputli*, *Phad* and the *Kaavad* amongst others. The most known or popular forms are the wooden puppets *Kathputli* (*Kath* as wood and *Putli* as puppet) and the painted horizontal scrolls called the *Phad* of Pabuji, Ramdevji and Devnarayan.

The puppet performances or *Kathputli ka khel* (the play of the wooden puppets) are secular and mostly performed any time of the day or night for entertainment and social satire, centering on legends and ballads of valour or romance such as Prithviraj Chauhan or Dholu Maru amongst others. The makers and performers of these puppets are one and same. The invisible performer who manipulates the string puppets (*sutradhar*) from behind a screen of the stage is accompanied by musicians while he recites in prose and verse.

The *Phads* serve religious and ritualistic functions and are ceremoniously performed for specific communities. The *Phad* scrolls are considered sacred and equivalent to a shrine and like a shrine or temple are ritually consecrated when made or performed. The performance is known as *Phad Baanchana*, and is recited in prose and verse. Along with the recitation the performer storyteller plays a stringed musical instrument and periodically breaks into dance. Typically, there are three kinds of *Phads* that are performed for their patrons or devotees. The Devnarayan *Phad* is recited for the *Gujar* community, the Pabuji *Phad* for *Rebaris* and the Ramdevji *Phad* for Meghwals and several other lower castes (Singh, 1995). The *Phad*, unlike other story scrolls in India which are vertical, is a horizontal scroll of almost twelve to thirty-five feet in length that is displayed fully open and performed at night. The storyteller *Bhopa* is different from the painter Joshi Chhipa of the *Phad*. The notion of revealing a little at a time is achieved by the active area of the scroll being illuminated by an oil lamp held by an assistant, either a learner or the wife of the storyteller *Bhopa*. A performance is commissioned by the patron either as a token of

thanks for wishes fulfilled, or in anticipation of a wish, like the cure of animals or rainfall (Miller, 1994; Singh, 1995; Smith, 2005).¹¹

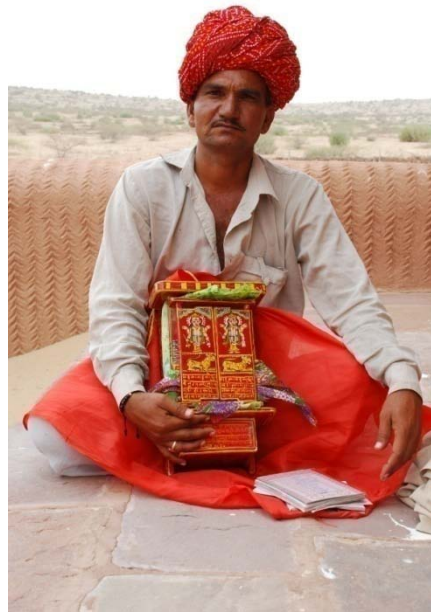


Figure 1.1 Storytellers with their *Kaavads* Left: Seturam

Right: Kojaram Rav

The *Kaavad* is one of the lesser known forms of storytelling from Rajasthan (figure 1.1). This is possibly because the practicing community and its patronage are quite small, although the *Kaavad* artifact has drawn some attention as an artistic and communication tool outside of its traditional role.¹² Versions of it are also sold to tourists. The storytellers (Kaavadiya Bhats) and their hereditary patrons (*jajmans*) consider the *Kaavad* as a sacred shrine which demands listening to stories and making donations. It is believed that listening to stories purifies the soul and reserves a place for the devotee in heaven. Although the stories are from the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* they are considerably different from the ‘classical’ or mainstream epics so as to acquire a life and interpretation

¹¹ For more details on the *Phad* tradition see Joseph C Miller, *The Twenty four brothers and Lord Devnarayan: The story and performance of a folk epic in Rajasthan, India*. (Pennsylvania, 1994). Kavita Singh, *The Pictures of Showmen*. (Chandigarh, 1995) and John D Smith, *The Epic of Pabuji*. (2005).

¹² Communication Designer Lakshmi Murthy has been using the *Kaavad* form to teach sex-education to young adults in Rajasthan since the nineties. See http://www.vikalpdesign.com/3_dimen.html.

The investigator has in the past created an interactive touch based *Kaavad* for primary school education called the *e-Kaavad* at the National Institute of Design, Ahmedabad. See <http://www.springerlink.com/content/9qg11t4275p24608/>.

More recently, Baroda based artist Gulam Mohammed Sheikh has been inspired by the *Kaavad* to create large non-portable structures for his interactive art. See <http://www.artflute.com/Blog/post/Private-View-of-Kaavad-Travelling-Shrine-Home--Ghulam-Mohamed-Sheikh>.

of their own. Indeed it could be argued that it may not be long before these stories lose themselves to homogenized dominant mass-media versions.

The *Kaavad* shares some common traits with the wooden puppets (*Kathputli*) and the painted scrolls (*Phad*); both in the manner of its making and performance. The method of painting the images in all three is the same where the outline is painted last after the figures are painted in water colours. Like the *Phad* it is a portable shrine where religious and heroic tales are recited after certain rituals are performed. And like the *Kathputli* it is also a source of entertainment. However, the *Kaavad* defies a definition as restrictive as an ‘artifact’, or ‘painting’, or ‘story’, or a ‘performance’. It is a work in which painting, recitation of genealogies; narratives and gesture coalesce to create a complete work of art or an ‘experience’. It is thus a phenomenon, an ‘intermedium’¹³ which transcends its own corporality; going beyond its material existence as a shrine. Like the *Phad* it is possibly experienced as a pilgrimage place; in addition it also signifies a conceptual space that the patron wishes to occupy in society. The *Kaavad* is used by the storyteller to tell stories and to recite genealogies; therefore it serves not only as a sacred shrine but also a theatre of narratives with visual imagery. It is unique that it is the only one in which the same image represents multiple persons. The *Kaavad*’s practitioners, the painted images, the shrine-like structure, the narratives and their narration all depend on each other and together create meaning and experience. This uniqueness sets it apart from other storytelling traditions.

1.3.1 Overview of the *Kaavad* Phenomenon

The *Kaavad* storytelling tradition is approximately a 400 year old tradition (Lyons, 2007) although like several oral traditions in India, its origin is located in mythology or attributed to a mysterious power. The *Kaavad* is made by a community of carpenters (*Suthars*) in the Mewar district for storytellers (*Kaavadiya Bhats*) from the Marwar district who ‘recite the *Kaavad*’ (*Kaavad Baanchana*) for their hereditary patrons (*jajmans*) spread over Rajasthan and neighboring states in the country. *Bhakti* Saints like Meera, Kabir, Raidas and Narsinh are found in the extant *Kaavads*. The *Kaavad* may have come into prominence at the same time as other forms of storytelling were being popularized by the growing *Bhakti* movement in the North, between the 12th to 17th centuries. Feelings of devotion together with protest against an oppressive social order were being articulated in the various

¹³ ‘Intermedia’, a term coined by Dick Higgins to describe artworks that do not confirm to a pure medium. An ‘intermedium’ is that which falls between media. See Dick Higgins, “Synesthesia and Intersenses: Intermedia” In *Leonardo*, 34.1 (2001) pp. 47-48.

regional languages and dialects. In the popular imagination, *Bhakti* was associated with a group of visionaries or *sants* who rebelled against rituals and caste distinctions (Sharma, 2002). Similar movements had already gained momentum by the 10th century in the South through the Alvars (Vaishnavites) and Nayanars (Shaivites); poets who extolled the virtues of devotion through personal worship and music. It is possible the *Kaavad* may have provided access for personal worship. The inaccessibility to an actual temple could be attributed to Rajasthan's sandy terrain where temples would be hard to build or/and to the strong hierarchical and feudal system of caste and race. It is also possible that there was a paucity of Vishnu temples in the region and therefore a shrine dedicated to Vishnu and his *avataar* Ram had to be brought to the devotees.

The *Kaavad* has been defined as a portable shrine '*chalta phirta mandir*' that comes to the devotee rather than the devotee going to the temple (Bhanawat, 1975). The storyteller brings the *Kaavad* to his patron's place once in a year and performs a recitation. He brushes the *Kaavad* with a peacock feather (considered to be sacred) to ward off evil and sacralize the object for the recitation and entry to a sacred space. The beginning ritual is as brief as lighting an incense stick; faith and belief being stronger than rituals. The recitation includes verse and prose rendition of known stories and the genealogies of the patron. The storyteller also praises the devotion and magnanimity of his patron's generosity to those gathered.

What is also unique is that the patrons of the storyteller may pay and commission an image of themselves, to be painted in the shrine alongside the Gods/deities, saints and local heroes and heroines depicted on the *Kaavad*. In this way the patrons may enter a space which was possibly denied to them or was inaccessible. It is through the *Kaavad* that the patron finds accessibility to sacredness. This happens at two levels, of space and time. One is the entry of the shrine/temple in the patron's home, thereby 'cleansing' the patrons place; and at the same time the patron also enters the 'sacred space' by virtue of being a painted part of it.

At another level, by experiencing the narrative as it unfolds and hearing the names of ancestors, the patron enters in Mircea Eliade's (1963) words a "sacred Time, at once primordial and indefinitely recoverable."¹⁴

¹⁴ Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*. (1963) p.18.

1.3.2 Origin Stories of the *Kaavad* Phenomenon

The term *Kaavad* comes from the word '*Kivad*' meaning door (Bharucha, 2003) and the shrine consists of several panels that open up, imitating the experience of opening doors after doors.

The Sanskrit- English dictionary (Apte, 1996) defines *Kaavad* as either a '*Kavaat*' or '*Kapaat*' or '*Kivad*' meaning half a door or a leaf or panel of a door. This description stems from its form.

The other meaning based on the function associated with the term *Kaavad* is that which 'is carried on the shoulder'¹⁵. The *Kaavad* which is carried on the shoulder is a bamboo pole with two baskets, and this is attributed to Shravan Kumar of the epic *Ramayana*, who used it to carry his blind parents to all the pilgrim centres.¹⁶ As Shravan is accidentally killed by his uncle Dashrath, the pilgrimage is not completed. His parents die of grief and the memory of this incomplete journey is reiterated.

How the form of the *Kaavad* came to be transformed from the bamboo pole and two baskets to the current shrine-like structure is not explained. The only explanation given by the storytellers from Jodhpur and Nagaur for this paradigmatic change in its form is that since Shravan's parents were unable to complete the pilgrimage, the pilgrimage places were now being brought to all those who cannot visit either a temple or pilgrimage sites. And when it became a pilgrimage place coming to the people the form was transformed into that of a painted shrine. According to Kojaram Rav, the storyteller from Kumhara, Jodhpur, this also explains why some pilgrim centres like Pushkar, Char Bhuj and Dwarka are a part of the *Kaavad*. Since the use of the *Kaavad* is first mentioned in the *Ramayana*, the *Kaavad* phenomenon is as old as the *Ramayana*. The Kaavadiya Bhats¹⁷ believe they are the descendants of Shravan Kumar, and this narrative explains the given identity of being *Kaavad* bearers or *Kaavadiyas* from the *Treta Yug* (the third epoch of time) and also forges an alliance between the storytellers and Lord Ram.

This origin story is further complicated with the storytellers attributing the design of the current form of the *Kaavad* to a woman, Kundana Bai, a Brahmin priest from Kashi (now

¹⁵ As told by storyteller Kojaram Rav in a personal interview with this investigator in Nagaur, July 12, 2007.

¹⁶ In Valmiki's '*Ramayana*' Shravan is not mentioned by name, but he was accidentally killed by King Dashrath. In Tulsidas' '*Ramayana*' Shravan is mentioned by name and king Dashrath is cursed by Shravan's bereaved parents to die of separation from his son Ram. In the *Kaavad* lore, Shravan is the nephew of king Dashrath and therefore related to lord Ram. They in turn are his descendants so they too are related to lord Ram.

¹⁷ These Kaavadiya Bhats are different from the '*Kaavadiyas*' who carry holy water in baskets balanced on bamboo poles from the Ganges in Haridwar to Shiva's temples in Rajasthan.

Varanasi). Kundana Bai was not an ordinary woman; she was gifted with a boon to be born afresh every day so that she was a child in the morning, a young woman in the day and an old lady at night.

Observing that the Kaavadiya Bhats did not have their means of livelihood, she gifted them the *Kaavad*. She ordered them to take the *Kaavad* around to devout people and collect donations on her behalf. The donations collected would be divided; half would go to the storytellers and the other half towards feeding and upkeep of cows in Kashi. This is inscribed in a textual form on the front doors of the *Kaavad* shrine and signed by Kundana Bai, validating claims made by the storytellers regarding the honorable use of the funds collected from the devotees and patrons.

1.3.3 The Situation Today

A tradition is sustained through continuity and change. In the case of the *Kaavad* too, the tradition survives as a ritual practice in remote villages and as commerce in urban areas.

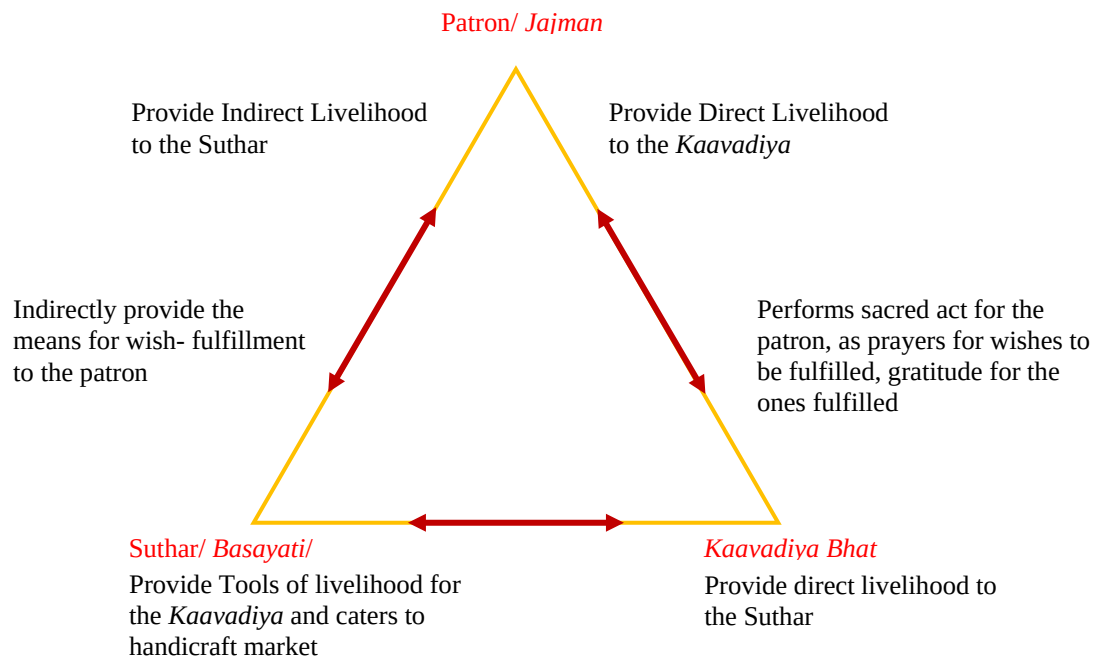


Figure 1.2 Relation Model

The tradition has been preserved through conservation of knowledge and practice on the one hand and through innovation on the other (figure 1.2). In the village it is possible to conserve the old methods and content because the makers are in touch with the traditional storytellers and are required to continue making the *Kaavad* as their forefathers. Whereas in the city due to lack of contact with traditional storytellers, the makers have found new

clientele with different needs, for which new themes have to be introduced. In that sense, both contribute towards the continuity of the tradition. The reason why they continue to make *Kaavads* is because of their strong sense of professional identity as the only ones who make these artifacts.

Because of having to innovate and find new themes, the makers in the city have to locate texts and expose themselves to various ideologies and approaches to life. Today, the *Kaavads* are being made for the tourism industry as well as the export market. The traditional *Kaavad* makers of Bassi and other middlemen who have entered the arena are making *Kaavads* to order, including those on various subjects like the life of Jesus Christ, Meera Bai, Prithviraj Chauhan, Mahavir etc. They rarely make them for the traditional client, the storyteller *Kaavadiya*, and the link between the maker and storyteller has weakened to the degree that some makers are not aware where the storytellers may be found. However, there are some storytellers still around to carry the tradition into the future. How long the tradition will last will depend on what it means to its practitioners and patrons and its importance in the everyday life of its community.

1.4 Aims and Objectives of the Study

The *Kaavad*, despite its uniqueness, has received scant scholarly attention and it may be appropriate and timely to give it the attention it needs.

As Jawaharlal Handoo (2000) points out:

“India has fascinating regional folk cultures which make the area of material culture more important and challenging. Finally, the global concern about the future of mankind in view of the uncontrolled technological growth and its recognized dangerous results compels one to keep in view the options which our traditional life styles offer in terms of folk technologies and dependable knowledge and wisdom. Who knows we might need all this again one day.”¹⁸

The tradition is on the brink of extinction as the storytellers find their listeners dwindling and the makers have to look elsewhere to sell their wares or employ their traditional skills to create other objects that appeal to consumers. Few practitioners are still holding on to the traditional form as handed down to them by their forefathers. Others are experimenting

¹⁸ Jawaharlal Handoo, *Theoretical Essays in Indian Folklore*. (Mysore, 2000) pp. 37-38.

with the themes and exploring subject matter from other religions, as well as secular content that may appeal to contemporary audiences.

The Audio-visual documentation of the tales and performances is an urgent requirement. Film helps preserve instances and events that are ‘rare and non-recurring’.¹⁹ Apart from conservation, film (moving images) also allows the investigator to study non-verbal gestures and expressions that communicate in the language of the people who represent the subject of the research.

An analysis of the phenomenon will suggest what characterizes the *Kaavad* and its significance for its community. It is hoped this thesis may be relevant for visual artists and designers seeking to collaborate or work with art practices or folklore. It also offers a potential framework to document, analyze and interpret data using specific theoretical tools. We may explore approaches of ethnography, structuralism and semiotics as a model for design analysis. This is to be carried out through empirical fieldwork and a close interaction with the practitioners in their space. Before the tradition vanishes completely- and it appears to be on the threshold of doing so- it needs to be given its due place. Who knows it may reappear some day in another form?

The study of the *Kaavad* tradition offers an opportunity to understand a community and its philosophy through stories that are unique to their culture. The recitation of the patron’s genealogies, at the same time, also raises the question of why the stories and genealogies are hinged together in the shrine. Therefore, the *Kaavad* appears to be an object that is ‘designed’ to serve specific functions integral to its form and recitation.

Just as stories are memories, so they are mediations between reality, and aspirations which reflect what the society desires to express about itself. Consider this:

“Myth as the primary form of the organization of collective memories, enables the groups to preserve a remembered past, conserve community integrity and identity and behold a vision of the future.”²⁰ (Mayaram, 1997)

Quite often designers are called upon to ‘intervene’ and introduce contemporary uses and forms, using traditional skills of artisans as a way of enhancing communication, and perhaps even generating income for the artisan. When they do this, they come to play the

¹⁹ Timothy Asch; John Marshall; Peter Spier, “Ethnographic Film: Structure and Function”. In *Annual Review of Anthropology*. (1973) pp. 179-187.

²⁰ Shail Mayaram, *Resisting Regimes: Myth, Memory and shaping of a Muslim Identity*. (1997) p.31.

role of a mediator between the craftsperson and market trends. In this role, they need to understand how the ‘craft object’ exists in its local context in order to fully participate and collaborate with the artisan.

As designers we often ‘adapt’²¹ or ‘appropriate’²² stories and visual styles from folk traditions to articulate creative expression. The *Kaavad* form has been ‘appropriated’ by this investigator to create a self-learning device that addresses contemporary needs of primary education. It becomes clear that though the form is used effectively, the nuances of the *Kaavad* and its cultural moorings cannot be understood in depth without an intense engagement. Prima facie, it is a unique convergence of image, narration and device on the one hand and a symbol of an inclusive practice of myth-making on the other. What becomes evident is that a deeper understanding of the phenomenon is essential for the ‘appropriation’ to be meaningful.

Our objective in this study is to examine the *Kaavad* phenomenon at a macro and micro level. On a macro level we may ask what function the *Kaavad* serves. What does a recitation entail in its natural settings? What keeps the tradition alive? How is it defined by the carriers of its tradition? How are they responding to changes in society and technology today? Why are stories and genealogies recited together? Is the *Kaavad* a ‘simulated pilgrimage’?

At a micro level we may investigate relationships existing between the images, the narratives and the material structure of the *Kaavad* shrine and how it links the makers, storytellers and their patrons.²³ Why are images and stories ‘ordered’, ‘arranged’ and ‘narrated’ in a specific way? Also what are the temporal and spatial characteristics of the *Kaavad* storytelling phenomenon?

²¹ ‘Adaptation’ may be defined as a ‘process involving the transition from one genre to another’. See Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*. (2006) pp.18-20 .

²² ‘Appropriation frequently affects a more decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain’. See Julie Sanders, *Adaptation and Appropriation*. (2006) pp.18-20.

²³ The gaps in current scholarship will be discussed in the following chapter on the review of literature.

The Context for Study

The larger canvas

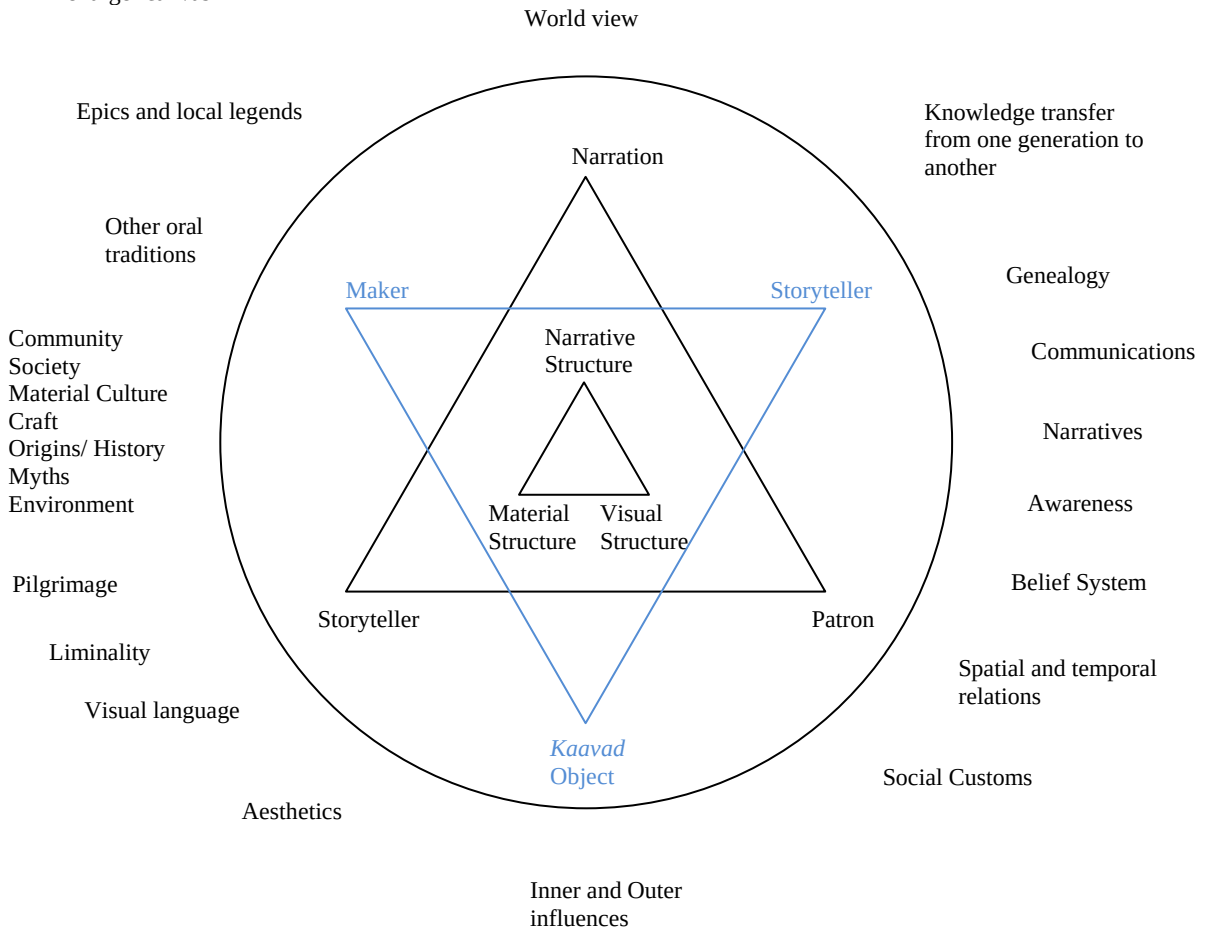


Figure 1.3 The Context and Framework for Study

A diagram framing the context for study (figure 1.3) is drawn up to visually represent the levels of engagement with no intended hierarchies of elements; rather our intention is to study the elements in relation to each other. There are sets of relations between the storyteller, *Kaavad* maker and the *Kaavad* at one level and at another level there is a set of relations that connect the storyteller, his narration or recitation and his patron. The universe of the *Kaavad* community includes their life, work, myths, environment, and notions of identity and sense of history. Within the universe of the *Kaavad* there is a set of relations between the wooden object, the images and the narratives that together form the portable shrine. The research questions are:

Is the *Kaavad* recitation and its performance akin to experiencing a pilgrimage as suggested by the storytellers? If so, what is the role of its 'design' and how does its design contribute towards that experience? How does the *Kaavad* object achieve this in conjunction with the oral narration of stories and genealogies?

Chapter 2

Review of Literature: Portable Shrines and Oral Narratives

2.1 Introduction

The *Kaavad* tradition appears to have received very little scholarly attention. Scholars have examined the *Kaavad* from the perspective of painting traditions (Bhati, 2009; Lyons, 2007), as a portable shrine (Bhanawat, 1975), recorded as documentation¹ or examined the phenomenon from a historical, narrative performance (Mair, 1988; Singh K. , 1995; Bharucha, 2003); however, it has not been studied amply enough as a composite whole phenomenon, especially the emic perspectives of all the carriers of the tradition to explain the ‘designed’ object, its significance to the community, and its reason to survive. Further, these studies do not conduct fieldwork ‘insitu’ with their informants, though some of them have used interviews with the *Kaavad* makers but not the storyteller or their patrons. Nonetheless, these contributions inspired and informed this enquiry and led to the

¹ Two recordings of *Kaavad* recitation in a studio setting are known to exist. One is made by Mahendra Bhanwat in 1972 at the Lok Kala Mandal, Udaipur (the recording could not be located when asked but it has been transcribed and published (see Mahendra Bhanawat, *Kaavad*. (Udaipur, 1975) pp. 13-29, and the second by Komal Kothari in 1982, accession no: 0263 at the Rupayan Sansthan, Jodhpur. (This is not transcribed or translated yet).

formulation of the investigation. This thesis conducts an in-depth investigation of maker, storyteller and patron through its fieldwork approach.

The objective of this chapter is to survey the existing literature on the *Kaavad* and comprehend the cultural environment that surrounds its tradition by looking at the extensive scholarship on related storytelling traditions in Rajasthan, particularly the *Phad* tradition (Joshi, 1976; Miller, 1994; Singh K. , 1995; Jain, 1998; Smith, 2005) and the performer-patronage relationship (Kothari, 1995). An understanding of Rajasthan's physical environment and social structure (Singh M. H., 1894, 1991; Dumont, 1966, 1988; Handoo, 1983; Singhi & Joshi, 1995; Tod, 2001; Bharucha, 2003; Vyas & Gehlot, 2010) offers a larger canvas against which we may appreciate the context and location of the *Kaavad* tradition. References to literature pertaining to other aspects such as methodology, ethnography, pilgrimage and identity will be made in the relevant chapters when we discuss those themes at length.

2.2 Rajasthan: the socio-cultural milieu of the *Kaavad* phenomenon

Rajasthan, the largest state in India is home to the *Kaavad* tradition and its community. Rajasthan's physical terrain is characterized by two distinct locales. South East Rajasthan includes Udaipur, Chittor, Bassi, Kota, Bundi etc and this terrain is green and densely populated whereas the North West with Jaisalmer, Jodhpur, Ram Devra, Bikaner etc. is sandy, dry and thinly populated. This geographical distinction between regions within Rajasthan is created by the oldest mountain range, the Aravalli hills (Ahuja, 1994). These distinctions also contribute to its cultural complexity. The fertile Mewar is well-known for its arts and crafts and Marwar with its desert and sand dunes has performers, musicians, puppeteers, panegyrists and storytellers.

The communities of performers have been encouraged by patronage that is hereditary; with each performer having several patrons that they inherit from their fathers. Komal Kothari (1995) describes three types of patron-performer relationship. One in which the patrons are gifted by a father and distributed amongst his sons in the same way as a property share. As families of the performers and the patrons expand and grow this number too keeps changing, with some members of a family being with one performer and others being with the performer's brothers. In the second instance, the patrons are seen as village group; in which case the performers divide entire villages amongst each other. In this case the

number of patrons may not increase too much because new villages are not formed very easily.

Another different relationship is an open access system, where a performer may arrive at any patron's place first and receive his 'customary payment'. This obligatory payment in any of the three relationships is fixed and assures a continuity of the tradition to some extent. The performer is not a stranger for his patron. He plays an important role in maintaining family records and genealogies of his patrons. Consider the following:

“The patrons explain that these are the people who carry the immense weight of memory within their heads about their origin, their ancestors, and family history. They see them in a timeless unit of human civilization to which they own their existence. Thus for all practical decisions of life regarding weddings, legitimacy of their successors and owners of hereditary movable and immovable property, they are governed by the performers.”²
(Kothari, 1995)

Rajasthan is amongst several other states in India that has a complex caste system that cannot be simply explained by the classical *varna* system.³

There are numerous *jatis* (castes) which according to Manu⁴ evolved out of intermarriages between the four *varnas* (Dumont, 1966, 1988). However, the *varna* system itself has been a much debated subject which is beyond the scope of this study. What is significant and essential to the study however is to understand that the *jati* relationships represent the way society functions while *varna* signifies a ritual ranking, therefore the caste and sub-caste actually indicates the real status (Thapar, 1975). The communities associated with the *Kaavad* phenomenon have been identified as the OBCs⁵ (Other Backward Classes) by the government of India that essentially places them outside of the Hindu classical *varna* system that classifies society in an exclusive hierarchical relationship with each other. This community prefers to identify itself by its caste such as Bhat, the Suthar, Mali, Meghwal,

² Komal Kothari, “Patronage and Performance” In *Folk, Faith and Feudalism*. (Jaipur, New Delhi, 1995) p.57.

³ Defined as the four main divisions of Hindu society, viz. Brahmin (priest), Kshatriya (warrior), Vaishya (merchant) and Shudra (service providers).

⁴ Manu is the earliest human, the brainchild of Brahma and the creator of the text *Manu Smriti*, which explains the caste system and acts as a guide for civilization. For more details see G. Buhler, *The Laws of Manu*. (2004).

⁵ For a central list of OBCs published by the Government of India see <http://ncbc.nic.in/backward-classes/index.html> However, in a personal communication with this investigator, Kojaram Rav said they follow the *jati* system which is further stratified into clans or *gotras*.

Bhati, Nai, Beldar, Jat, etc and is further divided into sub-castes (*gotra*); for example the Bhats are classified as the Bahi Bhat, Brim Bhat, Chandisa Bhat etc (Singh M. H., 1894, 1991). Further the 'caste is recognized by society at large and the sub-caste by the particular caste of the individual' (Ghurye, 1961).

Caste and occupation also have a relationship and often caste names suggest the profession of the individual which is used to explain the *Jajmani* system. The term comes from the Sanskrit 'yajamana' or locally 'jajman' which means a patron or 'he who has a sacrifice performed'. According to Dumont (1966, 1988) the *Jajmani* System makes use of personal hereditary relationships to explain the division of labour in a village, where a community with means (usually land) is served by a community of experts or specialists for a specific task against repayment in kind. This repayment, which is obligatory, could be in the form of land, food, clothes, livestock etc and thus contributes to a permanent hierarchical relationship which is renewed every year. Dumont (1966, 1988) also perceives the caste and profession link through the intermediary of religion rather than politics or economy. This link to religion has been criticized recently for making the ritual status appear to be more powerful than the secular one in India apart from making caste synonymous with India (Natarajan, 2005). For the *Kaavad* makers (Suthars) the '*Jajmani*' system is a thing of the past as their clients are varied and not all are hereditary but for the storytellers (Kaavadiya Bhats) the system appears to work as they still have their hereditary patrons for whom they perform and bring the *Kaavad* portable shrine once a year. We may ask what significant role the *Kaavad* recitation plays in the patron's life for which they continue to support the performer. Is it related to the 'immense weight of memory' that they carry through oral histories? Or, is it that the storyteller as a genealogist carries information that validates the lineage of his patrons?

2.3 Oral Narratives

The *Kaavad* phenomenon belongs to the 'oral tradition' which may be defined as 'cultural information passed from one generation to the next'⁶. This is carried through word of mouth, through spoken language and utterances. As Walter Ong (1988) points out, in oral cultures words are considered powerful. And words are recorded and recalled through the agency of memory, organized by formulas and aides-memoires. This aid to memory takes the form of rhythmic or rhyming verse, or a story or narrative.

⁶ <http://encyclopedia2.thefreedictionary.com/oral+tradition>

These narratives are not memorized word for word. In the Slavic oral tradition, studied by Milman Parry and later Albert Lord, startling results led to re-examining the notions of memory.⁷ They discovered singers do not memorize their narration verbatim; rather they have a formula or formulae by which they can actually compose. Albert Lord (1965, 1973) explains how the singer composes while performing, rather than presenting something orally that he learnt by rote. This composing, too, is not 'free improvisation,' rather it is a 'formula' that allows the teller to compose the song in his own individual way (Lord, 1965, 1973). This structure appears to be unique to the oral tradition, including performances and storytelling. This explains how the same story is never told in the same way twice and the reason is not a mere lapse of memory. Rather, it allows a fair amount of autonomy to the teller and the learner in this tradition.

Further autonomy can be exercised by the teller in the manner in which s/he chooses to narrate the story. The storyteller has to be tactile and improvise his entry and performance. This could include aide memoirs in the form of picture scrolls, masks, puppets and shrines. The image or the puppet/mask invokes the memory of the narrator as part of the story is 'told' or illustrated in the form of painted images while the remainder is recited. The stories and myths are invested in the objects and when the tellers are no longer around these objects live to partly tell the tale, for example the portable shrines.

2.4 Portable Shrines

The phenomenon of the portable shrine stems from antiquity. One of the earliest extant shrines is found in the Egyptian Ptolemaic Dynasty 305-30 B.C.E, made in wood and painted with gesso, housed in the Egyptian collection, Smithsonian: Freer Gallery of Art⁸. Museum information suggests that it was used to transport the deities around the places within and outside of the temple and was carried by the priests. The sides have eight gods of creation, while two gods Thoth and Horus, guard each door. A king who could probably be the patron also kneels in the doors below the gods.

⁷ Milman Parry's goal was to prove that Homeric poetry evolved out of an archaic Greek oral tradition and he sought to prove this by collecting oral songs from a living tradition in Yugoslavia. A study of these songs by Parry and Albert Lord led to the oral-formulaic theory. See Albert Lord, *Singer of Tales*. (1973) pp. 30-67. Also see www.chs119.chs.harvard.edu/mpc/about/intro.html

⁸ For further details see (<http://www.asia.si.edu/collections/>)



Figure 2.1 Egyptian portable shrine (left) with wooden pegs on the door (right)

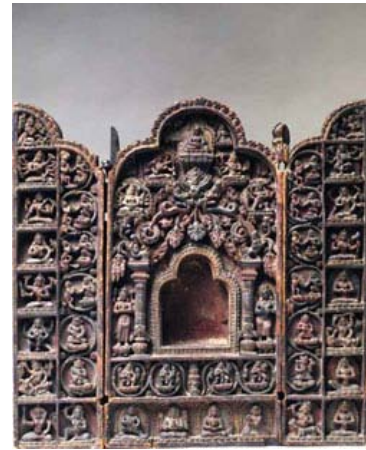


Figure 2.2 Portable Shrine, Nepal

The wooden pegs of the door seem to suggest that they served as hinges for the doors as also seen in the *Kaavad* (figure 2.1).

The Victoria and Albert Museum houses a portable shrine from 15th or 16th century Nepal, with doors that open and close (figure 2.2). According to a museum description, it possibly had an image of the Buddha in the centre with the surrounding niches housing deities and guardian figures. The lower border with an image of monk was ‘presumably the person who commissioned the shrine’⁹. This suggests that the patron could also be a part of the portable shrine.



Figure 2.3 Stupa Shrine from Bhutan

Sometimes the portable shrines served as souvenirs for returning pilgrims as in the case of Tibetan Buddhists (Guy, 1991) while at other times they were used by monks to preach to their listeners.

A portable shrine made in wood and clay found in Bhutan was used by *gomchen* (traveling monks). These monks preached Buddhist teachings, traveling from one village to another and used the shrine to explain religious stories, to those who were not able to read or write. The shrine had several doors that could be opened and closed. The shrine from the Liverpool Museum, UK is in the form of a stupa¹⁰ (figure 2.3).

⁹ For details refer <http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk/>

¹⁰ See www.liverpoolmuseums.org.uk/nof/world/asia_shrine.html

The portable shrine known as *Tashigomang* was believed to be the creation of Trulbi-zow Baleh, an incarnation of Vishvakarman.¹¹ The wandering bards known as ‘*Manip*’ were the alternate voice of religion and were considered dangerous as they were outside of mainstream religion, but received devotional offerings when they traveled with their shrines from place to place (Aris, 1987). Consider this:

“There are still such bards in Bhutan today, though none now enjoys the official status which previously freed some of them from the obligation to pay taxes and render labour services. Their standard repertoire consists of certain well-known Buddhist stories derived from Indian legend and the lives of Tibetan saints who played crucial roles in Bhutan. The bard's single "prop" is a portable stupa known as a *Tashigomang* ("Multi-doored Stupa of Good Fortune") - a sort of Buddhist Advent calendar in the form of a heavenly palace whose doors are opened by the bard as he chants to reveal the deities enclosed within.”¹² (Aris, 1987)

This is similar to the *Kaavad* in the way the doors open to reveal the deities within. However, the *Kaavad* storytellers recite the *Kaavad* for their patrons and not to a general audience in a public place.

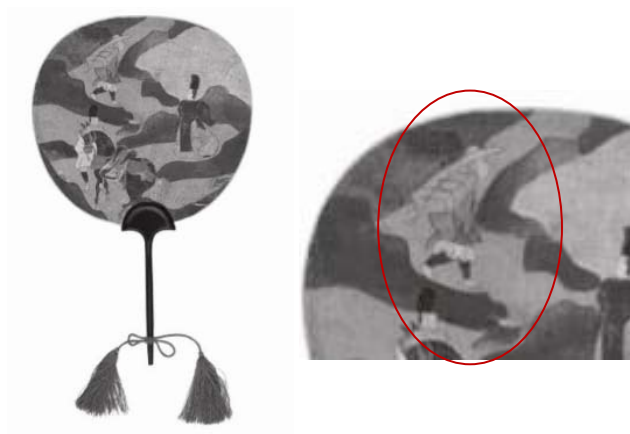


Figure 2.4 Edo Fan with pilgrim (see inset on right) carrying a portable shrine¹³

¹¹ See Yoshiro Imaeda and Doffu Drukpa, *Tashigomang of Bhutan* (supplementary brochure, "Asian Concepts of the Cosmos" Exhibition, La Foret Museum, (Tokyo, 22 Nov. - 12 Dec. 1982)

¹² Michael Aris “*The Boneless Tongue*”: *Alternative Voices from Bhutan in the Context of Lamaists Society*. (1987) p. 147.

¹³ See www.asia.si.edu/education/ArtsofJapan.pdf p. 20.

Another example of a shrine from Japan, at the Freer Gallery of Art, Smithsonian Institution, shows a pilgrim carrying a portable shrine, in a scene depicted on a fan from the 17th century Edo period¹⁴ (figure 2.4).



Figure 2.5 Ethiopian Icon



Figure 2.6 Lord Jagannath comes to meet people

In Ethiopia too, devotional images from the Bible were being painted on wood panels, in the fifteenth century (figure 2.5). Small portable icons for private worship also became popular at the same time. A leather cord passed through the icon to facilitate wearing around the neck. Double-sided diptychs were produced for numerous patrons at Gondar (Pankhurst 2000).

In India, Gods come off their pedestals to visit the mortals on some occasions, as in the case of the Jagannath Rath Yatra in Puri, Orissa. Each year, Lord Jagannath, his elder brother Balarama and sister Subhadra take a vacation to visit their garden temple in the countryside.

The idols are taken out of the temple and placed in chariots which are pulled by their devotees to the designated place outside of the city. This is the time for the gods to meet mortals and there is no distinction made as to the caste or creeds of the worshippers (figure 2.6). Fa Hien, the Chinese historian who visited India in the 5th century AD, observed:

“The monks of the Gomati monastery, being Mahayana students, and held in great reverence by the king, took precedence of all others in the procession. At a distance of three or four from the city, they made a four-wheeled image car, more than thirty cubits high, which looked like the great hall (of a monastery) moving along. The seven precious substances were grandly displayed about it, with silken

¹⁴ See www.asia.si.edu/education/ArtsofJapan.pdf.

streamers and canopies hanging all around. The (chief) image stood in the middle of the car, with two Bodhisattvas in attendance upon it, while *devas* were made to follow in waiting, all brilliantly carved in gold and silver, and hanging in the air. When (the car) was a hundred paces from the gate, the king put off his crown of state, changed his dress for a fresh suit, and with bare feet, carrying in his hands flowers and incense, and with two rows of attending followers, went out at the gate to meet the image; and, with his head and face (bowed to the ground), he did homage at its feet, and then scattered the flowers and burnt the incense. When the image was entering the gate, the queen and the brilliant ladies with her in the gallery above scattered far and wide all kinds of flowers, which floated about and fell promiscuously to the ground. In this way everything was done to promote the dignity of the occasion. The carriages of the monasteries were all different, and each one had its own day for the procession. (The ceremony) began on the first day of the fourth month, and ended on the fourteenth, after which the king and queen returned to the palace.”¹⁵ (Legge, 2004).



Figure 2.7 *Biman*, portable shrine, Orissa

Whereas the Jagannath Yatra form is an inclusive portable shrine that allows all to have a vision of the deity it differs from the portable shrines of Rajasthan in one respect; here everyone in the audience is or can be a part of the procession. In the case of the Rajasthani portable shrines there is a performer who is distinct from his audience.

A portable shrine *Biman*, also from Orissa, is made for returning pilgrims from Puri. It is a painted wooden shrine with wooden figurines of Lord Jagannath, Subhadhra and Balaram (figure 2.7).

In Rajasthan, the *Phads* (painted cloth scrolls of both Pabuji and Devanarayan), are considered to be portable shrines that are brought to patrons by the itinerant storytellers known as *Bhopas*. They are never left with the patrons as they are considered to be sacred, serving the patron as an experience of a pilgrimage (Smith, 2005, Jain, 2010). Similarly, the *Kaavad* too is considered a portable shrine that is brought to the patron by the Kaavadiya Bhats (Bhanawat, 1975).

¹⁵ James Legge, *A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms Being an Account of the Chinese monk Fa-Hien of his Travels in India and Ceylon in Search of the Buddhist Books of Discipline* (1886, 2004) pp. 18-20.

While the list above is not exhaustive, the types of shrines selected suggest that the notion of a portable shrine was widespread and that the shrine coming to people was well-known in India for at least two thousand years. What may be concluded therefore is that in most cases the shrines housed the deities and were made accessible for people. They were used for personal worship while traveling, or brought as souvenirs at the end of a pilgrimage, or used to make the deities accessible to those who could not visit a temple. In some cases like the Stupa shrine, *Phad* and *Kaavad*, the portable shrines also served as a space for storytelling and/or a simulated pilgrimage.

2.5 Pilgrimage and Religious Practices in Rajasthan

According to Monier-Williams dictionary a *tirtha* or ‘crossing place’ is ‘a passage, way, road, ford, stairs for landing or for descent into a river, bathing-place, place of pilgrimage on the banks of sacred streams, piece of water.’ Diana Eck (1981) discusses the primacy of place with regards to pilgrimage in India and traces a wide ‘constellation of meanings’ around the term ‘*tirtha*’. From being a place with good waters for drinking and bathing, a *tirtha* is a threshold, which links two worlds. She states:

“A second group of *tirtha* meanings emphasizes the nature of the *tirtha* as limens: the threshold, betwixt and between, which links this world and the other ... In sum it is clear that the *tirtha* is not only a riverside bathing and watering place, but a place where one launches out on the journey between heaven and earth. It is a threshold of time, space or ritual.”¹⁶

Another meaning attached to ‘*tirtha*’ is the notion of sacrifice, where the forfeiters actually have their wishes fulfilled after having made their sacrifices. The ‘*tirtha*’ therefore may be interpreted in several ways, as a place with sacred waters, as a liminal place between two worlds and as a form of sacrifice (Eck, 1981). A pilgrimage or *tirthyatra* involves all of the above, the pilgrim journey to a crossing place and enters a liminal space where they also make ritualistic sacrifices. Sacrifices could also translate as making donations and doing charity.

Pilgrimage is also an integral part of Rajasthani life and involves travel to shrines and temples within the state and faraway places. Pilgrims either walk to a pilgrimage place or use any form of vehicle, depending on what pledge they have made. A pilgrimage is

¹⁶ Diana L Eck, “India’s ‘Tirthas’: Crossings”. In *Sacred Geography*. (1981) p. 328.

undertaken to a sacred place when pilgrims wish to immerse the ashes of dear and departed ones, for peace and prosperity for themselves and their family, not only for the present, but for the life after death. They may also undertake a pilgrimage to fulfill vows pledged before.

Ann Gold (1990) defines two kinds of pilgrimages, '*Yatra*' and '*Jatra*' and the distinction is not merely phonetic; *Yatra* is made to pilgrim places, a *tirtha*, or crossing places such as Hardwar, Gaya, or Badrinath, a place of god where a person may be released from their sins, whereas *Jatra* involves a trip to minor 'goddesses and gods' (*devi devatas*) who grant wishes and to whom the devotee may pledge something. In a rich ethnographic account of a Rajasthani village's views of pilgrimage and pilgrimage sites she discusses various factors that distinguish '*Yatra*' from '*Jatra*' which are reflected in the pilgrims' objectives, the rituals involved and the architecture of the pilgrim sites. Consider the following:

“...*yatra* is set apart from the particularities of village social life by ritual prerequisites and aftermath. An auspicious time for departure must be determined by a Brahman; the path goddess (Pathwari Ma) must be worshipped both going and coming. When pilgrims return imbued with substantial residues acquired in divine crossing places, even their superiors in age or caste may touch their feet. *Jatra* is not hedged in this fashion by ritual attention nor regarded as transforming social identity. A decision to petition a local shrine deity may be taken at any time and accomplished without public fanfare.”¹⁷
(Gold 1990).

Temples or *Mandirs* are architecturally distinct from shrines called *Devals* or *Devras*. Temples are usually dedicated to God or *Bhagwan* (either Vishnu or his incarnations, *avatars*) and a priest performs the rituals. Shrines or *Devals* as they are called in Rajasthan are usually connected to semi-divine heroes, holy people or specific deities that grant wishes (Gold, 1990). They may be found in small alcoves in trees, terra-cotta plaques on roadsides or buildings and are known as '*devasthan*' where pilgrims make pledges and offerings. As has been observed in some of the storytelling traditions in Rajasthan, portable shrines, be they three dimensional or painted scrolls, invoke either the memory or the experience of a pilgrimage.

¹⁷ Ann Grodzins Gold, *Fruitful Journeys: The Ways of Rajasthani Pilgrims*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1990) p. 137.

2.6 Storytelling traditions using Portable Shrines in Rajasthan

The *Phad* and the *Kaavad* are both portable shrines carried by the performers to the place of their patrons. The *Phad* is a painted scroll on cloth and the *Kaavad* a painted wooden little shrine. Both have narratives painted on them by a caste different than the performer, and the technique of painting is also similar, notwithstanding other differences.¹⁸ Scholarship on the *Phad* tradition is more exhaustive than the *Kaavad*, the focus ranging from extensive descriptive studies of the tellers of the *Phad* tradition and its interpretation (Joshi 1976, Miller 1994, Singh 1995 Jain 1998, Smith 2005) to newspaper articles, essays, journals or historical references to the *Kaavad* (Bhanawat 1975, Mair 1988, Singh 1995, Bharucha 2003, Lyons 2007).

The *Phad* has received considerable attention; it has been extensively documented with scholars examining its performance, its visual language, the socio-economic structure of all the carriers of the tradition, and its narratives.

Mahendra Bhanawat's (1968) article on *Ramdala ka Phad* explains how it came to be different from the other *Phads* of Devnarayan and Pabuji. Interestingly, the stories from this *Phad* have strong resemblances to the *Kaavad* narratives, including the story of Shraavan and his maternal uncle Dashrath, Badrinath's temple, Mordhaj Raja, Duti Bai and the Bhakti saints. A comparison of narratives of this *Phad* and the *Kaavad* has been suggested by the author and may be taken forward, as only fieldwork and observation of actual performance of both will reveal this claim.

O P Joshi (1976) looks at the relationship between the patrons, artist, storyteller and audience of the *Phad* tradition in his book *Painted Folklore and Folklore Painters of India*. He examines the correlation between the image and narration in the *Devnarayan ki Phad*. He documents the art practices of the painters and the performers including attributes of a good performer, providing details of the life cycle of a *Phad* and the synchronic relationships between all practitioners. He describes the *Phad* as a 'mobile temple'.¹⁹

Joseph Miller's (1994) ethnographic doctoral thesis²⁰ on the Garasia tribe and their *Devnarayan Phad* spans a decade's involvement with the makers, tellers and listeners. It is a descriptive thesis with an exhaustive account of the story, the images on the scroll,

¹⁸ The *Phad* is an epic narrative focused on one hero, either Pabuji, Devnarayan, or Baba Ram Dev etc. whereas the *Kaavad* has multiple stories and is recited to multiple castes.

¹⁹ See O P Joshi, *Painted Folklore and Folklore Painters of India*. (Delhi, 1976) p.36.

²⁰ Joseph C Miller, *The twenty-four Brothers and Lord Devnarayan: The story and performance of a folk epic of Rajasthan, India*. (Ann Arbor, 1994).

performance and the belief systems of the patrons. He makes an extensive audio documentation of a performance, which is transcribed and translated in English. Using the structural method, Miller offers a scientific approach to analyzing the *Phad* paintings. This method provides insights that can be extrapolated to the images and their locations in the *Kaavad*. Several of the deities depicted on the *Phad* may also be found in the *Kaavad* for instance Shiva, Krishna stealing butter, Baba Ram Dev, and the chariots of the Sun and Moon etc.

Jyotindra Jain's (1998) study on the *Pabuji no Phad* and *Picture Showmen*²¹ of India provides historical evidences of both traditions from a narrative perspective describing how storytelling was an intrinsic part of everyday life in India. Citing references from Jain manuscripts, he suggests that story scrolls and picture boxes have existed since 2nd century BC. Use of visual devices to tell stories are common to many regions, especially in India, where the stories from the epics are told in many tongues and through many forms of visual representation. This vast canvas of storytelling forms; locates the *Kaavad* in a larger context, from which it may be examined and understood.

Kavita Singh (1995) examines the interrelationship of the context and the content of the images in the Devnarayan *Phad*.²² Besides the content she examines how the epic is depicted visually and how it is 'encountered' by the viewers for whom it is significant. Her study offers a strong structure to examine relations between the artifact, the viewer and the performer, and a structural study of the epic, which shows how a myth mediates between sets of oppositions. She also enumerates many traditions of 'picture showmen' or picture storytelling within and outside of the country. Singh also cites a reference to a *Kaavad-like* object from the Tarikh-i-Firoz-Shahi of Afif, where it is referred to as a '*Muhrik*- a wooden tablet covered with paintings within and without.'

John Smith's (2005) study of the Epic of Pabuji²³ situates the tradition in the context of the region, its social system and the changes brought about by the process of modernization. The *Phad* is described as a portable temple/ shrine which served the needs of a nomadic community. The primacy of place over time in the *Phad* is explained as an epic map in which events appear to be taking place. He also suggests that the *Phad* could

²¹ See the introduction by Jyotindra Jain, *Picture Showmen* (Mumbai, 1998).

²² Kavita Singh, *The Pictures of Showmen: Structure and Function of Images in the Picture Showmen Tradition*. (Chandigarh, 1995).

²³ John D Smith, *The Epic of Pabuji: A study, transcription and translation*. (Cambridge, NY 1991).

be a form of pilgrimage. This notion of place and pilgrimage may be examined in the *Kaavad* as well.

2.7 Historical References to *Kaavad*-like Forms and Objects

Due to a variety of reasons we are not discussing in detail the date and the origin of the *Kaavad* phenomenon. However, a historical context may throw some light on the practice and some of the terms used today. While the ‘*Kaavad*’ has not been called by this specific name in poet Bana’s account of King Harsha, there are references to picture storytelling in 7th century India that suggest that such practices may have preceded the *Kaavad* form. Bana mentions a *yamapatika*²⁴, showing Yama (the god of death/underworld) on a buffalo on a stretched canvas, and the storyteller ‘expounding on the features of the next world’ (Mair, 1988). What he ‘chants’ is very significant:

“Mothers and fathers in thousands and hundreds
Children and wives
Age after age have passed away: whose are they
And whose art thou?”²⁵

He seems to be addressing his audience and referring to the idea of their genealogies. There appears to be a relationship between recitation of stories and genealogies as the narrator appeals to his audience to think about their ancestry.

Another significant reference cited by several scholars (Goswamy 1986, Mair 1988, Singh 1995, Jain 1998), is to be found in some Jain texts, where the storyteller is described as a ‘*Mankha*’, a person of low caste who carried pictures painted on wooden boards and collected alms by showing these images to devotees. Thus, as per the Jain texts, the *Mankhas* were considered to be beggars (Jaini, 2001)

A reference to a *Kaavad*-like form is also found in *Tarikh-i-Firoz-Shahi*²⁶ of Afif:

“A report was brought to the Sultan that there was in Delhi
an old Brahman (*zunar dar*), who persisted in publicly
performing the worship of idols in his house, and that the

²⁴ The *Yama pata* is a piece of cloth or canvas on which *Yama* the god of death with his attendants and the punishments of hell are represented and the *Yamapatika* is the itinerant storyteller one who carries this about. See Monier-Williams Sanskrit Dictionary.

²⁵ This could well be the precursor to the chanting of genealogies in the *Kaavad*. Victor Mair also compares this to the present day *Ram Dala Phad* which closely resembles the *Kaavad*’s contents. Victor H Mair , *Painting and Performance Chinese Picture Recitation and its Indian Genesis* (Honolulu 1988) pp. 28-37.

²⁶ A 14th century account of the reign of Sultan Feroz Shah Tughlaq by Shams Siraj Afif.

people of the city, both Musulmans and Hindus, used to resort to his house to worship the idol. The Brahman had constructed a wooden tablet (*muhrik*), which was covered within and without with paintings of demons and other objects. On days appointed, the infidels went to his house and worshipped the idols, without the fact becoming known to the public officers. The Sultan was informed that this Brahman had perverted Muhammadaen women, and had led them to become infidels. An order was accordingly given that the Brahman, along with his tablet, should be brought into the presence of the Sultan at Firozabad. The judges and doctors and elders and lawyers were summoned, and the case of the Brahman was submitted for their opinion. Their reply was that the provisions of the law were clear: the Brahman must either become a Musulman or be burned. The true faith was declared to the Brahman, and the right course pointed out, but he refused to accept it.”²⁷

This is indicative of a *Kaavad*-like object in existence in the Sultanate period. Were the Kaavadiya Bhats related to the *Mankhas* mentioned in this text? The storytellers do not acknowledge being storytellers in their own village²⁸, as they are afraid of being called beggars or ‘*Maang khani Jati*’. Though our study may not be able to address this question we may ask, do terms like ‘*Mankha*’ relate to terms like ‘*Maang Khani Jati*’? ²⁹

2.8 Scholarship on *Kaavad* tradition

Mahendra Bhanawat’s (1975) essay is the first of its kind on the *Kaavad* and has been a source of information for several scholars. It describes the physical structure of the *Kaavad* and how the recitation takes place. Bhanawat refers to the *Kaavad* as a portable temple (*chalta phirta mandir*) that comes to the people who probably had no access to a temple in the sandy deserts or that there were not many Vaishnavites temples in the region. The telling described in the essay is based on one interview with the storyteller Shaitan Sinh³⁰ from Bhopalgad in Jodhpur district who recited the *Kaavad* in July 1972 at the Lok Kala

²⁷ Quoted and Cited in B N Goswamy, “In the Sultan’s Shadow: Pre-Mughal Painting In and Around Delhi”, In *Delhi Through the Ages*, Ed. R E Frykenberg. (1986) pp.129-142.

Also see Kavita Singh, *The Pictures of Showmen*. (Chandigarh, 1995) pp. 56-57.

²⁸ As told by Bansilal Rav and Kojaram Rav in a personal communication.

²⁹ We are grateful to B N Goswamy for drawing our attention to this linguistic similarity and thus widening our perception and perspectives.

³⁰ The recording was no longer available with the Lok Kala Mandal as it was made on an audio tape which had deteriorated with age. This investigator met with the son of Shaitan Sinh, Seturam in July 2007 who claimed to have stopped reciting the *Kaavad* but was willing to recite it for a recording.

Mandal (1975). This narration is then transcribed from the local Mewari into Hindi and is a part of the same essay. The narrator also reads out the genealogies of his patrons along with the names of their villages. This narration therefore does not represent what happens in natural settings. We propose to address through fieldwork in chapters three and four. Bhanawat's essay goes further to report the changing content and themes for the *Kaavad* and discusses the potential for education and communication. The essay does not refer to any other text or fieldwork. Bhanawat's several other essays and articles³¹ emphasize the need to innovate other uses for the *Kaavad*. The question of why the stories are told, along with the genealogies or why are specific stories represented on the same panel, is not addressed. Bhanawat compares the contents of the *Kaavad* to those of the *Ram Dala ka Phad* which may be explored further.

Rustom Bharucha's (2003) book *Rajasthan an Oral History*, based on conversations with the late Komal Kothari offers a brief account of the *Kaavad* tradition in addition to a larger canvas on the region and people of Rajasthan. According to him, the storytellers (whom he refers to as 'panegyrist of the Jassa Bhati community') have dual identities. They, like the acrobat 'Nats' have two professions, one of which they hide assiduously.³² This is an important point and has been addressed in our investigation. Bharucha also reports that a *Kaavad* recitation takes place at the demise of a patron's kith or kin.³³

Tryna Lyons (2007) essay on the art of Nathdwara and Basi³⁴ offers a historical background to the *Kaavad* makers of Bassi and the evolution of the *Kaavad* form. She suggests that the three-dimensional properties of the *Kaavad* developed gradually from a strip of wood to multiple panels to create a shrine. Further she compares the *Kaavad* to a pilgrimage to Nathdwara. She also draws conceptual parallels between the folk art of the *Kaavad* shrine with the temple art at Nathdwara, since the artists of both places belong to the same *Jangid* caste or community even though the artists at Nathdwara do not make *Kaavads*. As her focus is on conceptual parallels between the art of Nathdwara and the

³¹ Mahendra, Bhanawat, *Phad, Kaavad, Kilangi*. (Udaipur 1975).

³² This information was confirmed by the *Kaavad* makers in village Bassi, who explained that the Kaavadiya Bhat will never own up to being a storyteller in his own village. The Kaavadiyas themselves agreed that they would not admit to being storytellers in their own village as it lowers their caste status and they will be referred to as the '*mang khani jati*' (beggar).

³³ The deceased are praised and represented in the *Kaavad* at the request of their children but this is done much after their death. Often the patron even commissions his own image in the *Kaavad*. See Nina Sabnani, "Using Digital Media for the Study and Documentation of Kaavad Tradition in Rajasthan" In *Journal of Indian Folkloristics*. Ed. J. Handoo. (Mysore, 2007) pp.9-23.

³⁴ Tryna Lyons, "Mewari Perspectives: Udaipur, Nathdwara, Basi" In *Kingdom of the Sun* Ed. Joanna Williams. (San Francisco, 2007) pp. 35-51.

Kaavad paintings, there is no reference to meeting with the storytellers from Marwar or their patrons who form a significant part of the ongoing tradition. However, the proposition made about the storyteller Kaavadiya Bhat playing the role of a guide in a pilgrimage place leads us to ask whether the *Kaavad* is indeed a virtual pilgrimage? This question has been pursued further in this research leading to several other conclusions.

Ram Sinh Bhati's (2009) published dissertation³⁵ on the *Kaavad* is based on secondary research and ethnographic interviews in Udaipur city centered around one family of *Kaavad* makers. It describes the techniques for making and painting the *Kaavad*. It references conversations and interviews with the family, though this family has never made *Kaavads* for the traditional storyteller. Bhati's references to storytellers are based on the transcription of a telling is also taken from Bhanawat's 1975 essay on the *Kaavad*, not particularized by fieldwork. The study is more descriptive and its focus appears to be on examining the elements of the images on the *Kaavad* with the canons of Vishnudharmotara Puram and Chitrasutra, and we may ask how they lend themselves to study a folk tradition. Its contribution to understanding the *Kaavad* phenomenon is limited to the techniques of making the object.

2.9 Conclusion

Oral traditions often use visual devices to narrate stories, including shrines. The concept of a portable shrine is a widespread phenomenon and not specific to India alone. It is a fairly old tradition and emerged from the idea of worship being possible while traveling, whether it is the Gods that need to travel around the temple, as in the case of Egyptians shrines and Jagannath temple or being carried by monks while traveling from one monastery to another, as in the case of the Buddhists, or while propagating the importance of a particular religion as in the case of the *Tashigomang* and Vaishnavism, or a protecting emblem or icon, as used by the Ethiopians.

It is possible that the *Kaavad* shrine had to be carried around in times of persecution, or to remote places like the desert, where no temples of Ram or Vishnu existed.

The idea of a shrine with a set of doors seems to be common across so many cultures that it appears unlikely that the form of the shrine evolved in isolation, from a flat piece of painted wood to a shrine with doors and on to multiple doors. More likely, it evolved from

³⁵ Ram Sinh Bhati, *Rajasthan ki Lok Kala Parampara mein Kaavad Chitran*. (Udaipur, 2009).

one set of doors flanking the shrine to multiple doors or panels; however, it can only be a conjecture as there are no evidences to prove either of the claims.

The *Kaavad* shares similarities in form and function with some of the shrines discussed above, but also differs from them in various ways; for instance the *Kaavad* has similar wooden pegs, that are used as hinges like the Egyptian door (figure 2.1) and like the *stupa* shrine from Bhutan (figure 2.3) it has several doors that open to reveal deities within. It has painted narratives, like the Ethiopian icons (figure 2.5) and is inclusive, like the Jagannath chariot reaching out to devotees (figure 2.6). However, it is distinct in one respect; it is the only form of a portable painted wooden shrine that has images of deities along with the patrons whose genealogies are recited by the storyteller along with multiple stories from the epics and local legends.

The *Kaavad* conceptually comes closest to the *Phad* tradition, with which it appears to share several common elements. Both are portable shrines that are brought to the patron. In both traditions the performers or storytellers have a lifelong relationship with a patron for whom they make a recitation. The makers or artists are different from the storytellers and performers in both instances. In the case of the *Ramdala ka Phad*, the narratives also appear to be similar to the ones in the *Kaavad*, which merits a detailed examination and scrutiny.

The *Phad* is considered to depict a sacred geography, a pilgrimage place (Jain, 2010). Extensive literature on the *Phad* tradition offers suggestions and methods for collecting data and its analysis. The studies also present a framework for examining the close relationship between the carriers of a tradition, which includes the artist, the performer and the patron. Further, this literature contributes towards the articulation of questions we may ask about the *Kaavad* tradition that have yet to be answered.

Most studies dealing with the *Kaavad* have focused on one or the other aspect of the *Kaavad* phenomenon; either the evolution of its form, or its makers and their origins and in some cases a description of the tellers and their performances. The literature does not offer a comprehensive understanding of how all the carriers of the tradition come together and relate to each other. There is no record from the field that suggests how the makers, storytellers and the patrons claim their identities and define themselves or their tradition in the current times. Literature on the *Kaavad* tradition may be limited but it has presented some pointers to pursue our investigation and articulate our questions:

The performance or recitation transcribed by Bhanawat (1975) suggests that the narratives are incomplete or they are partially recited. Does that imply that the listeners are expected to know the stories? Is it possible to elicit the stories from the performers?

Is there a close relationship between the *Kaavad* and the *Phad* tradition?

Why does the storyteller hide his storyteller identity in his own village?

When is a *Kaavad* recited and what purpose does the *Kaavad* recitation serve its patron?

How does the design and structure of the *Kaavad* contribute to this end?

What stories are embedded in the *Kaavad*, when are they recited fully and what do they imply?

What is the significance of the stories and genealogies being recited together?

Finally, what does the syntagmatic order of a recitation reveal?

Is the *Kaavad* performance comparable to a pilgrimage? Is it a site for multiple identities?

Several of these questions can be answered if we have the emic perspectives from the carriers of the tradition. The lack of empirical details in these accounts can only be met by fieldwork with an ethnographic approach, which the following chapter attempts to provide through an insider point of view.

Chapter 3

Fieldwork: The *Kaavad* Community

3.1 Introduction

Being in the field gave the opportunity to understand the *Kaavad*'s universe from the social context of its community, the carriers of the tradition; the *Kaavad* maker carpenters (Suthars), the genealogist storytellers (Kaavadiya Bhats) and their patrons (*Jajmans*). Through several meetings and interactions we became familiar with their environment and cycles of seasons, their everyday life and their interactions with each other and the place of myths in their lives. Our contact was not continuous but frequent; we met several times over a period of three years in different locations, communicated periodically over the phone, and gradually acquired an understanding of our individual ways of working and being.

The carriers of the *Kaavad* tradition do not live or practice in the same region. The *Kaavad* makers live in Bassi, Mewar, and the storytellers live in Kumhara, Marwar, and their patrons are everywhere in Rajasthan and its neighboring states of Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. The *Kaavad* makers are more accessible since they live and practice in Bassi, their own village. The storytellers on the other hand lead a peripatetic existence because they do not practice in their own village, so they were difficult to trace.

The storytellers share a relationship over generations with their patrons, who are obliged to make a customary payment to them when the storytellers visit them periodically.

To understand the significance of the *Kaavad* phenomenon we needed to reach the patron or *jajman* through the storytellers and we met the storytellers through the *Kaavad* makers. Using an ethnographic approach we recorded all aspects of everyday life of the makers and storytellers with a focus on the making of the *Kaavad* and its recitation and performance in its natural settings. As Glassie (2001) points out:

“...every object of folkloristic study expresses the self, the individual, the one who processed received materials; and it expresses the society among whom, and for or against whom, the individual operates; and it expresses the world, and the place the society occupies; and it expresses some relation to the ultimate, the cosmological ground upon which all moves.”¹

3.2 Ethnographic Fieldwork: An Approach

Richard Dorson (1982) has described four important areas for the study of folk life and folklore viz. Oral Literature, Material Culture, Social Folk Customs and Performing Folk Arts. These areas offer us broad sectors within which to situate our study. Within oral literature Dorson places folk narrative and folk poetry. Material culture is described as the ‘physical folk life’ dealing with how people work, make their food, create objects, build their homes, learn skills and manage everyday life. Rituals and interaction between communities form the basis for studying social folk customs and drama, music and dance may be grouped under performing folk arts.² The *Kaavad* can be examined from some of these perspectives. Dell Hymes and Dennis Tedlock laid emphasis on studying folklore from an insider’s perspective rather than examining the literature in isolation (Magoulick, 2003). Bauman urges us to:

“... go beyond a conception of oral literature as disembodied superorganic stuff and to view it contextually and ethnographically, in order to discover the individual, social, and cultural factors that give it shape and meaning in the conduct of social life.”³

¹ Henry Glassie *Performance Theory and the Documentary Act*. (Chennai 2001) pp. 45.

² Richard M Dorson, ‘Concepts of Folklore and Folklife Studies’, *Folklore and Folklife*. (London ,1982) pp. 2-7.

³ Mary Magoulick ‘Fieldwork/Ethnography and Performance Theory’, *Folklore Connections*. (2003).

In other words, a researcher must faithfully record the making of the object ("text"), measure it, record the space in which it exists, record the creator's biography, life stories; study the community to which he belongs, record his own views about its history or origins, about its future, how he interprets his own tradition and how he responds to his current situation. Only then can a scholar hope to arrive at a deeper sense of meaning (Glassie, 2001). Based on Glassie's approach a study diagram (figure 3.1) is planned to guide the inquiry. It is devised to gather the data about the carriers of the *Kaavad* tradition; their home and location,

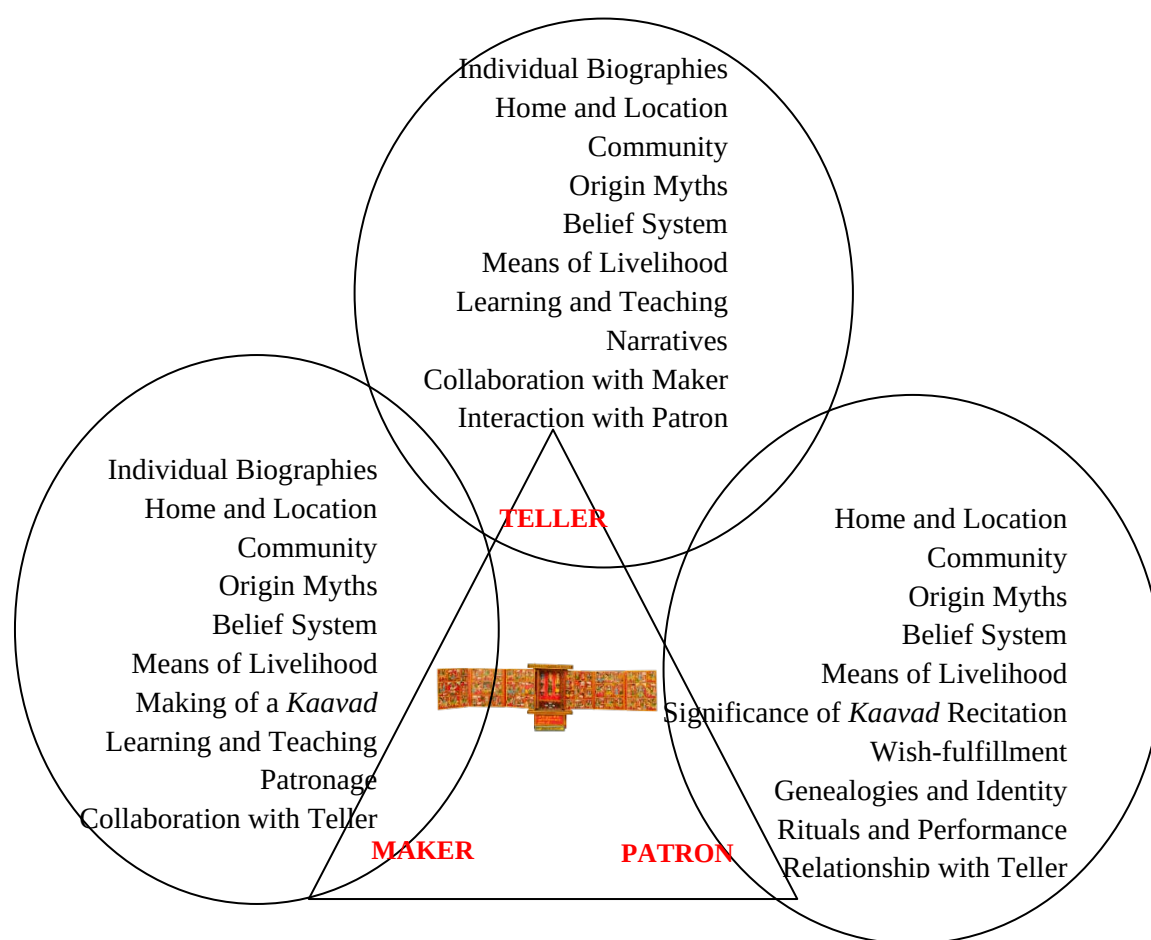


Figure 3.1 Study diagram

their work practice, origin myths, how they relate and interact with each other and the intersections between their claimed identities, belief systems and everyday life. Only an in depth understanding of this kind will explain the meaning and place of the *Kaavad* in the socio-cultural life of its communities and potentially reveal fundamentals necessary for the question of this research.

To understand the phenomenon from an insider point of view, we used methods such as participant observation, interviews and visual ethnography. We observed the *Kaavad* makers and storytellers at work, conducted structured and unstructured interviews and recorded the data in the video format as well as using photography.⁴ Visual ethnography was used as a methodology that may be seen beyond the role of providing supporting data. As Sarah Pink (2001) points out, it is an:

“...approach to experiencing, interpreting and representing culture and society that informs and is informed by sets of different disciplinary agendas and theoretical principles.”⁵

We used the film medium as one of the methods to gather and interpret data. Film and audio-visual recordings are well suited to document oral history, as they are immediately recorded and not left to the memory of the researcher and her notes. Further, film records non-verbal sounds or gestures or tone of voice which is rich data, and this nuance is possibly lost in field notes. The subject may perform actions that are unanticipated by the researcher or the subject may not consider their action significant enough to explain, for instance the order in which paint is applied on a *Kaavad*.⁶

3.2.1 Use of Film as a Data Gathering Tool

There are three methods by which ethnographic films are recorded; Objective Recording, Scripted Filming and Reportage. Objective records may be descriptive or analytical and both are used to study behavioral processes and social and cultural norms. Often the cameras may be remote controlled and recordings made at selected times. This is useful to study actual behavior in contrast to behavior described by participants. After recording over a long period of time the footage is examined shot by shot and after the analysis it is edited to present the findings.

In scripted filming the film is scripted by the film maker or investigator based on their need to present specific themes or events. This method is often used for recording all that appears to be fading or eroding from the cultural environment and needs to be conserved in some form for the sake of preserving knowledge.

⁴ We also left a digital camera with one of the *Kaavad* makers Satyanarayan Suthar to take photographs of various events and festivals that took place in Bassi over the year to have his perspective on what was important for the community.

⁵ Sarah Pink, *Doing Visual Ethnography*. (2001) p.18.

⁶ The colours are applied in a particular order with the outline in black painted last.

Reportage involves recording an event or segment fully and preserving what is significant. Several unrelated events may be recorded and preserved by the investigator (Asch, Marshall and Spier 1973).

We chose to use a combination of reportage and a scripted filming approach over objective recording, as our concern was to specifically document the processes of making, telling and listening. Objective recording, on the other hand, is more suitable for studying behavior and norms. For the interviews, we used the scripting approach and reportage for recitations and work practice. The *Kaavad* makers and storytellers were filmed in various situations, in their homes going about their business, at work, performing for patrons and while traveling in a hired jeep with us.

An ethnographic approach was adopted, although the time spent in the field each time was no more than two weeks at a stretch. However, a close contact was maintained with the makers and the storytellers via cellular phone on a weekly basis which helped construct a sketchy script. The objective was not to make any truth claims to represent "reality" but rather offer versions of reality as experienced by us, because all interpretation it would seem is, "an expression of our own consciousness" (Pink 2001). In a sense, the final product, which in this case was an edited film, served as an interpretation, rather than mere supporting data.

3.3 Defining the field, locating the *Kaavad* Community

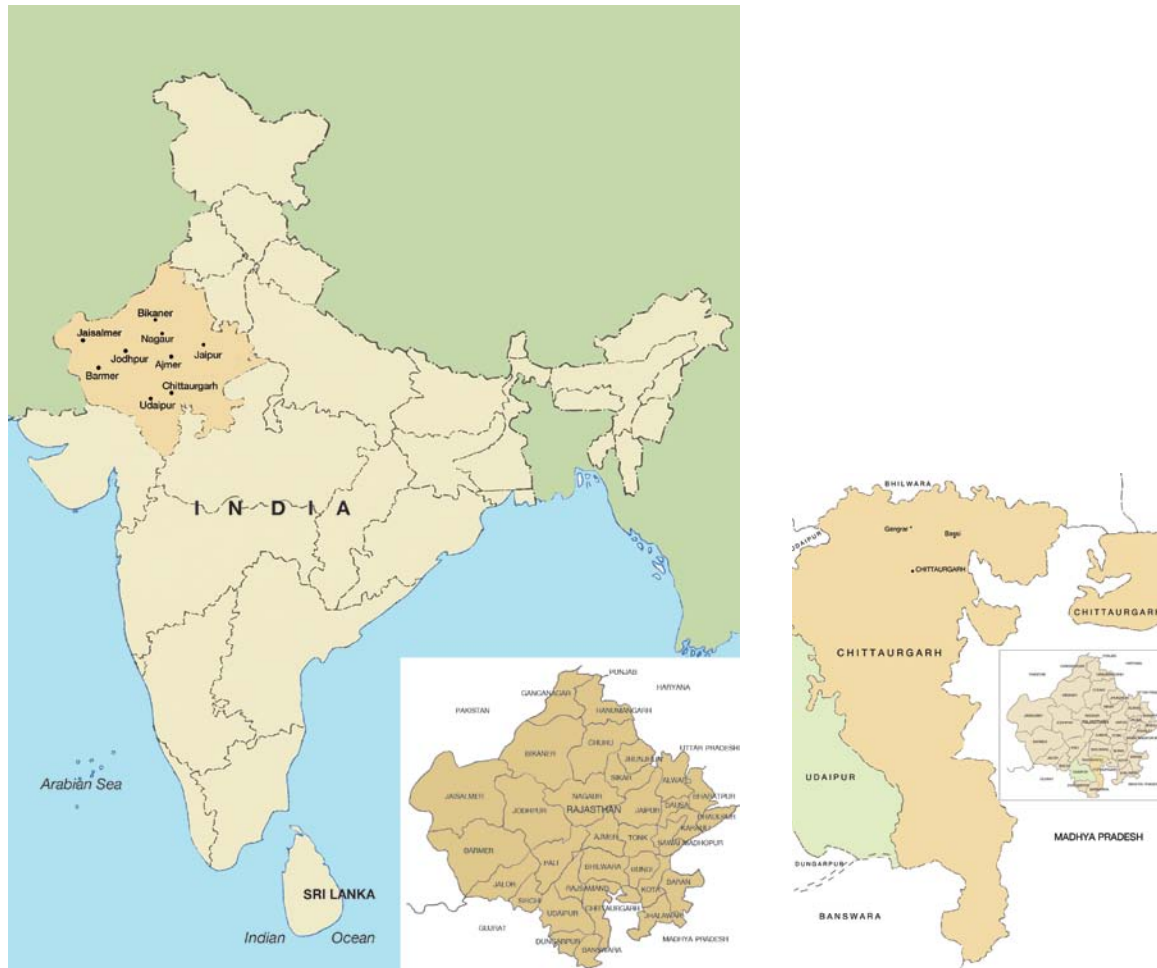


Figure 3.2 The districts of Rajasthan (left) and location of makers in Bassi (right)

Though the *Kaavad* is made in Bassi (Chittor) (figure 3.2) in the Mewar region of Rajasthan, it is not recited in these parts. The itinerant storytellers who go about reciting the *Kaavad* live in Marwar and recite stories for their patrons in the Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Nagaur and Barmer districts and are thus extremely difficult to trace. Fieldwork involved traveling to all the places mentioned above over a period of three years as rapport building took a considerable amount of time. Initially, contacts were made with the *Kaavad* makers residing in Bassi through our contact Kalyan Joshi, a *Phad* artist from Bhilwara. He accompanied us to Udaipur and Bassi to introduce the *Kaavad* makers and joined us in our search for the storytellers to Marwar.

At first, visits to Udaipur and Bassi involved interacting with the *Kaavad* makers (Suthar community) and observing the making of a *Kaavad*, as this was the least intrusive form of interaction. A week was spent with the Suthar community in Bassi and Udaipur to

understand the technique/ process of *Kaavad* making and its significance to their lives and livelihood. This allowed us to become familiar with the maker community. At the outset, the makers were very reluctant to share information, as they feared their knowledge would be taken away to start a new business; especially as filming could make it much easier for the film-maker to imitate their processes. The fact that we had a student ID card also did not suffice in the beginning. It was through several meetings, continued communication, interventions by contacts and commissioning of *Kaavads*. Finally we became patron ourselves and gradually built our trust.

Once their confidence was earned, the *Kaavad* makers were proud to speak to the camera. They were more willing to give time and share information as they felt they were being taken seriously and were being ‘immortalized’. Often they would remind us to switch on the camera as they were about to tell something important influencing our narrative interpretation. At other times they asked for the camera to be switched off, as they wanted to share something they did not want to be seen saying. This usually happened when they were sharing personal views or did not have charitable words for their colleagues from the same profession. It took a year of constant interaction with the *Kaavad* makers before any contact was made with the storytellers.



Figure 3.3 Marwar region of the storytellers

We were introduced to the storytellers through *Kaavad* maker, Ghanshyamji Suthar of Bassi who accompanied us with his son Ram Kisanji to the villages of the storytellers (figure 3.3). He introduced us to Narsinh Rav who led us to Kojaram Rav and his brother Pappuram Rav. Several engagements with storytellers Kojaram Rav and Pappuram Rav over the next year led us to accompany them to their patrons spread over Marwar.

3.3.1 Rapport Building and Compensation:

The researcher, being female, had its own challenges especially since the community had neither closely interacted with any woman researcher for long periods of time nor traveled with one. It is quite possible that all information was not shared with us on that account. Carrying equipment like a camera and computer was distancing as well. ‘Madam’ was the form of address used by the makers and storytellers and we addressed them with the suffix ‘ji’ at the end of their names.

Traditionally men have the largest role to play in making and reciting, however, the maker’s wife and daughter-in-laws are involved at different stages of the work cycle. So while the men were somewhat reticent in the beginning, the women communicated more easily and explained their role in the tradition. It took several months of communication and commissioning of several *Kaavads* before the Suthars felt comfortable to speak freely. The rapport was further established once we traveled together with them to Marwar in search of the storytellers.

The makers and storytellers were compensated for their time and information; the challenge being to compensate in a way that would encourage them to share rather than treat our interaction as a business transaction. The compensation then took on many forms: from commissioning of new *Kaavads* and recitation of stories, to organizing an exhibition of *Kaavads*, live demos by the makers and storytellers in urban areas like Delhi, Mumbai, Udaipur and Jaipur and later gifting of DVDs of the film⁷ for the participants to share with their community and to generate income for themselves through sales of copies. A number of makers and storytellers⁸ also attended an international conference in Udaipur where they conducted a workshop on *Kaavad* painting and told stories. Over a period of three years it

⁷ A documentary film ‘*Makers of Tales*’ of 22mins duration was made on the carriers of the *Kaavad* tradition as a part of the study. See the DVD.

⁸ Makers Ghanshyamji Suthar, Ramkisan Suthar, Mangilal Mistry and Satyanarayan Suthar with storytellers Kojaram Rav, Pappuram Rav and Tarachand Rav were amongst those invited to these venues at different points on time.

seemed as if we had been invested with certain roles and expectations not very different to that of a patron.

3.4 The World of the Suthars - Makers of *Kaavad*

For the study, three families of the Suthar community were identified; two families in village Bassi and the third family with Bassi origins, but had moved to a larger town Udaipur, forty years ago. All families are well-respected in the community, belong to the same caste, speak the Mewari language and share the same lineage.⁹ There the similarity ends.

Ghanshyamji Suthar's family in Bassi claims to be the only one who makes *Kaavads* for the storytellers. They have a second source of income through farming.

Satyanarayan Suthar in Bassi makes *Kaavads* and other wooden objects for tourists and for shops in Udaipur. He has no second source of income as his father did not present him with land or a house.

Mangilal Mistry's family in Udaipur has never made a *Kaavad* for the storytellers but he has made many contemporary ones. He has been associated with the Lok Kala Mandal in Udaipur as their Master craftsman and his craft is his sole source of income.

The rationale for selection of these families was to examine the impact of their socio-economic situations on the creation of the *Kaavad* object, be it an urban or rural environment. Each participant family had some unique abilities; Ghanshyamji Suthar was the only *Kaavad* maker who made the *Kaavad* for the traditional storyteller, Satyanarayan had a unique style of painting and was keen to learn about the tradition. Mangilal Mistry had an innovative approach towards making *Kaavads* for multicultural clients. And all three were amenable and accessible to us. We studied their methods of making, forms of patronage, how they sustained the tradition and what led them to design new objects.

The families gave an account of their lives, origins and ancestry and their interpretation on the evolution of the *Kaavad* form. They shared with us their philosophy, their method of working and their collaboration with the storytellers who commission the *Kaavads* from them. They sometimes competed with each other covertly and did not always have generous opinions about each other's talents and abilities.

⁹ See the Suthar genealogy on p.15.

3.4.1 Brief biographies of the *Kaavad* Makers

Ghanshyam Suthar is sixty-one years old and lives in Nalla Bazaar where he was born and grew up. He is able to read and write although he dropped out of school after the fifth grade. His house is typical in its structure to several houses in Bassi. His outer room is often used for meetings with friends. It does not have a toilet and the family uses the outdoors because there is no water supply in the house. His brothers Dwarka Prasad and Avantilal also live in Bassi in the same neighborhood.

Ghanshyamji is married to Susheela and has two children, son Ramkishanji married to Anita and daughter Lad who is married to Om Prakash and lives in nearby Bhilwara (figure 3.4). They belong to the *Basayati*¹⁰ clan. He has one *bhiga*¹¹ of land on which his family farms. They worship Vishvakarma¹², their chief god, but in the village Ghanshyamji visits, the Lakshminath temple in Bassi everyday, to worship Charbujha (Four Arms) and on festivals and special occasions he lights an incense stick at the shrine of the clan's *Sati Mata*.¹³



Figure 3.4 Ghanshyamji Suthar with family at their home in Bassi

¹⁰ *Basayati* Suthars are the only ones who make *Kaavads*, and they cannot marry within the class; however, they can marry other clans within the Suthar community.

¹¹ One *bhiga* is equivalent to 0.4 hectares.

¹² When we were traveling with Ghanshyam Suthar to Marwar we made a special stop at Pushkar to visit the Vishvakarma and Brahma temple, as both gods are related to each other.

¹³ *Sati* is a term used for a woman who immolates herself at her husband's funeral pyre. After her death she is revered by her community as *Sati Mata* or pure mother.

He has been making *Kaavads* for the storytellers since he was ten years old. He learnt the craft from his father Mohanlalji. The storytellers used to come to his father and now they come to him. Because of his paralytic leg he is unable to travel and promote his work. He delivers the ‘tourist *Kaavads*’ to Prem Patwa, a middleman from Bassi, who travels to towns and cities with the wooden objects from the artisans and supplies them to emporiums and shops. Prem Patwa gets a commission for his services and often lends money as an advance for buying wood and tools etc.

Ghanshyam Suthar is keen to continue the tradition as it gives him his special identity but is not sure if his son will carry it forward. Any break in the tradition he feels could also spell misfortune for the clan. Besides, he believes it is his responsibility to carry the tradition forward, just as his forefathers have done in the past.

He believes the *Kaavad* form was introduced to the Suthars by storytellers who brought the first *Kaavad* from Kundana Bai.¹⁴ It was first made in nearby Gangrar and then brought to Bassi. It may have begun as a basic flat painted panel which slowly acquired doors. He cannot explain why more doors were needed.



Figure 3.5 Satyanarayan Suthar at work and his home

Satyanarayan Suthar (figure 3.5) was born in 1973 in Bassi and went to school there. When he was nine years old his mother died and his father remarried. He learned the art of carpentry from his father, but at age sixteen he had to leave home and fend for himself. He gained real experience working for an export house, which also influenced his style of painting. He is married to Kaushalya, has three children, lives in a rented place and does not possess any land. The ground floor serves as a workspace and shop. He depends on his artistic skills to make a living.

¹⁴ Kundana Bai is a fictitious saint- like character from Kashi (Varanasi), who supposedly gifted the *Kaavad* to the storyteller. For more details see K 12 *Kaavad* Tales from Kojaram Rav in Appendix I.

He does not supply his *Kaavads* to any middleman; instead he sells them directly from his shop in the village and participates in fairs and exhibitions within the country.

He is unaware of the *Kaavad*'s history and until very recently had not made a *Kaavad* for the traditional storyteller. He is keen to experiment, but is not comfortable painting figures or objects outside of the *Kaavad* vocabulary. He is passionate and proud of his skills and would like to continue with the tradition but does not know all the *Kaavad* narratives. His neighbor Ghanshyam Suthar is not willing to teach him or share his knowledge, fearing he will lose his traditional patrons (the storytellers) to a new comer like Satyanarayan.

Satyanarayan is religious and visits the *devra*¹⁵ of Bhaironji every Sunday. Every year he makes a pilgrimage by undertaking a '*padayatra*' (walking) to Sanwariyaji, a pilgrim centre near Bassi.



Figure 3.6 Mangilal Mistry and family in their home at Udaipur

Mangilal Mistry is originally from Bassi where he was born in 1943 and moved to Udaipur when he was eighteen years old. Ever since, he has been associated with the Lok Kala Mandal in Udaipur and worked there till he retired in 2006. He owns the house he lives in with his wife Sayardevi and two sons and their families (figure 3.6). The other two

¹⁵ *Devra* is a small shrine which is different from a temple in one respect; a temple has a priest but at the *Devra* a person worships without a priest. A *Devra* is also where a smaller deity resides and worshippers may pledge or sacrifice something.

sons live in their own houses. Each of his four sons has a different last name which is more dignified according to Mangilal Mistry. He wanted his sons to have their individual identities since they live in the city. Suthar as a last name he reasons would mean being equated to a carpenter and not a craftsman. So the eldest son has *Basayati*¹⁶ as his last name and the rest have Sharma while he himself uses Mistry.

He learnt the craft of making *Kaavads* from his father and puppet making at the Lok Kala Mandal. In 1961 he was brought to the Lok Kal Mandal museum in Udaipur by the then director of the museum, Devilal Samar; who was impressed by young Mangilal in Bassi and instantly offered him a job. Mangilal Mistry never looked back. Being adept at the art of making *Kaavads* and painting them he was encouraged by Mahendra Bhanawat, a senior researcher at the Lok Kala Mandal to experiment with the form and content of the *Kaavad*. He added the sun symbol to the *Kaavad* which is absent in the traditional *Kaavad*.

Being away from the village he did not come in contact with any storytellers.¹⁷ His clientele were tourists and urban visitors to the museum. He experimented with the sizes so that tourists could carry them easily. Using published texts as information, he made *Kaavads* on other religious themes like the life of Christ, Mahavir and Devnarayan. Experimenting with secular themes he has also made *Kaavads* on the life of Mahatma Gandhi, the girl child, micro-finance etc.¹⁸ This innovative work has brought him a fair share of publicity and fame. Retired from the museum, he participates in local and national fairs and exhibitions. He does not supply to any of the emporiums in Udaipur; instead he prefers to make them against orders. Besides *Kaavads*, he makes wooden puppets, *Phads*, masks and paints walls for homes that have a wedding in the offing. One of his sons is fully involved in continuing the tradition but the others do it only part-time because they have jobs outside of their hereditary profession. When we met him he was making an eight foot *Kaavad* for the West Zone Cultural Centre.

¹⁶ *Basayati* is also the name of the *gotra* or clan amongst Suthars to which the *Kaavad* makers belong.

¹⁷ He met the storytellers for the first time in 2007.

¹⁸ Mangilal Mistry has made *Kaavads* with fifty three themes that he makes to order.

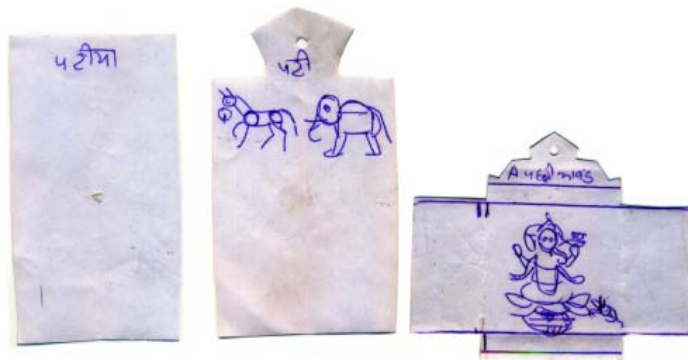


Figure 3.7 A sketch made by Mangilal Mistry to show the probable evolution of the *Kaavad* form

He believes the first *Kaavad* began as a flat piece of painted wood ‘*pattiya*’ or ‘*patti*’, which then acquired two doors and finally evolved into its current form (figure 3.7). The way to conserve the craft is to ‘give it relevance’ he says and this is what he tries to do in his work. As he was painting the gods on a *Kaavad* commissioned by us, he observed philosophically that all the gods were born in the homes of kings¹⁹, whereas the poor only brought up saints.

3.4.2 Home and Location: Village Bassi and its environs

The *Kaavad* makers known as Suthars or Basayatis reside in Nalla Bazaar in village Bassi, approximately twenty-five kilometers from Chittor. Bassi lies on the Chittor-Kota road. A four-lane expressway connecting Udaipur and Kota now cuts through some of the land owned by the community. Bassi is situated in the Mewar region, amidst the hills of the Aravalli ranges in Rajasthan that divide the fertile South East from the dry and sandy North-west. Chittaurgarh or Chittor is its district headquarters. Bassi has a dam nearby and a canal which is the chief source of water. The village has had electricity for twenty years although the supply continues to be irregular. From a census data collected in 2001, Bassi has an approximate population of 9872, of which women account for 4830, and men 5042, of which the Suthars constitute about a hundred.²⁰ Other communities that live in Bassi are Brahmins, Khatik, Regar, Muslims, Rajputs, Mahajans, Telis, Kumbhars, Sonis etc and each community has its own territory within the village.

¹⁹ Mangilal said ‘gods such as Ram, Krishna, and Buddha etc were born to kings whereas saints like Kabir, Raidas etc. were born to poor people.

²⁰ This information was given to us by Patwar Bhawan in Bassi in 2007.

The Suthars mostly keep to themselves in Nalla Bazaar which is situated north of the village (figure 3.8). Bassi also has a fort and the family of the erstwhile royalty lives in the palace; it is south of the village, and now converted into a hotel known as the Bassi Fort Palace. The Suthars refer to it as the '*Ravda*'.²¹

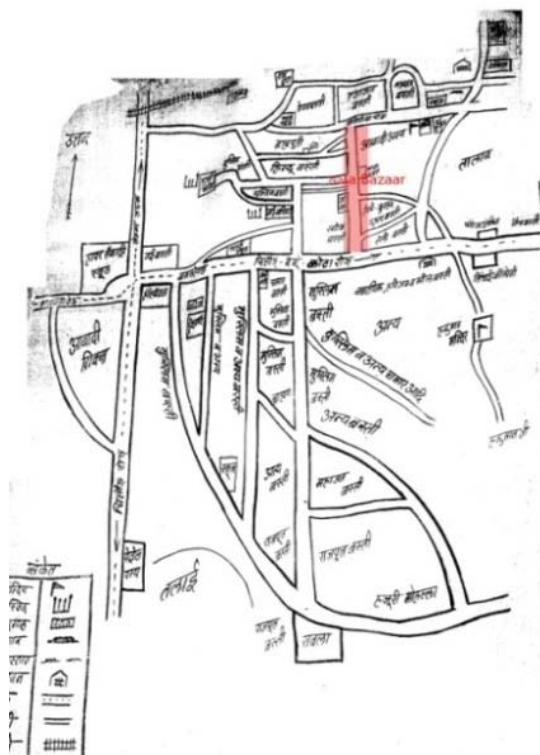


Figure 3.8 Map of Bassi with Nalla Bazaar



Figure 3.9 Suthar Bhotlal at work

Bassi was founded in 1560 AD by prince Jaimal from Devgarh. According to the genealogist of the royal family, one of their ancestors Govindadas happened to come across a group of artisans in Malpura near Nagaur, making painted wooden objects.²²

He brought one of them, Parabhat, to Bassi offering him ten *bhigas*²³ of farming land and a house to settle in, against services he would offer the family. It was not uncommon for a family of means to 'patronize' (to be a *jajman*) a craftsman in this manner.

The houses in Nalla Bazaar have a common structure. The outer room serves as a workshop and has a covered verandah where guests may sit and chat. The workshop space is separated from the living quarters by a courtyard. The courtyard is open to the sky and

²¹ '*Ravda*' is a palatial house which is a bit smaller than a palace which will be referred to as '*Mahal*'.

²² As told by Sarpanch Mahendra Kanwar in a personal communication in 2007.

²³ One *bhiga* is equivalent to 0.4 hectares.

may have space for cattle²⁴ on one side and a place for washing in another corner. The kitchen and sleeping rooms, that have a covered verandah, also open into the courtyard, creating a space of many thresholds (figure 3.9).



Figure 3.10 *Bheda ki Guwadi*, the ancestral home of the Basayati Suthars, and their *Sati Mata*, Bassi

The house called '*Bheda ki Guwadi*'²⁵, which still stands today, has seven to nine rooms and three families continue to live there, although several families have moved out of it over generations (fig 3.10 left). Since they came and settled in the place, it came to be called Bassi (as in *Buss jaana*: to settle) and the Suthars (carpenters) came to be known as *Basayatis*. However, they continue to use Suthar as their last name. The land gifted by the royal patron came to be distributed gradually amongst the family as its members grew in numbers. Later, land was also allotted by the government to the community to encourage farming.

While they agree they were brought to Bassi by the royal family, the Suthars also believe they originally came from Nagaur. A legend explains how they were forced to leave their hometown in search of a safer place. Narrated by Mangilal Mistry in Udaipur, it goes to show how myth and reality are seamless in the construction of identity. The story which does not have a date is as follows: A woman from the Suthar community in Nagaur, went to fetch water from a well. When she failed to lift the heavy pot onto her head a youth appeared from the water and helped her place the pot on her head. He then warned her to go home without casting a backward glance at him. The woman rushed home but got suspicious by the time she neared her house and turned around to see if she was being followed by the youth. There was no one, but soon then many people in her community began to die, one by one. And so fearing of being wiped out, they decided to leave

²⁴ When we were visiting Ghanshyamji one evening he asked if we would like to have some tea but for that said his wife we must wait for the cow to come home, which she did at her expected time.

²⁵ Implies ancestral property owned as a group.

Nagaur.²⁶ How they came to Bassi from Nagaur is ambiguous. When questioned about this they subscribe to the story of being brought by the Bassi royalty via Malpura, which may have possibly been an interim place where they took shelter after leaving Nagaur.

Being in Bassi, they missed their pure mother (*Sati Mata*)²⁷ who was left behind in Nagaur. There was no deity like their own *Sati Mata*, whom they could receive blessings from (*dhok dena*) on special occasions. A group of carpenters (Suthars) therefore visited Nagaur to bring the soil from the well (*baori*) where the *Sati Mata*'s shrine had been. They brought the soil from the deity's well in Nagaur and mixed it with the soil in Bassi and created a sacred plaque of the *Sati Mata* and placed it (*sthapana*) in the local shrine in Bassi. It was as if the ancestors also came to reside with them. It may be noted that the notion of soil as place is metonymical.

However, it turned out that the soil did not belong to their *Sati Mata*, which is the reason why the Suthars are always fighting amongst each other. Recently, another group went back to the well (*baori*) in Nagaur to retrieve the *Sati Mata* lying at the bottom of the well. Again the efforts were not rewarded and guidance is being sought from local deities to locate the actual *Sati Mata* belonging to the Suthars of Bassi (figure 3.10 right) which will bring peace and harmony to the community.²⁸

²⁶ As told by Mangilal Mistry in 2006 in a personal communication.

²⁷ Each community has their own *Sati Mata* and it is important for the community to have her presence in the village. Her presence is invested in the soil from the original place therefore a simple icon or replica of the plaque made from any soil is not acceptable to the community.

²⁸ This was related to us by Satyanarayan Suthar in 2010 during a phone conversation.



3.4.3 Community of Makers in the Village, Identity and Origin Myths

The carpenter (Suthar) community of Rajasthan is classified as an OBC (Other Backward Class) caste by the Census of India, although they acknowledge themselves as Suthars or *Basayatis*. They are Hindus; are vegetarian, do not drink alcohol and call themselves the children of Vishvakarma, claiming to be Jangid Brahmins (Raina, 1999). Therefore in the social hierarchy they are higher than several other castes because of being ‘Jangid’ Brahmins. They share food and water with other Suthars and Brahmins but not with the butcher (*Khatik*) or anyone who eats meat and drinks alcohol. While this is so traditionally the rules are far more relaxed at the interaction level. Often several communities eat together especially when there is a feast after people return from a pilgrimage or a death ritual²⁹. The Suthars have sub-caste within which marriages take place.

A Suthar is denoted metonymically by a hatchet (*Basola*)³⁰, so 51 practicing carpenters in the village will be referred to as 51 *Basolas* in Bassi. As they are all believed to be the descendents of artisan Parabhat they are all related to each other (figure 3.11) and therefore no marriages can take place between them. They may marry Suthars from other villages if they have not originated from the same ancestor who came to Bassi. This is why the genealogies hold a very important place for them. They also pride themselves on this long preserved lineage and all artisans share a common genealogist who has all their records. Property and wealth is divided equally between sons with the daughters getting their share in the form of a dowry (*Maira*) at the time of their wedding. However, if a daughter is not married or separated from her husband through divorce or death, then she also gets an equal share of the property. Death (referred to as going quiet or *Shaant ho jana*) rituals include cremation and scattering of ashes *phool* (flowers) in the Ganges.

Most Suthars live in Bassi with a few exceptions like the family of Mangilal Mistry and the late Devilal Suthar, whom we had met in Chittor when he was alive in 2006. Both had left Bassi in their youth and, even though they felt unwelcomed and alienated by the community, they identified with their origins in Bassi.

Origin Myths

The Suthars call themselves the progeny of Vishvakarma³¹ and attribute to this their monetary state, which is not as good as other communities. According to their lore,

²⁹ As told by Satyanarayan Suthar in a personal communication.

³⁰ *Basola* is a hatchet like tool used for chipping wood.

³¹ All castes that use the hammer and set-square claim to be the children of Vishvakarma says Satyanarayan Suthar, because that is what is represented iconographically in all images of Vishvakarma by the Suthars.

Vishvakarma is the chief architect of the Universe, the supreme patron of the Arts. He had five sons that were born from his body, one of them being Maya the carpenter (Suthar), who fathered the carpenter community. The community in Bassi believes that Vishvakarma was the younger brother of Brahma (others believe he was Brahma's son). Vishvakarma was called upon several times to build for the Gods. At first he made the Universe, and then he recreated a Golden Lanka, because it was burnt down. He also recreated Dwarkapuri for Lord Krishna because it had drowned. So pleased were the Gods with Dwarkapuri that they wanted to send him gifts. While he was still on his way home they sent the gifts of diamonds and emeralds and a cow to his house. His wife was sweeping the floor when the gift bearers arrived. She would not let them in nor accept the gifts in the absence of her husband Vishvakarma and sent them away. A merchant's (*Baniya*'s) wife in the neighborhood observed this and invited the gift bearers to her place accepting the gifts meant for Vishvakarma. And 'so this is how the Suthars lost their wealth to the *baniya* merchants'.³² In the *Kaavad* tales (K35) Krishna disguised himself as a Suthar to help fix the broken cart of Narsinh *bhagat*, because the devout carpenter was too tired to carry his tools to the site. Krishna also asked Vishvakarma, their ancestor, to build a city for his best friend Sudama (K52), but because it was made in wood it has not survived³³. The Laxmi Narayan temple complex of Bassi (figure 3.12) is also painted in the same manner as the *Kaavad* by some of the Suthars.³⁴



Figure 3.12 Temple complex in Bassi Left: Exterior



Right: Interior painted by Jamnalal Suthar from Bassi

³² As related by Mangilal Mistry from Udaipur.

³³ As to why Sudama's palace was made from wood is not explained.

³⁴ This appears to be a recent migration of the *Kaavad* imagery into the temple.

3.4.4 Cycle of seasons, means of livelihood, and distribution of work

Most families of Suthars have some land and one or two cows. They plant maize in the monsoons which is harvested in December and sow wheat which is harvested by March-April. No farming takes place in the hot summer months. While the men are involved in carpentry, the women work in the fields. Women also do all the household work, which includes cooking, cleaning, laundry, filling water etc. The yield from farming is just about enough for the family's upkeep. Over the years each family has come to depend less on their farm produce and more on the sales of their craft objects.

The Suthars work according to seasons and make objects required for festivals in that particular season. In winters they make *Kaavads* and wooden toys, as it is the tourist season. They celebrate the festivals of *Holi*, *Raksha Bandhan*, *Hariyali Amavas*, *Deewali*, *Teej*, *Makar Sankranti*, *Gangaur* and *Vishvakarma Jayanti* and for some of these festivals they make specific objects in wood. During *Makar Sankranti* the families cook the rice and lentils dish (*Kheech*) of Karma bai³⁵ and remember and celebrate her faith and innocence. After Holi it is time to make statues of *Isar Gaur*, statues of Shiv and Parvati or Gauri required for the *Gangaur* festival which usually falls in the last week of March or early April. This is followed by making *Ram Rewaris* (shrines) for the *Dev Jhulna Agyaras* when the deities are placed in the shrine (*Ram Rewari*) and taken to the lake and 'swung' (*jhulna*) gently, before being brought back to the house.

Besides making *Kaavads*, the Suthars are also involved in making wooden toys, furniture, sculptures for export and seasonal objects for the local market. The objects made by the Suthars include sacred gateways or *Torans* for weddings, swords, masks and miniature musicians' sets; all of which are made in wood and painted. In winter, when the tourists arrive the demand for *Kaavads* peak, involving everyone in *Kaavad* making – sold in places such as handicraft shops in major cities all over north India.

As they work from home, there is no sharp line distinguishing work from non-work or even leisure. The work is quite often clearly divided between the male and female members of the family. Men do the carpentry and painting and are skilled in both domains. Women do all the preparatory work of priming, making of colours, applying the base colours and then the finishing which includes painting the decorative dots and varnishing. Women follow instructions from men and their work can be interrupted to make tea or fetch anything. Work is undertaken at an even pace and if a family crisis occurs it takes

³⁵ The story of Karma Bai (K 50) is depicted in the *Kaavad* and the story may be found in Appendix I.

precedence and all work can be put on hold. Work is not undertaken on the day of Vishvakarma's birthday (*Vishvakarma-jayanti*), *Teej*³⁶ and *amavasya* day (moonless night).

The *Kaavad* is made in a particular order; whether it is painting or constructing the *Kaavad* object. The images are arranged on the panel in a specific grid-like composition with each figure occupying its own frame. Before painting, the object is made in wood, treated and cut into panels for a large number of *Kaavads* in a particular season; its construction and painting follows an assembly-like order.

Traditionally, the *Kaavad* was painted with mineral colours ground and mixed with wood glue, and then with water. The basic colours were red, *hinglu*, yellow, *piyawadi*, green, *hara*, blue, *neel*, white, *suffade*, and black, *syahi*. They were mixed into a paste and stored in coconut shells. The brushes were also handmade, using squirrel hair. Now, most makers use powder colours which they continue to mix with the wood glue and store in steel bowls.

The maker first sketches the images with a very light yellow line, if he is a novice. If he is accomplished, he applies the mass colours of the figures, starting with the face, the limbs, clothes, ornaments and eyes. The outline in black is painted last and the image slowly appears from a mass of flat colours. This convention is also found in the string puppets and *phad* scrolls, although the method of making the colours is different.

3.4.5 Worship and Pilgrimage

Life revolves around work and worship. Certain days of the week are assigned to the worship of a particular deity. Monday is for Shankar Bhagwan, Tuesday for Balaji, Friday is for Tejaji and Santoshi Ma, Saturday for Sani Maharaj and Sunday for Bhaironji. There are 25-30 temples and several *devras* or small shrines (almost fifty) scattered around the village. Satyanarayan Suthar explains the difference between a shrine (*Devra*) and temple (*Mandir*). A temple is where prayers are offered through a priest, whereas in a shrine or *Devra* a devotee may pray without a priest in attendance. *Devras* are also places where devotees may sometimes be possessed by a deity. The temple or *Mandir* has a distinct architecture, with a *mandap* (a pillared hall or porch), *shikhar* (the rising tower) and a *garbha griha* (sanctum sanctorum) and is dedicated to God but a *Devra* could be just a plaque or a statue of local goddesses and gods (*devi-devatas*). They believe the *devi-*

³⁶ *Teej* is the festival of swings, and takes place in the months of August/September.

devatas can actually fulfil wishes and expect sacrifices to be made. Bhaironji may be approached on Sundays for fulfilling the wishes and the devotee may pledge giving up some food or habit dear to them.

Pushkar which is far off towards Ajmer is considered a place of pilgrimage as it has a temple dedicated to Vishvakarma and also has the only temple dedicated to Brahma. When we visited Pushkar with Ghanshyamji Suthar and his son Ramkishanji we visited both the temples of Vishvakarma and Brahma where they made donations and offered their prayers.

Other places for pilgrimage mentioned by them are Char Bhuja³⁷ (Four Arms) and closer to home, Sanwariyaji (the dark one, Krishna). Once a year, many people from Bassi, including Satyanaryan Suthar, take a pilgrimage, a *padayatra* (walking for a day and a half) to Sanwariyaji.

Pilgrimages to Badrinath, Kedarnath, Haridwar may be taken once in a lifetime and are considered very sacred. Once a year, a bus tour is organized in the summer when a multi-caste group makes a pilgrimage to the holy places together, quite often to immerse the ashes or *phool* (flowers) of the deceased ones. In Rajasthan, the communities aspire to immerse the ashes in the Ganges and will often store the ashes in the house till a pilgrimage is undertaken to Haridwar or Kashi. They may store the ashes of several deceased family members till they have the means to travel to the sacred river. If the ashes are misplaced for some reason, then the deceased person's name is engraved in a silver tablet which is then immersed in the river.³⁸ When a pilgrimage has been made to immerse ashes of the dead after twelve days from the death, the feast is called *Gangoj*³⁹ (Gold, 1990) but when it is completed for peace and harmony, the feast is called *Dangri*.⁴⁰

Those who go on such pilgrimages are revered when they return. Before they leave the pilgrims (men and women), pay a visit to the local shrine of *Pathvari mata*⁴¹ (the path mother who guards the way) to take her blessings and, similarly, on their return, they first stop there before coming home. While they are away the women periodically visit the shrine of *Pathvari mata* and offer her invitations (*nerta*) to their homes. When the pilgrims return the women visit the *Pathvari mata* with freshly sprouted wheat which they offer and

³⁷ *Char Bhuja* or Four -Arms is considered to be a form of Lord Vishnu.

³⁸ This was shared with us in personal communications with *Kaavad* maker Satynarayan Suthar and storyteller Kojaram Rav during the course of our fieldwork.

³⁹ Ann Grodzins Gold, *Fruitful Journeys*.(1990) pp. 194-202.

⁴⁰ This distinction has been made by the participants in the field.

⁴¹ Ann Grodzins Gold, *Fruitful Journeys*. (1990) p.198.

bring the blessed grain brought back to their homes. Quite often, people returning from the *Pathwari mata* are ‘possessed’ (*bhanw aana*) by the deity.⁴²

Once home, the pilgrims throw a feast for the whole community and all present in the feast are offered a drop each of the sacred waters from the Ganges collected by the returnee.

3.4.6 Learning and Transfer of Knowledge

Learning takes place through apprenticeship and observation. There is no formal training. Transfer of knowledge from father to son is stiff and formal in Bassi. Ramkishanji did not enjoy learning from his father because he felt there was very little conversation or encouragement. Ghanshyamji feels his son is not interested in learning the traditional method, which requires patience. He would rather teach his daughter-in-law. Training begins early, even as children go to school. The girl child is not taught the craft as she leaves the house when married but daughter-in-laws are taught the craft to help with the family profession. The male child is initially taught carpentry, followed by painting. In Udaipur, Mangilalji teaches his grand-daughter the art of drawing by drawing circles and connecting them to create figures, occasional engaging her with stories.

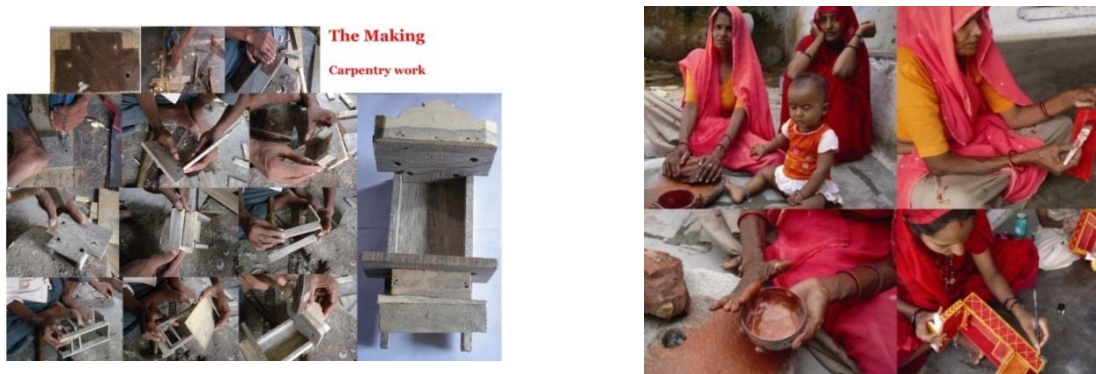


Figure 3.13 Left: Carpentry work: *Ghadna* and *Thokna*, first step to learning. Right: Susheela and Asha Suthar preparing and finishing.

Carpentry work is termed as *Ghadna* or *Thokna* (figure 3.13 left) and the painting work is called *Maandna*. Selecting of wood to make the *Kaavad* is an art. The wood of the *Adusa*⁴³ tree has to be cut on days when the nights are moonless; else there is danger of wood bores if the wood is cut on days when the moon is waxing. The wood has to be sun dried for almost six months prior to use. Methods of making a *Kaavad* are akin to an assembly line operation. The Suthars make the various pieces in bulk and assemble them together. The women also do the priming of the *Kaavads* in bulk (figure 3.13 right). The method of

⁴² As told by Satyanarayan Suthar from Bassi Chittor.

⁴³ *Ailanthus Excelsa*.

carpentry and painting remains the same whether it is undertaken in Bassi or in Udaipur, because the Suthars are from the same family and share the same knowledge. Living in the city has influenced the family in Udaipur to innovate themes and content of the *Kaavad* for tourists and a secular clientele, but the physical structure of the *Kaavad* artifact remains unchanged.

Of the twenty-five families of Suthars, only five to six families are involved in making *Kaavads*. Few like Ghanshyamji and his family have met the storytellers themselves. Ghanshyamji says that the *Kaavad* was first made in Gangrar and then brought to Bassi. Eighty five year old Kanhaiyalal Suthar in Gangrar on the other hand said the *Kaavad* was initially found in Jalod after which it came to Gangrar and then the whole industry moved to Bassi. As no one makes *Kaavads* in Jalod or Gangrar anymore there are no records about how the *Kaavad*'s form evolved to its present stage.

3.4.7 Patronage past and present

Traditionally the Suthars had patrons for whom they made ritual objects for festivals and weddings etc. They also made *Kaavads* for the Kaavadiya Bhats, who commissioned them periodically. This model was based on dependence between the participants and was sustained by the demand made by the village community and the visiting storyteller.

Over the years both sources of patronage depleted giving way to commerce and middlemen. Most Suthars now make objects on order from clients/shops based in cities. They also make cricket bats and household objects for the local markets. Some work for exporters, making large sculptures and furniture items. Some, like Mangilal Mistry, have innovated on the themes and content of the *Kaavads* making them available for aesthetic and secular purposes. Satyanarayan makes them for tourists as well as storytellers but he is new to the latter. Ghanshyamji makes *Kaavads* for the traditional storytellers (Kaavadiya Bhat) who still come in search of a new *Kaavad*.⁴⁴

3.4.8 Interaction with the Storytellers

Amongst the Suthars in Bassi, only two make *Kaavads* for the traditional storyteller. They have conserved the content, themes and visual style taught to them by their fathers. When the Kaavadiya Bhat commissions a *Kaavad* he also collaborates with the Suthar in determining the placement of images on the *Kaavad* that represent their patrons. This piece

⁴⁴ A storyteller may visit him once a year, usually in the summer months or the monsoons when the storyteller is not away reciting for his patrons.

of information or instruction that is given to the Suthar from the Kaavadiya Bhat is known as the *aida* (figure 3.14). Whereas, all other images pertaining to the deities and their stories are pre-determined and known to the Suthar, supervision for the panels of the patrons are only painted in the presence of the Kaavadiya Bhat. The Kaavadiya Bhat arrives at the place of the Suthar and lives in his house till the work is completed. He may even bring orders from other storytellers to save them the time and expense of travelling, and to compensate his own travel expenses.



Figure 3.14 Ghanshyamji Suthar taking instructions or '*aida*' from storyteller Shera Ram in Nagaur

The Suthars and Kaavadiya Bhats share a common pool of the myths and stories and worship similar deities so the familiarity with the religious tales and *devi-devatas*⁴⁵ allows them to collaborate and communicate freely with each other. As the storyteller spends a couple of days waiting for his *Kaavad* to be painted he may regale the Suthar community with some stories, even though they may not be his usual patrons.

3.5 The Tellers of Tales: Kaavadiya Bhats

With Ghanshyamji Suthar, his son Ramkishan and Kalyan Joshi, a Phad artist, we visited the villages of the storytellers in Nagaur, Hari Singh ki Bassini, Bhopalgad and Kumhara in the Jodhpur district. This initial introduction by the *Kaavad* makers facilitated an ongoing interaction with the storytellers. We met the storytellers in their villages and later met them in Nagaur since some of them felt uncomfortable meeting us in their own village. The reason for their discomfort was due to the fact that their storyteller identity (*Kaavadiya*) is hidden from the community in their own village. In their villages they are only known as Rav Bhats or genealogists. If the storyteller identity was revealed, due to our presence, then they would lose the social standing within the village community,

⁴⁵ Minor gods and goddesses are termed as *Devi-Devatas*.

because the status of a storyteller is much lower than that of a genealogist.⁴⁶ With Ghanshyamji we first visited Narsinhji Rav in his village, Bassini Hari Sinh ki. As he was not very comfortable in his own village we went to Bhopalgad, which is a bigger town. There he recited the *Kaavad* in the house of another storyteller, Seturamji Rav. There too, the fear was palpable and we decided to leave. But Narsinhji promised he would introduce us to other storytellers related to him. Through him we met the brothers Kojaramji Rav, Pappuramji Rav, Shera Rav and their uncle Shravan Rav in the village Kumhara. Each of them recited the *Kaavad* for us in an open field, without the patrons, so the recordings lack the authenticity of a true recitation.

A year and half later, when the trust between us was established, we accompanied the storytellers to their patrons' villages to document the performance in its enactment. The time in between allowed us to be comfortable and at ease with each other.

Places visited with the storytellers in December 2008 included Balao, Dechu, Pokharan, Ramdevra, Ajasar, Khinwsar, PWM road Mohangad, Gammon India: Jaisalmer, Kumbharkota, Sadhu Bheel ki Dhani, Chelak, Jhinjinali and Marudi in the Jodhpur, Jaisalmer and Barmer districts. It took us a year of meeting with Kojaramji, Pappuramji, Narsinhji and Tarachand Rav in several places including Nagaur, Jaipur, Delhi and Mumbai before having the opportunity to see them perform in front of their patrons in their natural settings⁴⁷. The patrons readily agreed to our presence during the performance. We recorded their recitations with several patrons spread over many small villages in the Marwar region. Bharti Kanther, a person of Rajasthani origins, and familiar with the Marwari language accompanied us to the patrons to assist us with the translations. As we traveled together we learnt more about their lives and customs, which may not have been possible through interviews or recording performances alone.

3.5.1 The Kaavadiya Bhat Community

The *Bhat* community of Rajasthan is classified as an OBC (Other Backward Class) caste by the Census of India but they respond to the terms *Bhat jati*. The Kaavadiya Bhats are the itinerant storytellers of the *Kaavad* tradition who live around the Jodhpur, Nagaur and

⁴⁶ As told by Bansilal Rav, the storyteller is equated to a '*maang khani jati*'; those who beg and eat and therefore this identity has to be concealed on all accounts.

⁴⁷ We invited them with the *Kaavad* makers to Delhi to perform at the India International Centre in February 2008, to IIT Bombay in March and September 2008 and to Jaipur in October 2008. We traveled with them in December 2008 and visited their homes in July 2007 and June 2010 and also invited them to a conference in Udaipur in August 2009.

Kishangarh districts of Rajasthan. The name is derived from the profession of the ones who carry/use the *Kaavad* to make a living. The term '*Bhat*' is derived from the caste of the teller. This distinguishes them from the *Kaavadiyas* who carry the water from the Ganges in Haridwar to their hometowns in '*Kaavads*' (two baskets balanced on a pole in which the pots of water are placed and carried on the shoulder by the *Kaavadiya*). The *Kaavadiya Bhats* are related to the Barots of Gujarat as they too are record keepers and maintain a record or *Bahi Khata* of their patrons.⁴⁸

According to Kojaramji, there was only one community, that of Rajputs. But when the Rajputs began to be persecuted by Parsuram,⁴⁹ many gave up the identity out of fear and so the thirty six *jatis* (based on occupation) came into being.⁵⁰ The *Bhats* have sub-castes that also decide which patrons they may serve. The *Bhanwar Bhats* are the record keepers of the barbers, tailors and carpenters, just the way the *Gung Bhats* keep records for Rajputs, the *Lull Bhats* for the trading community and the *Pingal Bhats* for the Jats and Bishnoi community. The records of patrons of a *Bhat* family are equally divided amongst the male siblings by the father on his retirement.

Being Bhats, they call themselves *Rav*, a title conferred upon them by Umed Sinh, a Rajput king from Jodhpur.⁵¹ This raised their status from the *Bhat*, who essentially lives off charity. The *Kaavadiyas*, therefore, carefully hide their profession as storytellers in their own village, choosing to acknowledge only the genealogist identity, which is recognized as a superior position, allowing them to mingle with the higher castes. He hides the storyteller identity at home because the storyteller status equates him to a '*maang khani jati*'⁵² (those who beg and survive), the stigma of which is worse than being called a thief or murderer⁵³ yet they must 'believe' and tell.

⁴⁸ As told by Kojaram Rav in a personal communication in 2008.

⁴⁹ Parsuram, the angry one, is the sixth incarnation of lord Vishnu.

⁵⁰ As told by Kojaram Rav in a personal communication in 2008.

⁵¹ *ibid.*

⁵² The term *Maang Khani Jati* phonetically sounds like the '*mankha*' mentioned on page 19. This was brought to our notice by B N Goswamy in a personal communication in Chandigarh, 2009.

⁵³ As told by Bansilal Rav in a personal communication in 2007.

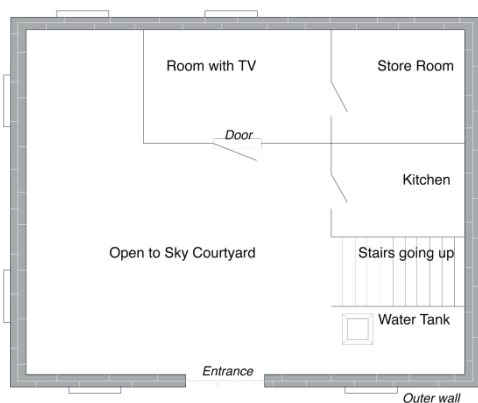


Figure 3.15 Left: Kojaram Rav's house



Right: Kojaram and family

3.5.2 Brief biographies of Storytellers: Kojaram Rav

Kojaram Rav was born in Kumhara, a village 90 kms away from the city of Jodhpur. He dropped out of school after grade five. He is the most educated amongst his eight siblings. He lives in a mud and stone house (figure 3.15 left) and owns a jeep that he uses to travel within the villages. Kojaram lives next door to his brother Pappuram in *Raavon ka paada/baasa* (the neighborhood of Ravs).

He learnt to drive a tractor as a young lad and later he drove a jeep. He has bought and changed three jeeps to date. Kojaram is forty-five years old and is married to Igyarasi Devi, two years older than him. He has four sons and two daughters (figure 3.15 right).

He was trained by his grandfather Sultanram Rav to be a storyteller when he was ten years old and by the age of twelve he began to practice on his own. His father Bansilal Rav inherited one thousand patrons from his father at the time of '*neara*' or distribution of wealth. From these Bansilal's sons inherited two hundred patrons each. Kojaram worked hard and increased the number of his patrons from two hundred to five hundred. Today he has a little more than five hundred patrons whom he visits once in three years as it is not possible to visit all every year. The patrons also prefer it, so that they can be really generous when Kojaram comes to them after a longer period. In continuation of the tradition he has taught his sons Radheshyam and Ramesh to recite the *Kaavad*.

Kojaram's father Bansilalji aged 62, owns 25 *bighas*⁵⁴ of land in Kumhara which has been given solely to his youngest son Girdhari at the request of Kojaram's mother Sairi Bai. Kojaram therefore has no land in Kumhara and has to survive on his skills as a storyteller and till his own land far away in Mohangarh, near Jaisalmer.

⁵⁴ One *bhiga* is equivalent to 0.4 hectares.

He stays in the village for four months of the year approximately from March-April until the beginning of monsoons, which is June-July. As soon as the rains set in he packs his jeep with food, utensils, mattresses and clothes and leaves with his family for Mohangarh where he has his own land (*Murba*) by the Indira Gandhi canal in the Thar Desert. This land of 25 *bhigas* was given to his family by the government of India for farming, using the water from the canal. Along with brother Pappuram he grows some vegetables and grain on the land for four months from July to November. Just after the festival of Dipawali he sells the produce in a market (*mandi*) in Mohangarh, leaving 20 quintals of *bajra*⁵⁵ for his own family and seeds for the next sowing season. When all is settled he sets off to visit his patrons from village to village for the remaining four months of the year from November-December to March, just before the colourful festival of Holi.

Kojaram has a big repertoire of stories⁵⁶ and is capable of reciting them without hesitation and without referring to any books or notes. His excellent memory serves him well when reciting the genealogies of his patrons. When we asked him how he was able to remember so many names he retorted, saying that in his oral tradition, memory was everything and his school was the repetition of the performances and through practice he learnt and perfected his art.

Kojaram recited the *Gupat paat*⁵⁷ or the hidden panels for us at our request in Jodhpur. This is recited only for those patrons who wish to remain anonymous or harbor a secret wish or feel victimized by fate. It included reciting of stories of Sani Dev and Kundana Bai.⁵⁸ Kojaram Rav recited fifty four stories for us which we will discuss at length in the following chapter.

⁵⁵ *Bajra*, or pearl millet is the staple diet of the Kaavadiya Bhats.

⁵⁶ Kojaram recited fifty four stories for us that are translated in English, and labeled K1 to K54, see Appendix I.

⁵⁷ The *Gupat paat* is rarely recited as most patrons wish to be known. It was recited at our request at Jodhpur in June, 2010.

⁵⁸ See K 10 for Sani Dev and K 12 for Kundana Bai in *Kaavad Stories* by Kojaram in Appendix I.

3.5.3 Brief biographies of Storytellers: Pappuram Rav



Figure 3.16 Pappuram, Shanti Devi, Bablu, Manphool and Dinesh outside their house

Pappuram Rav is thirty-two years old, married to Shanti Devi⁵⁹ and has three sons (figure 3.16). He went to school, but could not continue beyond grade three because of his peripatetic existence. He lives next door to Kojaram Rav, but his house does not have a closed courtyard. He does not have any vehicle and relies on his elder brother Kojaram to take care of him.⁶⁰ Pappuram has three hundred patrons and they are usually from the Jat, Mali and Suthar communities. As a result, his way of speaking and his dialect are different from Kojaram, whose patrons are usually Rajputs. Pappuram was trained by his father Bansilal Rav⁶¹ and often travelled with him to gain experience and confidence. He began telling stories and reciting the *Kaavad* on his own when he was fifteen years old. He is teaching his younger son Manphool who is quick to learn and eager to perform. Since the family is on the move every four months, Pappuram sends his sons to school for short durations hoping they will learn something. He spends several months in Haryana working in the construction business as a manual labourer in the summer months when there is no work in the fields.

In the monsoons, he sends his belongings in the jeep with Kojaram and travels with his wife and children by bus to Mohangarh. There he builds a temporary hut for his family and involves himself in clearing the field of shrubs and weeds and gets the earth ready for the

⁵⁹ Shanti Devi and Kojaram's wife Igyarasi Devi are both sisters married to two brothers.

⁶⁰ In 2009 Pappuram attempted suicide because he had no earnings and felt helpless. Kojaram took charge and restored him back to health.

⁶¹ See figure 3.18 for the Rav Bhat genealogy.

sowing of seeds. Together with other members of the family, both brothers sow and harvest the produce by the end of October or November. They own a milch cow.

When the produce has been sold he leaves with his wife and children to visit his *jajmans* spread across the state. He too returns to Kumhara at the time of Holi.

Pappuram has a remarkable command on the stories and engages his listeners, involving them in the discussion when telling the stories. When we asked him to recite the closed or *Bund paat*⁶² of the *Kaavad* for us he said it required us to become his patron for life and commit to pay our dues each year, failing which he would have us represented upside down in the *Kaavad*. The ceremony involved us opening the doors of the outer shrine which symbolically opened the doors to heaven.⁶³

3.5.4 Origin Myths and multiple identities of the Kaavadiya Bhats

The Kaavadiya Bhat has multiple identities, some that are assumed and others that are imposed upon him. There are several narratives built around the origins of the Kaavadiya Bhats. A Bhat has been described as the one born of a Kshatriya father and prostitute mother, or a Kshatriya father and widowed Brahmini or Brahmin father and Shudra mother etc (Gunarathi, 2000).

Munshi Hardayal Singh (1894, 1991) reports:

“Speaking of their fabulous origin, Sir Henry Elliot says “that they were produced to amuse Parvati from the drops of sweat on Shiva’s brow, but as they chose to sing his praises than hers, they were expelled from heaven and condemned to live a wandering life as terrestrial bards.”⁶⁴

The storytellers have their own version to this narrative, according to which, once Parvati asked Shiva to tell her a story that none should hear and be recited exclusively for her. To ensure that no one else would hear it, Shiva had to destroy the whole universe. He forgot to look under the blanket where she was sitting. Shiva asked Parvati to keep responding with a ‘yes’ when he spoke so he knew that she was awake and had not fallen asleep. A parrot-egg lay under the blanket, listening keenly. As it happened, Parvati fell off to sleep in between but the parrot kept saying yes to keep the story going. When she woke up Parvati apologized for falling asleep and the parrot thief was thus discovered. The parrot flew off

⁶² The closed or the *Bund paat* to the left of the viewers is recited for new patrons only.

⁶³ This ceremony took place in Jodhpur in June, 2010.

⁶⁴ Munshi Hardayal Singh *The Castes of Marwar*. (Jodhpur 1894) pp.118-120.

and Shiva was annoyed with Parvati. Then a bit of ash fell from Shiva's brow and transformed itself into a bumble bee (*bhanwara*) and Shiva blessing the bee turned it into a human being. This 'being' then begged to be given an identity and to be assigned his task in life. Shiva pronounced him to be a *Bhanwar Bhat* who would go around singing the praises of the lord. Coming from the brow of Shiva the *Bhanwar Bhats* were thus gifted with superior memory and they became the record keepers of the barbers, tailors and carpenters. Later in the myth, they helped Parvati to make amends with Shiva.⁶⁵

In addition, the storytellers also claim to be blessed by goddess Sarasvati who resides in their throat (*kanth*) when invoked, enabling them to speak fluidly and faultlessly.

“ *Sada Bhavani Daimi*
Sun Mukh ret Ganesh
Paanchon dev rakhs karein
Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh.”⁶⁶

Forever be by our side Sarawati
 Be in front of us Ganesh
 Together five gods protect us with
 Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh

The most popular myth amongst them is about how they came to have the name *Kaavadiya*. In their own words the *Kaavadiya Bhats* claim to be the descendants of Shravan Kumar of the *Ramayan*. In the *Kaavad* lore Shravan Kumar, was the nephew of king Dashrath of Ayodhya. He was accidentally killed by Dashrath when carrying his blind parents in a *Kaavad* (carrier) taking them to various pilgrim places.⁶⁷

This narrative explains how they came to be *Kaavad* bearers from the *Treta Yug*⁶⁸ and also forges their alliance with Lord Ram. Another myth explains how they came to have the *Kaavad*.

The *Kaavad* shrine was given to them by Kundana Bai a Brahmin lady from Kashi.

⁶⁵ As told by Kojaram Rav in a personal communication and chanted in several performances.

⁶⁶ See Appendix III for a translation of the *Kaavad* performance.

⁶⁷ See K47, the story of Shravan Kumar and his parents in *Kaavad* stories by Kojaram, Appendix I.

⁶⁸ *Treta Yug* is the third epoch of time after *Sat Yug* and *Dwapar Yug*.

When the *Kaavdiyas* did not have the written genealogies (*bahis*), she gave them the *Kaavad* to make a living.⁶⁹

Kundana Bai was blessed to be born every day.⁷⁰ They reported that Kundana Bai would assume the body of a child in the morning, a young woman in the afternoon and an old lady in the night (figure 3.17).



Figure 3.17 Kundana Bai

In the *Kaavad* she is concealed behind a sliding panel which is not visible to all. In the months of *Shravan-Bhadon*⁷¹ when women worship the *Peepal*⁷² tree for the longevity of their husbands' lives they also take the blessings of Kundana Bai who is considered to be the eternal bride (*sada-suhaagan*).⁷³

The storytellers experience no discomfort in claiming these multiple identities as each narrative tries to rationalize their innate characteristics, pre-given by birth. Besides claiming a space in immemorial time, claims are also made to caste status in historical time - that of having Rajput origins. Kojaramji explains that at one time all of them were Rajputs but they changed their caste when Parsuram began killing all the Rajputs; then when they wanted to switch back to being Rajputs they were not allowed to do so by those who had withstood the violence. Multiple identities are also maintained in the village where they are genealogists and storytellers (hidden identity). We shall later see how this duality is in resonance with their performance and their interactions with the patrons.

⁶⁹ See K12 the story of Kundana Bai in *Kaavad* stories from Kojaram Rav, Appendix I. Till she took a *Samadhi* (equated to leaving one's body voluntarily, as a final attainment of liberation from mortality) they would offer half their earnings to her which was used for feeding cows and the other half was retained by them for their own upkeep. No man could ever set eyes on Kundana Bai; and so she lived in a cave attended to by women. Only girls between the ages of five to fourteen were allowed to see her and carry the *Kaavads* out for the storytellers.

⁷⁰ One may compare this to the notion of story itself, which never dies but is born again and again in different forms.

⁷¹ The monsoon months between July-August-September.

⁷² *Peepal* tree's Latin name is *Ficus religiosa*.

⁷³ Many women patrons gift their blouses (*kanchilis*) as a part of the ritual to the storytellers when they recite the story of Kundana Bai.

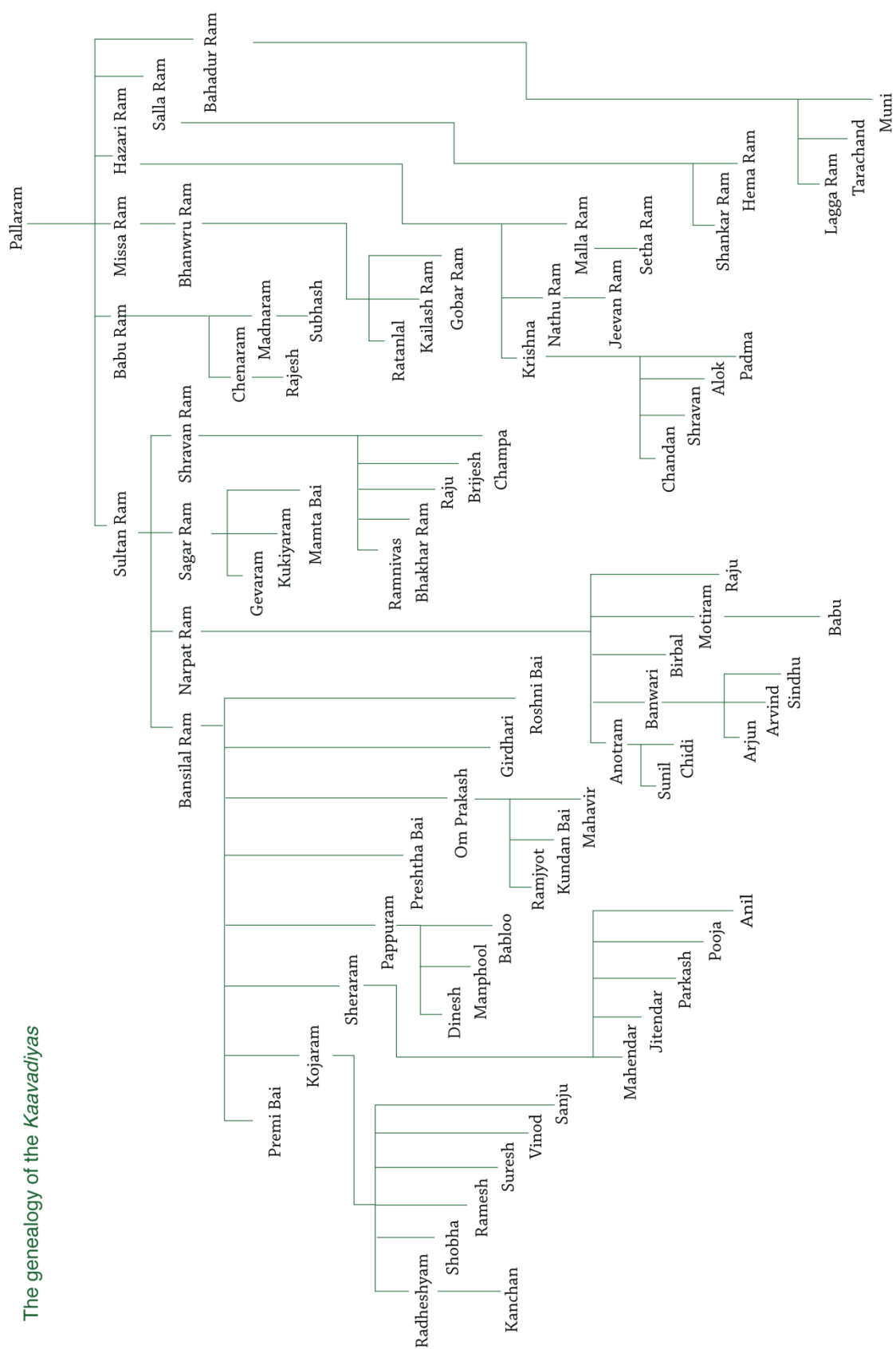


Figure 3.18 The Rav Bhat genealogy of Kojaram Rav

3.5.5 Storytellers home and location

The storytellers (figure 3.18) live around the regions of Jodhpur, Jaisalmar, Nagaur and Barmer districts. Besides Kojaramji Rav and Pappuram Rav who live in village Kumhara in *Tehsil*⁷⁴ Bhopalgad, we also met Tarachand Rav who lives in nearby Kukurda and Narsinh Rav who lives in Hari Sinh ki Bassini, also situated in Bhopalgad. These villages are only accessible by road from Merta city, the birthplace of the saint Meera Bai. In composition, their villages are quite similar to each other. The numbers of households in all three villages range from 167 to 360, and the storytellers comprise of twenty to thirty households. There are very few amenities in the village. Their houses are made of mud and stone. Water supply is either from tube wells or tankers, once a week at the price of Rs 150 per tanker. The nearest hospital is 11 kms away. There are two primary schools, but few girls attend school here. Kumhara village has two temples; one is that of Thakurji Krishna and the other of Balaji Hanuman.

Jatis that live in Kumhara are Jat, Mali, Suthar, Kumbhar, Brahmin, Natiya, Harijan, Dholi, Muslim Teli, Meghwal, Goliya, Kumbhar, Suthar, Sant and Harijan. In the social hierarchy the first is Brahmin and last is Harijan. There are no Rajputs in Kumhara. The storytellers Kojaram Rav and Pappuram Rav live close to the Natiyas at the edge of the village. In the course of our study they shared their stories, their thoughts on the tradition and their own aspirations as storytellers.

Their life revolves around the seasons. They recite the *Kaavad* (*Kaavad Baanchana*) after Diwali up to Holi, the time when they are away from their village. Just before the festival of Holi⁷⁵ they return home and get involved in the Holi celebrations. Most men are adept at playing the *Chang*, a musical instrument used extensively during this festival. This is a time of celebration and visiting the families, so work is put aside for this period of time which could last from one to two weeks. Then it is time for working in the fields for a short period, after which the summer months set in, making agriculture impossible. They utilize this time to work on road construction sites and may travel to neighboring Haryana and Punjab in search of work. They are paid a hundred to three hundred rupees a day. Once the monsoons arrive they return to work in the fields. In Rajasthan the monsoon season is known as the season of *Chaumasa*. This is when the Gods sleep and should not be disturbed. Therefore the patron too cannot make a wish to the Gods through the storyteller.

⁷⁴ A *tehsil* is an administrative division, comprising of some towns and villages within a district similar to a county in other parts of the world.

⁷⁵ The festival of Holi usually occurs around March when the storyteller returns to his home base.

The storyteller is free during this period to pursue other economic activities, such as agriculture. Some Kaavadiya Bhats have their own land, but most often they work on the land of others. Others use their camels to transport goods for the community. Some also travel to the homes of the Suthars to get new *Kaavads* made. Even today, the storyteller has to adopt multiple professions to make a living.

Children get married at an early age. The marriage ritual ceremony begins with a coconut being sent by the girl's father to the house of the proposed groom. The groom's family, after accepting the coconut throws a feast and celebrates for four days before leaving (this is known as *baraat*) for the girl's house. After the wedding ceremony the girl returns to her parents' home and stays there till called for by her husband's family. The engagement is known as *sagai* or *byah* and the wedding is called *shaadi*. Opium or *Amal* is shared during these occasions. The women cover their faces (*ghoonghat*) and cannot be seen by men other than their husbands. When a person gets married their maternal uncle is obliged (*Mayero bharna*) to bring the gifts for the wedding. As the extended family lives in the village the storytellers return to their village for all important events, even if they have no jobs or work there.



Figure 3.19 Narsinh Rav's family setting up *Dera* in Asarlai, Jodhpur district.

3.5.6 Itinerant existence

As they are not permitted to tell stories in their own village they need to travel far to where their patrons will receive them with respect and shower them with gifts. Most storytellers have at least a hundred or two hundred *jajmans* or patrons that they have usually inherited from their father, just in the way family wealth is divided between male siblings. They may visit about three

or four families in a day. They usually travel with their families and often walk long stretches along dry river beds, carrying their belongings on mules. Besides mules they also take along their goats which serve to provide milk as and when required. They set up their homes on the outskirts of the village they are visiting. Their homes away from home are make-shift arrangements called *Dera* (figure 3.19), which are set up in an open space with a few bushes. We visited one such *Dera* where the clothes, bed sheets/covers were placed

on the ground or on bushes. Bushes served to hold up spice boxes, sugar and tea. The goats were also tethered to these bushes and the floor was used for eating, sleeping and resting. This was not even a temporary structure with a ceiling or roof as the weather was dry and there was no threat of rains. Once they had settled the *Kaavdiya Bhat* made the rounds of the village, informing his patrons of his arrival and fixing up the time and day for his recitation. He and his family planned to stay there for a week or so until they had finished reciting the *Kaavad* for all their patrons in that village and then move on to another village of patrons where they would set up another *Dera*.

3.5.7 Role of a Kaavadiya Bhat: genealogist

Traditionally, the storyteller probably had multiple roles in society. He was invariably a record keeper, priest, entertainer, informer and teacher all in one. Today he would be probably known as a record keeper and/or a storyteller. The records are entered in a *Bahi Khata* in a script called *Modhi Padhai* (figure 3.20) which has thirty six letters, but no *matras*. This script, explained Bhanwruji, is used to ensure secrecy, so that even the patrons cannot read it.



Figure 3.20 Bhanwruji Rav reading out a Bahi in Modhi Padhai

These *bahis* (records) are rare and very few storytellers have them.⁷⁶ These records are usually about the donations made by the patron's family over generations. There is also information on the names of the patron's village which is useful when marriages are being arranged; incest is thus avoided. These records have less to do with property and land records and more to do with lineage and establishing relationships with divinity to raise

⁷⁶ Kojaram said they also prefer not to have it because they would be tempted to sell it to rich patrons and lose their livelihood anyway. Also it could erode memory, he added.

one's status in the community. When Bhanwru Bhat recited this *pothi* in Gammon India⁷⁷ premises near Jaisalmer the people gathered around to hear him recite the genealogy for his patron Gordhanji (a Mali by caste) who supplies labour for construction of the Gammon India in Jaisalmer. This recitation had some similarities to a *Kaavad* recitation but, because it was written it had a logical flow that began with the formation of the universe, when humans were ten times taller and lived for hundreds of years and animals and trees could also speak. Gradually the humans became smaller, lived for less years and began to have more children, and the flora and fauna went 'quiet'. Much later the *jatis* (sub-castes) came into being.

The *Kaavad* structure, on the other hand, has disparate narratives from the *Puranas*, the *Bhakti* saints and epics that do not appear to form a seamless whole. However, there is an order that the oral recitation follows which is indicative of a structure beneath the apparent incoherence. Also, the images of the patrons painted inside the *Kaavad* validate the oral recitation of the genealogies and serve as focal points of interest. Apart from reciting genealogies the storytellers also narrate stories from the *Kaavad*, but this takes place only towards the evenings. Sometimes the storytellers also play the role of match makers and

even offer to sell objects made by one patron to another patron (figure 3.21).



Figure 3.21 Kaavdiya Narsinh Rav with patrons in Balao, Jodhpur district

3.5.8 Transfer of knowledge and the training of a storyteller

Kojaram's son Ramesh is training to be a storyteller. Becoming a storyteller begins by observing a teller in his natural settings. The novice must travel with his father and observe the performance and get acquainted with the patrons. This he may do over a season or two. When he is at home he first learns to recite the poetry that is chanted at the beginning of

⁷⁷ Gammon India was a construction site on the outskirts of Jaisalmer where Bhanwruji's patron had a shack.

the recitation.⁷⁸ Since it is in rhyme he is able to remember it easily. He must also learn a few other rhymes or *saviyas* which may be chanted in between the recitation. Then he must learn to recite the genealogies of the patrons. His father has a notebook in which all names are entered and updated every year. This is also to be committed to memory.

He needs to be well-acquainted with the position of the images in order to point at them without requiring to search. The *Kaavad* images lend themselves to interpretations, both fixed and flexible. The images that are fixed are the ones with the stories from the epics, the patron saints and local heroes. He has to point at them with his peacock feather so he must be well-versed with their locations on each panel in order to recite the story represented by the images.

Once he is confident of reciting from memory, he has the opportunity to recite for a patron on visits with his father. Under the father's supervision he begins with a recitation and thus the patron also becomes familiar with him. When Kojaram feels confident he will send Ramesh on his own to recite the *Kaavad* for some of his patrons. This may take three to five years.

Manphool is learning from his father Pappuram and is endowed with a musical voice which holds the attention of a listener. He started to learn in 2009 and gave his first performance in 2010. He finds it easier to learn the names of the patrons and their genealogies because they meet very often. What is difficult is to remember, he says, are the stories from the epics and the places where they came from. His stories vary from the ones Pappuram recites as Manphool is learning from a very knowledgeable storyteller called Malla Ram from Bassini Hari Sinh ki. A good storyteller, says Pappuram, is the one who remembers all the names and the order in which the stories are to be narrated.

3.5.9 Interaction with Suthars and the patrons/*Jajmans*

Typically the storyteller visits his patrons once a year⁷⁹ and as they make donations towards having their images or their parents' images painted in the *Kaavad* he commissions the *Kaavad* maker Suthar to make him a new *Kaavad* with specific instructions with regard to the patron's request. Most patrons simply make a donation and the storyteller may get them painted riding a horse or an elephant or travelling in a plane. However, there are occasions when the patron makes a specific request which has to be honored. Certainly, the storyteller cannot return to his patron with the same *Kaavad*

⁷⁸ These are called *Saviyas* or *Dohas*.

⁷⁹ This may vary from one storyteller to another because it depends on the number of patrons he may have.

without making the changes he was paid to make. One of the possible reasons for the paucity of extant *Kaavad*s from a longer period could be that the wood used is quite poor and brittle. Since the storyteller periodically changes the *Kaavad* (unlike the *Phad* which is conserved for a long time by its teller) he too does not appear to be too concerned about the life span of a *Kaavad*.

3.6 The Patrons: *Jajmans* of the storytellers

We accompanied Kojaramji and two other storytellers to their patrons' homes for the *Kaavad* recitation. Each patron or *jajman*, as they are referred to, is visited at least once in two or three years and if they happen to live in a very remote region then they are visited once in five years. This was the case when we visited Lunaram from the Beldar community. Lunaram's was the only house in a radius of three kms. and the only way to get there was on foot or a rugged car. The family was very surprised to see us and was immensely pleased to see Kojaramji whom they called Motiram.⁸⁰ They had not had a *Kaavad* recitation for five years because Kojaramji had not been able to visit them. The communities visited and for whom the *Kaavad* was recited were Rajputs, Beldar, Jat, Nai, Kumbhar, Mali, Meghwal and Bheel.⁸¹ Some patrons refused us entry as there was a death in the family and others did not have the means to pay for the recitation.

3.6.1 The relationship with the storyteller

The storyteller is known to the patron over generations. The storyteller may have visited the patron's place with his father before he began to recite the *Kaavad* independently. Being a patron (*jajman*) means being responsible for the one who depends on him and on which the patron too depends for reinforcing his own identity. The *Kaavadiyas* (storytellers) and their *jajmans* (hereditary patrons) consider the *Kaavad* as a sacred shrine which demands certain rituals be followed, listening to the genealogies, epic stories and making donations. It is believed that listening to stories purifies the soul and reserves a place of entry for the devotee in heaven. When the storyteller comes and recites the *Kaavad* the most important part of the narration, as far as the patron is concerned, is not the story, but the recitation of his own genealogy. Along with the genealogy, the storyteller also extols the virtues of the patron's forbears and informs all who have assembled about the generous gifts given by the ancestor of the patron and the patron's own generosity

⁸⁰ When asked Kojaram explained he was known by two names, one was Moti which was used by the elders and one Kojaram which is how most people knew him as.

⁸¹ There are thirty six *jatis* or castes named by Kojaramji that are catered to by the storytellers.

towards the teller. The patron is pleased to be ‘recognized’ and praised and in return offers the storyteller a hearty meal, cash and clothes and sometimes livestock, like a goat or lamb. Some may even offer a calf. At patron Hukmaram’s place Kojaram was offered a calf not yet delivered by the cow.

3.6.2 Community of patrons, home, location, means of livelihood

The patrons belong to thirty six communities or *jatis* (caste) that were originally all Rajputs, but due to forced conversions and persecution, renounced the Rajput title and adopted their occupational identities. However, most patrons fall into the OBC category as per the Census data of India. Each *jati* has their origin myth with which the storyteller is conversant and may recite it if they ask for it.

The patrons either live in the middle of a *Dhani* (field) or in a village and in the case of a town or city they reside at the periphery of the town. Most of them have some land and are also involved in doing masonry work in small towns or cities. Some deal with livestock and others do farming. Besides farming they follow their caste professions as well.



Figure 3.22 Upside down donors

3.6.3 Significance of a *Kaavad* recitation

The *Kaavad* can be recited for almost anyone except the Muslim community for whom the *Kaavad* holds no significance, says Kojaram. For almost all of the thirty six *jatis* identified by Kojaram the *Kaavad* signifies inclusion into the fold. Each patron may have their own reason for it to be recited but for all it does mean a sacred space has come to their house. It is not something that they can own, as it comes from Kashi and the storyteller is its guardian. In their understanding the *Kaavad* can only come in certain months of the year when the Gods are awake. After the auspicious period is over the *Kaavad* has to be returned to Kashi where it comes from.⁸²

Some have been patrons for many generations, so recitation is undertaken as matter of routine, when the storyteller comes uninvited. Some may welcome them if there is a happy occasion in the family like the birth of a son or grandson or a wedding. The richer patrons invite the storyteller to take pleasure in having their genealogies recited and to hear the praises of their ancestors. The poorer patrons receive the storyteller with respect and make

⁸² As explained by patron Askaran Sinh in village Jhinjinali, a sacred object like *Kaavad* cannot be kept in a household.

donations towards a wish they want fulfilled. Some make donations towards a wish for a male child, others for safety and security and some for an experience of a pilgrimage they cannot afford to make. The relationship between the storyteller and his patron is usually amiable and even when the storyteller needs to reprimand the patron for not giving him his dues he does this in a humorous way. He points at an image of an upside down couple (figure 3.22) and assigns them the names of the patron's elder who was supposed to pay the teller but did not do so. The patron is aware of what the storyteller is trying to convey. So he pays on behalf of his ancestor and the storyteller promises to set upright the ancestor on his next visit.

3.6.4 Significance of the recitation of genealogies

The genealogies are visual and the images depicted are emblematic. The patron listens very carefully when the names of all the ancestors are read out in relation to the donations they made and the village they came from. When reciting the names they begin with the oldest person/ancestor known to the family. Along with him they name his wife and children. Then they mention the name of the village they are from, what vehicle they have been given to ride and the donations they have made. This also includes names of the extended or joint family over generations. This information becomes very useful when arranging weddings as there will be some families they cannot marry into, as it may amount to incest. This notion is reinforced by one of the stories told regarding incest.

This story told by Kojaram Rav is about the marriage between Shiva and Parvati. At first when Vishnu asked Shiva to marry Parvati he refused to marry her because he said Parvati was his sister. Then when both Vishnu and Parvati persisted Shiva made a condition. Parvati had to die 108 times before all ties of kinship were broken between them and only then could he marry her. For the patron knowledge of a person's name, village, clan and caste is very important without which the person is a non-entity and no kindred ties can be made with them.

3.6.5 Wish-fulfillment and the *Kaavad* recitation

A patron may make a wish through a *Kaavad* recitation for anything they lack in life. The storyteller assures them that a wish made in earnest will be granted. Women patrons usually make a wish for children or the longevity of their husband's lives. They may also get the *Kaavad* read on the occasion of a son's completing a year of good health if the child has been unwell or if they wish to find a good match for their daughters. They too,

like listening to the names of their elders (*vaderas*). When the lady makes the wish she also pledges a special gift to the storyteller which he will note down in his book. When he comes again the next year and the wish has been fulfilled he will remind her about the pledge (usually a goat, calf or a silver ring) and she will oblige. In Dechu, a woman gave her silver ring to the storyteller as her offering, which was separate from what was given by her family. When a patron does not fulfill the promise made, the storyteller points at an image of an upside down couple, referring to it and them in another village, where the patron is also known to that family. This may cause undue embarrassment, so most patrons keep to their word.

3.7 Performance of the *Kaavad*

According to the patrons, the storytellers are invited when the patron needs to celebrate an occasion like a wedding, the birth of a child or the fulfillment of a wish. On such occasions the storyteller extols the virtues of their forefathers (who may be deceased), singing their praises for the benefit of the audience. This then raises the status of the patron in their own community.

Usually, the storyteller is either invited or on his own visits his patron after a period of a year or more. The *Kaavad* recitation takes place during the day. The storyteller is received with respect and given a place to set up the *Kaavad* for the recitation. This takes place in a space meant for visitors, usually away from the main residence of the patron. The recitation can happen only in times of peace and harmony. If there is a death in the family then the storyteller may have to return another day. Storytellers also do not recite on a moonless (*amavasya*) night.

Genealogies are narrated during the day and the family members, neighbors and close relatives huddle around the teller.

3.7.1 Recording of a *Kaavad* recitation

We travelled with storytellers Narsinh Rav, Pappuram Rav and Kojaram Rav to their patrons' places where they recited the *Kaavad*. The patrons were familiar with the storytellers and greeted them pleasure. Floor coverings were immediately laid out in the courtyard or guest rooms and neighbors were invited to join us. Before and after the recitations considerable amount of time was spent in exchanging of news. In all instances

we were offered food and tea. Of the several recordings three were transcribed and translated. We will now describe sample recitations of the *Kaavad* as they occurred.⁸³

3.7.2 Narration or *Kaavad Baanchana* and the sequence of a performance by Narsinh Rav from Bassini Hari Sinh Ki

We arrived at the house of Pratap Ram in Balao near Dechu, and were received in the open courtyard, where the women spread out floor coverings for us to sit on. Although the patron's caste was that of a potter (Kumbhar) they did not make pots; instead they wove carpets. After the introductions and exchange of news, we were offered tea and water. Storyteller Narsinh Rav sat against the wall with his *Kaavad* wrapped in a white cloth. Gradually everyone began to seat themselves. The older men and children sat close to him. The younger women with veils covering their heads and faces sat behind the door of a room from where they could only hear but not see the *Kaavad*. A very old lady, who was deaf in the ear, also sat very close to the children and men. The storyteller uncovered the *Kaavad*, put aside two notebooks that were on top of it and began brushing the *Kaavad* with a peacock feather. He opened the lowest drawer of the *Kaavad* and brought out a string of beads made from the seeds of Rudraksha.⁸⁴ Before the narration began Narsinh Rav lit an incense stick and introduced himself. He mentioned his own name, the village he had come from and the patron for whom he was going to recite the *Kaavad*.

Narsinhji swung the panel open to his right to reveal another set of panels inside. He did not open the doors of the outermost shrine of the *Kaavad*. He introduced all the figures visible and provided a synopsis of the stories depicted in the panel of the Paandavas. He did not narrate the whole story as it is assumed that the stories are already known to the patrons. The few lines serve as reference points or simply invoke the memories of the patrons. During this time his voice was low and his gaze was fixed on the *Kaavad* images, leading everyone to connect and enter the space. In a way, he invited the listeners to also become a part of the text.

As he chanted or sang he opened the panels one by one, introducing the images of Gods, saints and local legends. All along, he introduced the figures in the present tense, creating a sense of travel and the notion of being in the presence of the deities. Gradually he opened

⁸³ Transcripts and translations of three recitations by three storytellers for three patrons can be found in the Appendix III.

⁸⁴ Rudraksha seeds are called *elaecarpus granitrus*. This was peculiar in his case because Kojaramji and other storytellers did not wear such a string in their necks for any of their performances.

up the panels that had the images of the patrons. At this point the patrons became more attentive and closely observed the images.

Now he began reciting their genealogies, calling out their names, praising them and telling everyone what donations were made by the patrons in various villages, including the one he was visiting. The patrons 'recognized' their ancestors on the panels and felt satisfied that their ancestors were well looked after in the other world.

As per the custom he opened only one half of the *Kaavad* which is to the right of the viewer, called the *Khul* or open (1990) *paat*. This is the side that has all the panels on the Paandavas, Krishna, Bhakti saints, *Badrinath ka paat* and the patrons. As he kept unfolding the panels and approached the sanctum sanctorum (*thakur mandir*) he reverted to reciting the abbreviated stories of the deities that included Shravan Kumar, Karma Jatni, Raja Harishchandra and Taramati Rani, Sudama and several others. He gave emphasis to the *Bhakti sant* Sireeyade who is the patron saint of the Kumbhar *jati*. Finally he revealed the chief deities in the shrine: Ram, Sita and Lakshman.⁸⁵ The patrons folded their hands and bowed their heads, as they would in a temple chanting *Jai ho* several times. The whole recitation took about 12 mins. Throughout the recitation he repeated two or three phrases that reminded the listener that the *Kaavad* was a sacred shrine.⁸⁶

When this ritualistic reading concluded the gathering was invited to make their donations. The patrons donated food, cash, and jewelry.⁸⁷ Women made their own donations of clothes and small items of jewelry like a silver ring for which they did not seek any permission from their husbands. However, they are unable to give cash, grain or an animal without the consent of a male member of the family.

Narsinhji entered the names of his patrons in his book and recorded the donations made. He wrote in his own script called the *Modi Bhasha*.

To entertain them he told the story of their patron saint Sireeyade, a devout potter woman who defied king Hrinakush and did not chant his name, instead she chose to chant the name of Ram against all odds.⁸⁸ At the end lunch was offered to all of us. Narsinhji wrapped the *Kaavad* in the white cloth and strapped it on his shoulder before leaving.

⁸⁵ Sometimes the innermost shrine has printed images of Goddess Durga but most *Kaavads* seen by this investigator have the wooden statues of Ram, Sita and Lakshman.

⁸⁶ The entire performance with its English translation may be found in Appendix II.

⁸⁷ Patrons may offer animals, usually new born calves, or goats or whatever they can afford to give.

⁸⁸ The story of Sireeyade K37 can be found in Appendix I.

3.7.3 Narration or *Kaavad Baanchana* and the sequence of a performance by Pappuram Rav from Kumhara

This recitation took place outside the hut of a Jat patron, Taggi Bai and Hukmaram Choudhry.

Pappuram uncovered the *Kaavad* wrapped in a red cloth and put aside two notebooks and a peacock feather. He introduced himself and the patron and his village. He lit an incense stick and placed it in a bowl of grain. He explained that the *Kaavad* recitation was equivalent to a pilgrimage.

He began with brushing the *Kaavad* with the peacock feather and chanted a few rhymes that extolled the virtues of charity and humility.⁸⁹ This was followed by pointing the peacock feather at the two guardian figures on the outermost doors of the shrine. Then without opening the doors he swung aside the panels to reveal the *Paandava ka paat*, to the right of the viewer. He recited the stories of the Panadavas, Meera Bai, baby Krishna, Raja Mordhaj and Padmavati Rani. The stories were not told in detail; rather they were referred with an assumption that they were known to the patrons. Then he paused to tell the story of princess Padmavati and included the listeners in his discussion, so that they too began to appreciate and nod their heads when he spoke. After he finished telling the story he turned the panel to reveal the *Bhaktimala ka paat*.

In this *paat* too he began with chanting some rhymes and recited stories of Dhanna *bhagat* and his field, Kuba Kumbhar, Raidas, Kabir, Ginka Bai, Bherj Bhati, Neni Bai, Ganesh and Sireeyade. Then he turned the panel to *Badrinath ka paat*. At this panel he first chanted a rhyme about the value of going to the Badrinath pilgrimage, and then recited the story of Bhagirath who brought the Ganges to earth through penance.

Then he turned the panel to reveal the panels of the patrons and began reciting their genealogies. After reciting the names of their clan members he ended with the names of Taggi Bai and her husband Hukmaram, announcing they were placed honorably on a chariot of swans (*Hansari Palki*), as they had made their twenty first donation and were free from their dues. He reiterated that the donation given would last beyond their lifetime and would make their names eternal. The patrons looked visibly pleased.

Then he returned his attention to the stories on the inner shrine doors and the patrons nodded and prepared to make their donation. He recited the story of king Harischandra, Duti Bai, and Shravan Kumar, before invoking and praising the gods and goddesses as well

⁸⁹ The performance and its English translation can be found in Appendix III.

as Shabri and Sudama. He ended the recitation by reminding everyone that whatever is given in charity goes a long way and will be made available in the future.

His oft repeated line was that making a donation was equal to bathing in the holy Ganges. At the end of the performance he was given some cash and promised a calf of the pregnant cow. He noted this down in his notebook and wrapped the *Kaavad* back in its red cloth. Tea was served by Taggi Bai before we left.

3.7.4 Narration or *Kaavad Baanchana* and the sequence of a performance by

Kojaram Rav from Kumhara

Kojaramji recited the same *Kaavad* used by Pappuram for his Rajput patron in village Jhinjinali. We were received in a special place meant for visitors called a '*kothhari*'.

The narration began with chanted verses of poet saints Kabir and Tulsidas, where the virtues of sharing and charity were extolled. 'Just as the river never depletes if a sparrow drinks from it so does the wealth of a person does not deplete if s/he is charitable, says Kabir. Tulsidas says there are two streams of devotion in this world. If the desire is for wealth then one must be charity and if the desire is for enlightenment then one must meditate on God's name'. The saints too endorse the value of charity.

This was followed by a chant-like invocation to the five Gods: Sarasvati, Ganesha, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh, seeking their protection and blessings.

Kojaramji brushed the *Kaavad* with the peacock feather and turned the panel, without opening the outer shrine doors with the two guardian figures called *Poliyas*.⁹⁰ He opened the *Pandava ka paat* and recited the stories of Pandavas, Meera Bai, Baby Krishna, Mordhaj and Padmavati, and Krishna stealing butter. Then he turned the panel to *Bhaktimala ka paat* and started with the story of Dhanna bhagat, Kubaji Kumbhar, Raidas, Kabir, Ginka, Senji bhagat ending with Sireeyade. Next he turned to Badrinath ka paat and chanted a rhyme about the virtues of making a pilgrimage to Badrinath and the virtues of charity. When he saw the attention of his patrons wavering, he chided them by chanting a rhyme about looking but not seeing, hearing but not listening. This brought their attention right back to him. This was followed by the story of Bhagirath and his penance to bring the holy Ganges to earth.

Then he turned the panels to reveal the patrons panels and recited the genealogies of his patron and his extended family. He mentioned their names, their village, the kind of

⁹⁰ *Poliyas* means guards or policemen.

donation made and the image or vehicle desired by the patron. He also clarified which patron had paid his dues and was giving him the gifts as a matter of choice. For those who had to pay past dues he said that once they made their payments their names would be entered or corrected in all the five hundred and eighty *Kaavads* that were in circulation in Rajasthan.

Then he recited the stories on the inner shrine doors and told the story of king Harishchandra, Duti Bai, Shravan Kumar. Finally he invoked the gods and ended the recitation.⁹¹

At the end of this performance he was given some cash and lunch.

The patron Askaran Sinh explained to us that for him the *Kaavad* was like the sacred Geeta.

Later Kojaramji explained that if the patron wished for his own image to be placed in the *Kaavad* then the expenses must be discussed and paid for by the patron.

With regards to the peacock feather he explained that it symbolized Krishna and was used to ward off any evil or ghost that may happen to hover around the *Kaavad* or the house he was visiting. He said the *Kaavad* houses Gods and demons and the living and the deceased, therefore it needs to be cleansed frequently and wrapped in a cloth to protect it from any entities.

The same *Kaavad* is also used to recite the genealogies for another patron from another *jati* and the same images serve to represent their kith and kin. When the storyteller visits another patron he uses the same *Kaavad* to recite their genealogies and will point at the same images, assigning different names to them.

3.8 Conclusion

The process of understanding a phenomenon from the community's perspective takes a considerable amount of time and patience. Some information was shared with us only towards the end of three years of interactions; when they felt comfortable enough to reflect on the tradition and interpreted for us some of the stories from their own perspective.

The *Kaavad* bestows each group with their unique identity. For the *Kaavad* maker Suthar, it distinguishes the community from other Suthars because they are the only ones who make the *Kaavad* and have the traditional knowledge. They do not want to stop making them even if they do not earn much from it because they do not want to be held responsible

⁹¹ A comparison of recitations by different storytellers is made in Chapter 6.

for the death of this tradition. Some believe it may even bring them bad luck if they stopped making them. Others take pride in being the sole inheritors of the craft. Currently there is one family which makes the *Kaavads* for the storyteller and who is knowledgeable about the stories and the order of their appearance on the *Kaavad* panels.

The storytellers, the Kaavadiya Bhats are distinct from the Bhat community of Rajasthan because of their being the *Kaavad* bearers (*Kaavadiyas*). Through their origin myths they are related to Shravan Kumar from the Ramayana who carried the first *Kaavad* although it did not resemble their *Kaavad* in its current form which was given by Kundana Bai.

The patrons also feel represented by the *Kaavad* in that it legitimizes their relationships to gods through their long ancestry.

All carriers of the tradition are therefore directly or indirectly connected to each other through the *Kaavad* and depend on it for their identity and livelihood.

The *Kaavad* mediates the two realms of imagination and reality for the communities, making the divisions seamless. Some of the events in the stories mirror events in their everyday life, for example the making of *Kheech*⁹² during a festival. The events in the stories also reinforce social norms and behavior.

Even though a *Kaavad* recitation is not a rite of passage kind of ritual for the patron, it does appear to have a significant place in the lives of its carriers. The order in which the stories are unfolded in a recitation also appears to be significant. There is a clear distinction between the various parts of the *Kaavad* and its recitation for specific patrons. This suggests there is an underlying structure guiding its design and performance that needs further examination. Decidedly, there is a structural relation between the object and community and between the various parts of the *Kaavad* that we shall explore in the next chapter.

⁹² *Kheech* is made by Karma Jatni for a stone god in the *Kaavad* lore. See K 50 in Appendix I.

Chapter 4

The *Kaavad* Anatomy: Design and Structure

4.1 Introduction

A storyteller's *Kaavad* called the *Marwari Kaavad* has a fixed height, a flat roof, and a red base colour. The number of panels is even and varies from ten to sixteen, depending on the number of patrons a storyteller may have. The images on the panels include those of gods, saints and patrons.

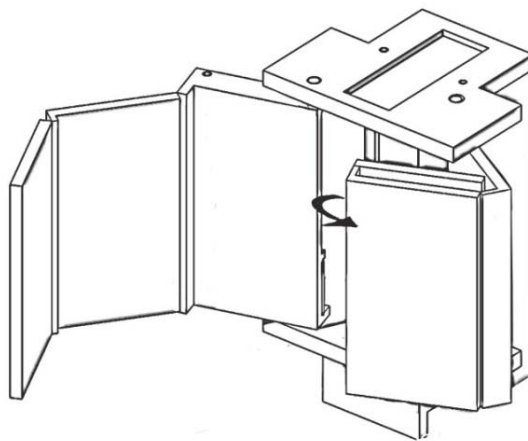


Figure 4.1 Kojaramji carrying his *Kaavad*

The *Kaavad* is usually wrapped in a red or white cloth and carried on the shoulder by the storyteller (figure 4.1). This *Kaavad* is quite different from the one made for non-practitioners.

The *Kaavad* made for non-practitioners or non-ritual purposes (figure 4.2) has a painted sun on a roof that simulates the rising tower or *shikhara* in a temple.

There is no set order of the images although we may recognize images from the Ramayana on the left and images from Krishna's life on the right. The sizes of these *Kaavads* vary from six inches to eighty-four inches in height but the ratio and form remains the same. They can also be found in many colours and are not limited to a red base colour.¹

Like the storyteller's *Kaavad*, the non-ritual *Kaavad* also has an inner sanctum with wooden figurines depicting Ram, Sita and Lakshman.



Figure 4.2 Non-ritual or commercial *Kaavad* from Bassi, Chittor

The storyteller's *Kaavad* is significantly different from the non-ritual, commercial *Kaavads* catering to clients like tourists, in that it is a ritualistic object which is recited and never acquired by any patron. This most likely explains why there is no particular order of images or number of panels in the commercial *Kaavads*.

The discussion here is limited to the design and structure of a traditional ritual *Kaavad*, also known as the 'Marwari *Kaavad*' made for the storytellers (Kaavadiya Bhats) which they recite for their hereditary patrons. By 'design' we imply the overall plan or anatomy of the *Kaavad* while the 'structure' is the arrangement and organization of the various elements and their relationship to each other.

The storytellers call it the *Kaavad* of Shravan or Ram *Kaavad* and the *Kaavad* makers call it the Marwari *Kaavad*. This is because the storytellers for whom they make the *Kaavad*

¹ In Bassi Chittor, we saw *Kaavads* made in pastel shades as well as primary colours, as according to the makers, the foreign tourists who frequent that place prefer lighter colours.

hail from Marwar. The *Marwari Kaavad* has a distinct structure and its anatomy may be studied from the perspective of its physical, visual and narrative structure. The physical structure is the unpainted wooden box with panels that are hinged to a core shrine in a symmetrical fashion. The visual structure is the imagery and its grid system that contributes to the recitation, and helps the storyteller remember or recall the narratives. Each panel has a name and function. The narrative structure is formed of the stories, the order in which they are told, their visual arrangement on the panels, and the way they are narrated in conjunction with the turning of the panels during a recitation.



Figure 4.3 *Marwari Kaavad* closed and open position

4.2 The *Kaavad* Anatomy

The *Kaavad* appears to be conceptually based on a Hindu temple which usually consists of an entrance with guardians, a covered hall for the devotees to gather (*Mandap*) and an inner shrine or sanctum sanctorum (*Garbhagriha*). The temple hall may have images of gods as well as images from the epics. Like a temple, the *Kaavad* too has an entrance with guardians and an inner shrine (*Ram mandir/Thakur mandir*) which is reached by the turning of the hinged panels. The panels fold into each other and the ones closest to the central core/shrine are held in place by wooden pegs acting as hinges (figure 4.3). The painted panels appear to surround the traveler. The base gives a sense of the plinth of a temple and the panels simulate the grand entrance to the temple with the seated lions and the guardians or *poliyas* on the outer doors.

The structure lends itself to be portable and can be compressed to a box² while traveling and opened out (figure 4.3) to give the sense of a temple, creating the different thresholds, from the outside to the innermost shrine. This movement enables the storyteller to guide the listeners from one story to another through time.

On the front doors of the *Kaavad* is a ticket or wooden tablet which is tucked into the hinge of the closed doors that serves as a license for the storyteller to perform.

The ticket has the following text in Hindi:

“This *Kaavad* is made in the Annapurna temple in Kashipuri. Signed Kundana Bai”.³



Figure 4.4 The ticket on the outer shrine doors



Figure 4.5 Entry pass carried by the storyteller

This ticket (figure 4.4) is shown to the patrons to prove that the *Kaavad* brought to them indeed comes from a sacred place. On the side of the *Kaavad* is a pocket for another wooden panel or strip that is the entry pass which authorizes the storyteller to recite the *Kaavad* in a particular area or territory. This pocket is absent in all the *Kaavads* today, but is found in the one in Ahmedabad at the Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Museum. Today the

² In the older *Kaavads* the panels were hinged together by iron pegs (as in figure above) that locked into a ring on the adjacent panel so that all the panels could be dismantled and compressed into a box. Now that metal hinges are available the panels are nailed together with lesser chance of losing any part or losing the order in which they must appear.

³ As told by Kojaram and Pappuram in a personal communication with this investigator, Kundana Bai was a woman priest from Kashipuri (present day Varanasi) who gifted the *Kaavad* to the storytellers to collect donations for feeding cows on her behalf. They were allowed to retain half the collections as their earnings and the other half was used to look after cows in Varanasi. After her passing they found the makers in Bassi to fashion the *Kaavads* for them and continued collecting donations in her name. For more details see K 12 in Appendix I.

storytellers carry such strips (figure 4.5) that they themselves commission, but display as legal documents to their patrons.

The entry pass with a storyteller had the following text written on both sides.

“This pass is given from Kasipuri’s⁴ Annapurna Devi temple. You may give your donation in this *Kaavad* which travels all over the country. It goes to Rajasthan, Marwar, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Bengal, Haryana, and Bangalore. Your donation will come to me. Believe this to be true, it is not a lie. Believe Kundana Bai.”

4.3 The Physical Structure

The traditional *Marwari Kaavad* is usually twelve inches tall and has ten, twelve or sixteen panels or *paats* that are hinged together and flank the core shrine equally on either side. When closed the *Kaavad* stands twelve inches tall and eight inches wide. When fully opened it is twenty-six inches wide.

On the side of the *Kaavad* is a pocket for another wooden panel that is the entry pass which authorizes the storyteller to recite the *Kaavad*.

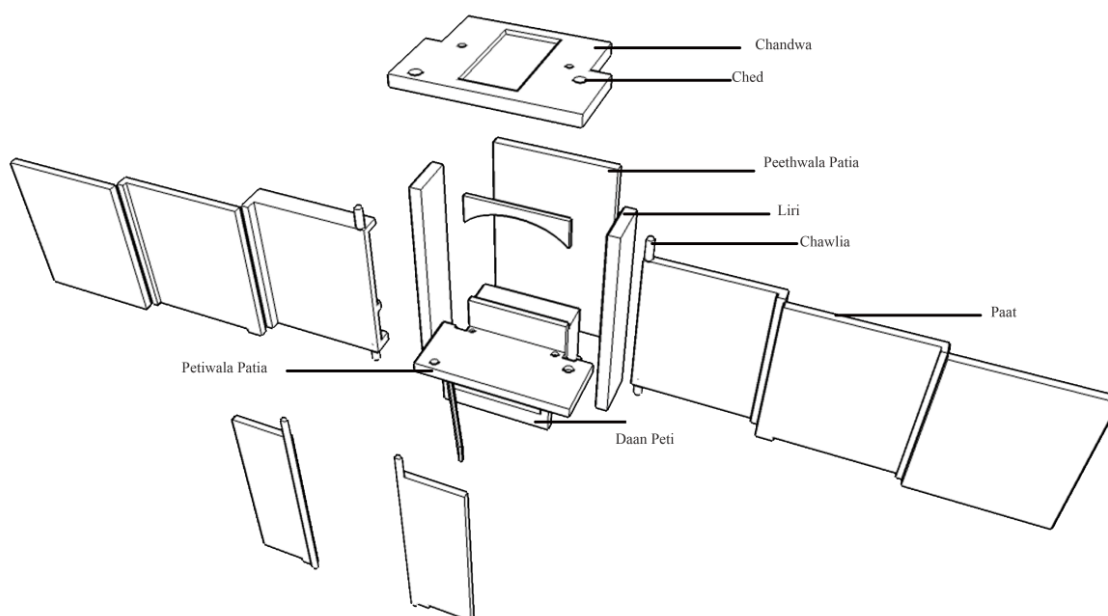


Figure 4.6 *Kaavad* parts as identified by the makers

Each part and panel has a name assigned to them (Figure 4.6) enabling communication amongst the makers and between the tellers and makers. The makers are connected with the construction of the *Kaavad*, so they have a name for each piece of wood that makes up

⁴ Kasipuri stands for the current city of Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh, India.

the *Kaavad*, such as the roof of the shrine (*Chandwa*), the side strips (*Liri*) forming the inner core and the wooden peg of the panels (*Chaulia*) etc.



Figure 4.7 Left: Outer shrine with Vishnu/ Krishna and Kundana Bai in hidden or *Gupat paat*. Right: Inner shrine with Ram Sita Lakshman is reached through the open or *Khul paat*. Below is the donation box or *daan peti*

The *Kaavad* has two sets of shrines (Figure 4.7). One is located on the outside at the entrance and can be opened directly; the other is at the innermost core of the *Kaavad* and can be reached only after all the panels on the right are opened.

The storyteller has his own distinctions for the *Kaavad* parts, which are not even known to the makers, but shared amongst storytellers and their patrons. For instance, the left set of panels of the *Kaavad* (i.e. left of the viewer) is referred to as the closed or *Bund paat*⁵ (Figure 4.8). This is named such because in usual circumstances the storyteller never opens the left panels. It is only recited for new patrons.



Figure 4.8 Closed or *Bund paat* recited for new patrons

⁵ The term *paat* is used by the storyteller to denote a single panel as well as a set of panels. For instance the single panel of Bhakti saints is called a *paat* as well as the closed or *Bund paat* which is a set of panels to the left of the viewer. Similarly, the open or *Khul paat* and hidden or *Gupat paat* are also a set of panels that are termed as *paat*.

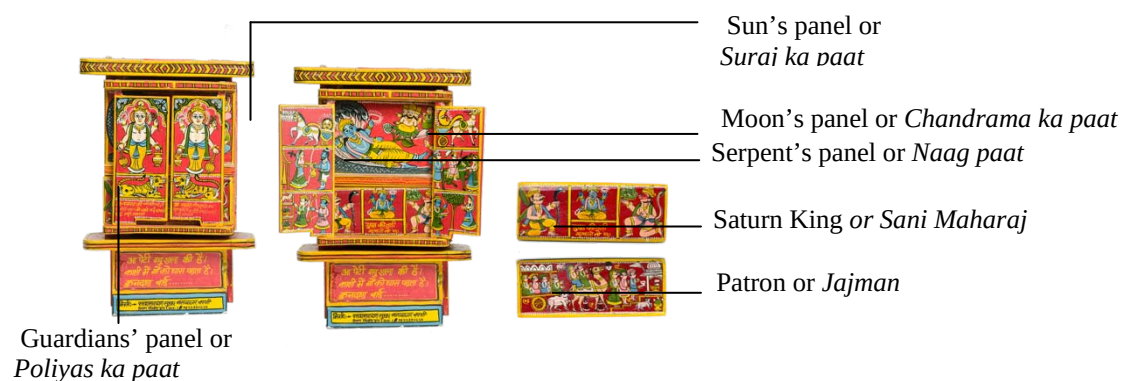


Figure 4.9 Hidden or *Gupat paat* recited for anonymous patrons/*jajmans*

The outer shrine is referred to as the hidden or *Gupat paat* and is recited for patrons who wish to remain anonymous (Figure 4.9). In tune with this function, the structure has sliding panels that are used for concealing the images of such patrons. The sliding panel also conceals Kundana Bai, the creator of the first *Kaavad*, a woman priest (*Brahmini*) who was never seen by men and provided the storytellers with their means of livelihood.

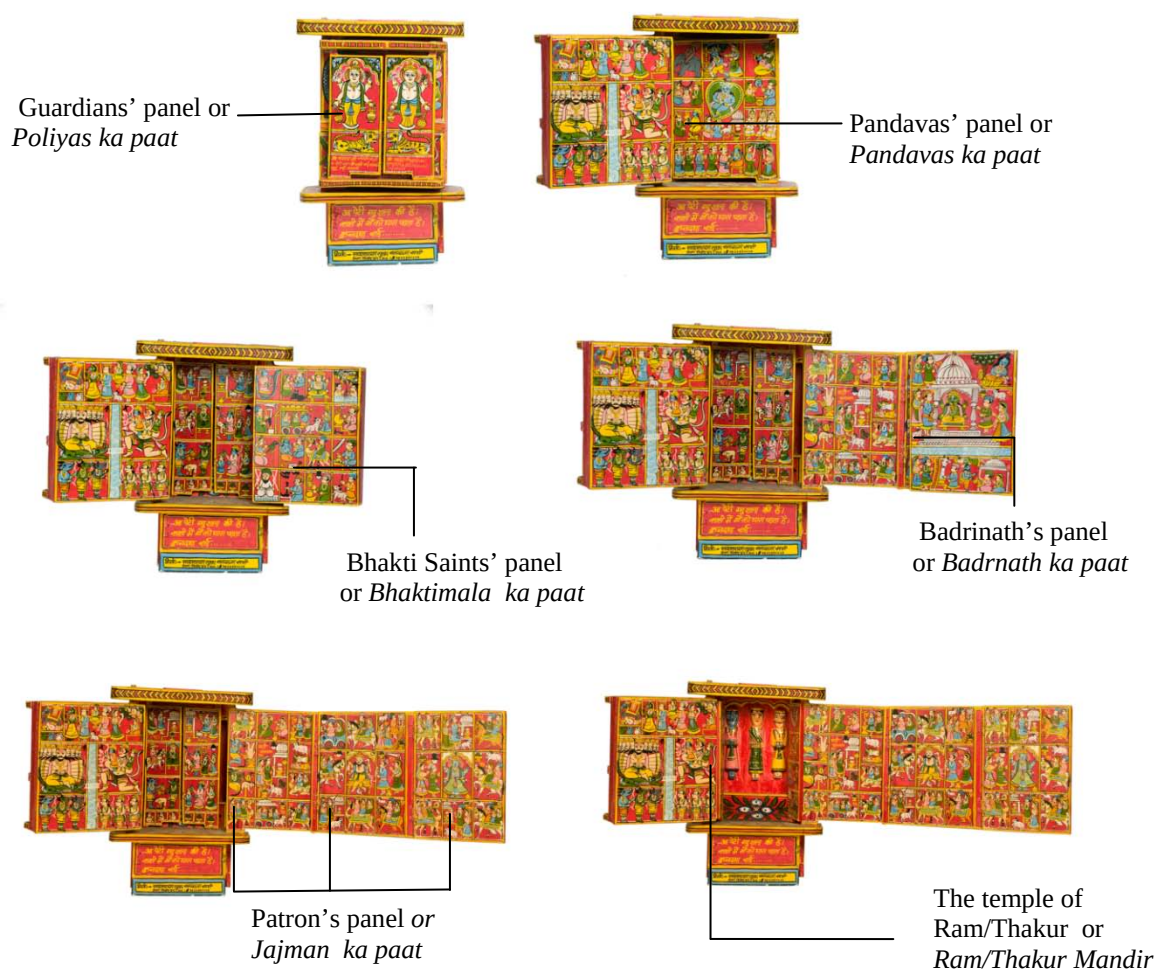


Figure 4.10 Open or *Khul paat* recited for regular clients, left side not opened

The right set is referred to as the open or *Khul paat* (Figure 4.10) which is recited for patrons whom the storyteller visits regularly. The donation box or *daan peti* which lies at the base of the shrine is also hidden and known only to the initiated. This is used to store cash and jewelry gifted by the patrons. The written text implies that the donations will be used for feeding cows. It is signed Kundana Bai, and in more recent times it is also written or signed in Hindi, ‘*Bharat Sarkar*’.⁶ (Government of India).

4.3.1 Comparison of *Kaavads* from various sources

Although a historical approach or attempt to date the *Kaavad* is beyond the scope of this study we may consider examining *Kaavads* from various museums and other collections to understand and identify elements that have withstood changes over time.

The number of *Kaavads* in museum collections in India⁷ is limited and the earliest procurement is from the early 1960s making it difficult to date them. However there is a distinct difference between the *Kaavad* at the Sanskriti Kendra in New Delhi, and other places such as the Lalbhai Dalpatbhai (LD) Museum in Ahmedabad, the National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum (NHHM or Crafts Museum) in New Delhi and the Oriental Institute in Baroda. Other *Kaavads* examined include the ones used by the storytellers Kojaramji Rav, Bansilalji Rav and Narsinhji Rav.



Figure 4.11 *Kaavad* from the Sanskriti Kendra

Poliyas ka paat	Naag paat with Vishnu and Sani Maharaj	Patrons with Baba Ramdev in centre
	Front of the shrine without donation box Left: Dashrath <i>paat</i> and Gods Right: Patrons and <i>Badrinath ka paat</i>	
Lakshman, Sita and Ram	Back of the shrine Left: Bhaktimala ka paat and Pandava ka paat. Right: Poliyas and Raavan paat	

⁶ This is painted by the *Kaavad* maker at the behest of the storyteller to motivate his patrons to donate and is not officially granted or endorsed by the Government of India.

⁷ Museums visited were the Lok Kala Mandal and Bagore ki Haveli in Udaipur, the National Handloom and Handicrafts Museum and Sanskriti Kendra in Delhi, Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Museum in Ahmedabad and the Oriental Institute in Baroda. Of these the *Kaavads* in Udaipur were made by an artisan who has never made a *Kaavad* for a storyteller and therefore none of his *Kaavads* have the patron panels and the order of the panels is also random. Further he was commissioned by Lok Kala Mandal to make the *Kaavads* for the museum for display purposes and so he made them larger. For these reasons the *Kaavads* from the Lok Kala Mandal have not been considered for a comparison with *Kaavads* from other museums.

The *Kaavad* from **Sanskriti Kendra** (fig 4.11) is similar to the other *Kaavads* in the following ways:

It has the same size and is predominantly red. The outer doors have the two guardians or *poliyas* and the tigers below. When these doors are opened we can see Vishnu on the serpent Sesh Naag flanked by the sun and moon. The panels of Dashrath, Pandavas, Bhaktimala, Badrinath and Raavan *paat* are similar in the grid format and placement of figures even though the painting style is more delicate and intricate compared to the others. There is one panel that appears to depict four deities from various places and one other panel that possibly portrays the patrons. The panels are hinged together by iron pegs that fit into iron rings. The inner sanctum has Lakshman, Sita and Ram in that order and they are attached to the back wall with strings. Sita's size is much smaller than Lakshman and Ram and her clothes and appearance are also quite different from the other *Kaavads*.

The figures have carved crowns over their heads. The arch above the inner sanctum is formed by triangular pieces attached to the left and right corners of the sanctum.

What makes it clearly distinct is that it does not have a donation box at the bottom, has lesser number of panels making it look more like an icon than a temple, and has only one panel with the patrons.



Figure 4.12 *Kaavad* from the National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum, New Delhi

The National Handicrafts and Handloom Museum in Delhi (figure 4.12) has a number of *Kaavads* of which no: 61/2176 and 77/7/5807 appear to be later versions although there are some similarities to the one from Sanskriti Kendra. The wooden figurines of Ram Sita and Lakshman⁸ are similar with crowns but Ram is placed on the left and the space is divided by a sheet of glass. The hinges are made of iron pegs that fit into iron rings. Here

⁸ In the *Kaavad* 77/7/5807 the figure of Ram is missing.

the number of panels is more with many sides reserved for the portrayal of patrons. The panels with the patrons also have numbers and letters from the devnagari alphabet painted on each frame, a feature found on *Kaavads* used by storytellers today. The style of painting also appears to belong to the family of Ghanshyamji Suthar, a living *Kaavad* maker from Bassi. The figures are more tightly packed in the frames and have less detail. Number 77/7/5807 also has Kundana Bai in the panel below Vishnu.

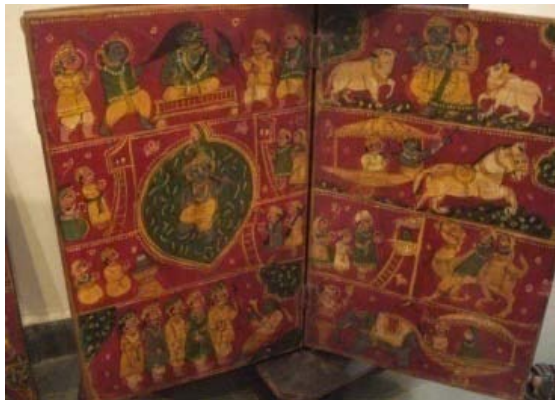


Figure 4.13 *Kaavad* RC-M/Raj from NHHM Museum, New Delhi

Pandavas ka paat	Radha Krishna Krishna Arjun Patrons
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Figure 4.14 *Kaavad* from the L D Museum, Ahmedabad

Poliyas ka paat	Naag paat with Vishnu and Sani Maharaj	Pocket for entry pass	
		Raavan ka paat	Kundana Bai
Jajman paat or patrons on left and right with inner shrine doors open showing Ram on left			

Specimen named ‘RC-M/Raj’ (figure 4.13) is a larger version and very different in its style as well; probably painted by a *phad* artist.⁹ The content appears to be similar as it has the Serpent or *Naag paat*, *Pandava paat*, *Bhaktimala paat* and *Badrinath paat* etc.

The *Kaavad* from the **Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Museum** in Ahmedabad (figure 4.14) also appears to belong to the same artistic tradition as the one from the NHHM. Here one may see the appearance of Kundana Bai as well as the pocket for the storyteller’s entry pass. This is present in none of the *Kaavads* today.

⁹ The *Phad* artists from Bhilwara belong to the Joshi or *Chipa* community and have a similar method of painting although their style is more refined and delicate.

The hinges are made from iron pegs and rings and the wooden figures have Sita in the centre flanked by Ram on left and Lakshman on right. The panels with patrons also shows the local deities situated in the central frame of the grid surrounded by the painted patrons on their vehicles and with images of their donations. The roof of the shrine has the image of Pabuji on his black horse. The painting style appears similar to the storyteller's *Kaavad* and may have been painted by Ghanshyamji Suthar's ancestors.

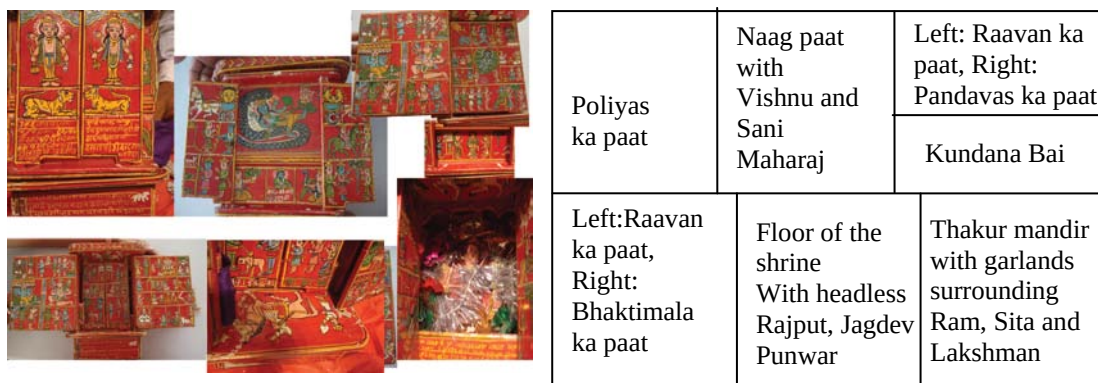


Figure 4.15 Kojaram Rav's *Kaavad*

The *Kaavad* from **Kojaramji Rav** is quite elaborate (figure 4.15) with sixteen panels owing to the large number of patrons that need to be accommodated. The sliding panel below the *Naag paat* conceals Kundana Bai in all her three stages of being. The inner sanctum has a garland of glitter and artificial flowers strung around the deities. The shrine has images of Pabuji on the roof and Jagdev Punwar on the floor creating an experience of being surrounded by images in a space.

While examining the *Kaavads* in museum collections in India and with the ones with practicing storytellers we noticed a similarity amongst the *Kaavads* in the broad structure, background colour, number of panels, order of panels and number of shrines. All had a height of twelve inches except one (RC-M/Raj), with a red background, had two shrines and the panels followed the same order on the left and right of the shrine. This assured us the existence of an order of panel arrangements as per the demands of recitations.

Table 4.1 Description of *Kaavads* examined

<i>Kaavad</i> location Accession No:	Height	No of panels	Inner and Outer Shrines	Donation Box	Patron panels
Oriental Institute, Baroda Acc no: 22079	1 12.4"	9 (missing piece 1)	Both present Naag serpent carved in relief work	Not present	Figures riding animals and bicycles no other motor vehicles
Oriental Institute, Baroda Acc no: 22080	12.4"	9 (missing piece 1)	Both present Naag serpent carved in relief work	Not present	Figures riding animals and bicycles no other motor vehicles
Lalbhai Dalpatbhai Museum Ahmedabad	12"	10	Both present Naag painted	Present	Figures riding animals and motor cars Images of bulbs representing electricity
Sanskriti Kendra, New Delhi	12"	8	Both present <i>Naag</i> /Serpent carved in wood	Not present	Figures shown praying, no vehicles
Crafts Museum New Delhi Acc no: 61/2176	12"	10	Both present	Present	Figures mostly riding animals, bullock cart and one motor car
NHHM New Delhi Acc no: 77/7/5807	12"	10	Both present	Present	Figures riding animals, bicycle and one motor car
NHHM New Delhi Acc no: RC-M/Raj	18"	10	Both present	Present	Figures mostly riding animals, bullock cart and one motor car
Kojaram 's <i>Kaavad</i>	1 12"	12	Both present	Present	Figures riding animals and motor cars

We noted a distinct difference between the *Kaavads* at the Oriental Institute, Baroda, Sanskriti Kendra in New Delhi, and other places (table 4.1).

The *Kaavads* in these collections did not have a donation box at the bottom. The lesser number of panels in the *Kaavad* at the Sanskriti Kendra (only one panel showing patrons) makes it look more like an icon than a temple. This detail indicates a possible change in the purpose of the *Kaavad* shrine; whether the donations were made despite the absence of the box or the *Kaavad* did not travel is a matter of debate.

An understanding of the *Kaavad*'s various parts will further clarify its structure and anatomy.

4.4 The Visual Structure

The *Kaavad* images are primarily figurative. Some figures are iconographic, typically amongst which are the gods and demons, for instance Vishnu/Krishna is shown lying on the serpent (*Shesh Naag*) and Raavan is shown with ten heads. Other figures are identified by their actions or objects surrounding them. For example, Kabir is shown with a loom, Dhanna Bhagat is farming, Raidas *chamar* (one who works with leather) is working with shoes etc.

Patrons are depicted as couples riding on animals or vehicles or *vaahans*. The image-making also incorporates the new with the old unselfconsciously as may be seen in the figures riding helicopters and cars. Letterforms, numbers and animals or birds surrounding the patrons serve the function of identifying the patron and the donation made by them. The narrative related to the image is recited by the storyteller.

4.4.1 The Painting Style

The *Kaavad* painting style termed as folk Mewari style by its practitioners most likely belongs to a common pool of painting from a tradition of Mewar Jain Manuscript painting that existed in the Chittor region since the 13th century known as the 'Maru Gurjar' style.



Figure 4.16 Champavati from Chaurpanchashika, Mewar

According to Vashistha (1995) the Mewar style's main motifs and forms were derived or influenced by the early paintings of the *Chaorpanchashika* and the *Bhagawat* (figure 4.16). The *Kaavad* art may be compared both in terms of colors, the red background and stylization of figures. However, the use of a strong black outline and inclusion of text in the image is closer to Jain manuscript paintings. The *Kaavad* figures do not reflect the sophisticated line work seen in the manuscripts; on the contrary they are quite raw and robust.

4.4.2 The Visual structure and layout

The images are arranged in a particular order in a grid format.

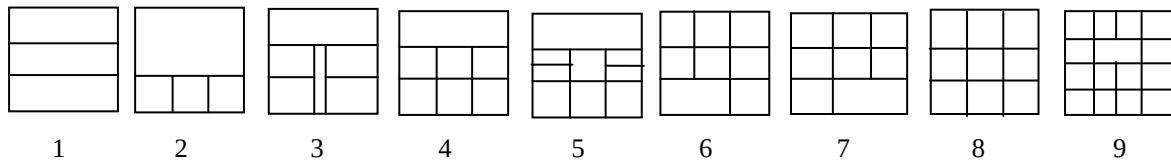


Figure 4.17 Different kinds of grid formats in the *Kaavad*

The division of spaces is either horizontal or vertical and the total number ranges between three to fifteen divisions in the *Kaavad* (figure 4.17). The above grids are the total no: of combinations in the *Kaavad* and some are repeated. Except for grid no: 3 which has a narrow column in two thirds of the panel all other grids have either square or rectangular frames.



Figure 4.18 Yellow lines divide the frames

A yellow line divides the frames into the grid format. Horizontal divisions are further emphasized by white dots (figure 4.18)



Jai or Poliya	Vijai or Poliya
Sinh Protector	Sinh Protector
Get this <i>Kaavad</i> opened with an offering of incense stick and your seven generations will go to heaven. Believe it to be true not a lie	Get this <i>Kaavad</i> opened with an offering of incense stick and your seven generations will go to heaven.
This donation is for the upkeep of cows. Whatever you donate comes to me. I am its keeper Signed Sarpanch Mahendra	

Figure 4.19 Panel 1 (left) and 2 (right) outer shrine doors with *Poliya* or guardians of *Kaavad*



<i>Surya Baggi</i> Chariot of the Sun driven by the seven-faced horse <i>Saukaran Ghoda</i> who came from the churning of the ocean, <i>Samudra Manthan</i>	<i>Chandrama Baggi</i> Chariot of the Moon driven by the Black deer, <i>Kala Mriga</i>
Sita offering alms to Raavan who is disguised in the form of a wandering mendicant, sadhu	Baba Ramdev on a green horse with Sugna Bai
Mriga Deer Garden Ram (blue) Lakshman	Shabri/Shravat <i>bheelni</i> offers half-tasted berries(<i>ber</i>) to Ram and Lakshman

Figure 4.20 Panel 1 Surya or Sun (left) and 2 Chandrama or Moon (right) on the reverse side of *Poliyas* or guards

4.4.3 The Panels

The stories are located on certain panels only, while others have images representing the patrons. The panels are painted on both sides and have specific names:

The front of panels 1¹⁰ and 2 are called the *Poliyas paat* (figure 4.19) and the back of these are called Sun or *Surya* and Moon or *Chandrama ka paat* (figure 4.20). Together with panels 1, 2 and 3, the whole set of panels is called the hidden or *Gupat paat*, which is recited for patrons who wish to remain anonymous and also make anonymous donations. The stories associated with the sun and moon panels include Sita's abduction by Raavan and the devotion of Harji Bhati¹¹ for Baba Ramdev and Shabri the *bheelni*. Other stories associated specifically with the Sun and Moon is that of Ahalya and daughter Anjani.¹²

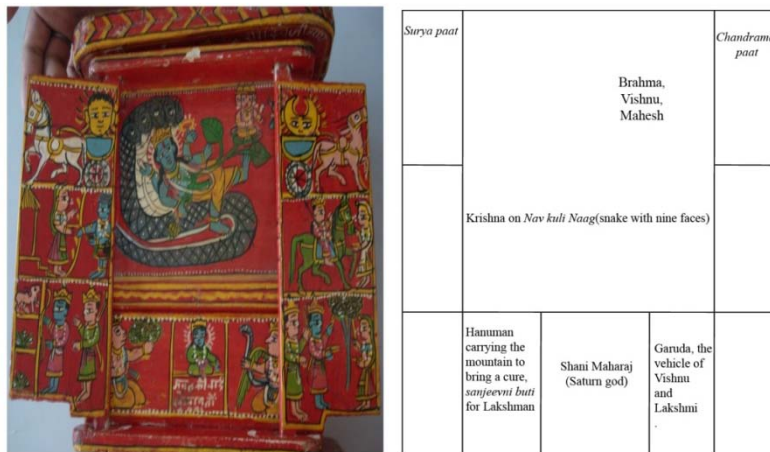


Figure 4.21 Panel 3 Snake or *Naag paat*, on the reverse side are Patrons or *Jajmans*

The front part of panel 3 called the Snake or *Naag paat* (figure 4.21) has a sliding panel with Shani Maharaj (the deity Saturn). Behind the sliding panel are anonymous patrons and the back wall has images of Kundana Bai. The reverse side of this panel has images of patrons.

¹⁰ The numbers assigned to the panels by us are nominal to facilitate identification of the panels. For the storytellers these numbers change depending on the kind of recitation they are making; whether it is for a new patron, a customary one or someone who wishes to be anonymous.

¹¹ Harji Bhati is not represented here but the gift of the green horse he receives from Baba Ramdev is shown.

¹² Ahalya, her husband Gautam Muni and daughter Anjani are not represented and this story (K) too is only told when asked for. The sun and moon in the context of this story represent the royalty, the *Suryavanshis* or descendants of the sun and *Chandravanshis* or the descendants of the moon.

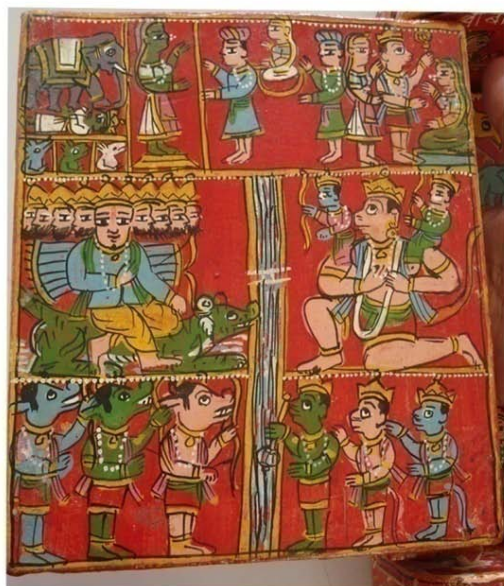


Kaushlya Ram Dashrath Lakshman Sumitra Kekvaji		
Tailor	<i>Kalash (pots)</i> Prayer for son (a wish is made) <i>Pyau</i> (Water as donation)	Donated Cow Sunar (Jeweller)
<i>Tulsi/ Holy Basil</i> Jagania with <i>tandura</i> sing songs Rajput Rikiya Jati	Rajput Raval Java singh Jaiselmer	Duti Bai Rajput haunted by ghost of Duti Bai

Figure 4.22 Panel 4 Dashrath ka paat

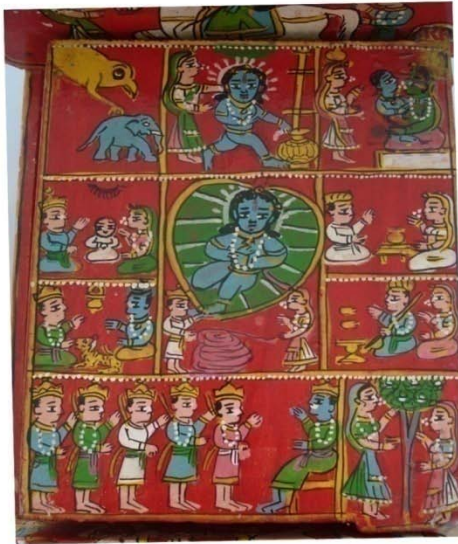
Panel 4 has *Dashrath ka paat* (figure 4.22) on the front and the back has the *jajman* or patrons. With Dashrath are his three wives and Ram and Lakshman. All other figures are patrons from different professions and clans. This panel along with panel 5 is a part of the closed or *Bund paat* which is recited for new patrons.

The front of panel 5 has the *Raavan paat* (figure 4.23) and its back has the *jajman* or patron panel. *Raavan paat* has images of the war with Raavan from the *Ramayana*. It also depicts the sinner Dhapu gujari who is a gossip and a non-believer in contrast to devout wives like the sati and Sita.



Ghendas, Dhapu's husband being trampled by an elephant	Dhapu Gujari, the sinner, gossip and liar, green body	Sati in palki Mandodari Rani Hanuman meets Sita in Lanka	
Their three sons			
Raavan with twenty arms, ten heads, two feet on his vehicle	R a t n a g a r	Hanuman with Ram and Lakshman	
Rakash/demons or police Raavan's army	S a g a r	Dev/ celestial beings Hanuman's army	

Figure 4.23 Panel 5 Raavan ka paat



Bird attacks elephant	Krishna Kanhaiya steals butter, mother Yashoda ties him to a <i>Kadamb</i> tree	Holka and Prahlad Sakhi saheli/ friend puts flowers (on left)
King Modhaj and Queen Padmavati sacrificing their son Ratan Kamal	Krishna takes birth on a Banyan tree	Ranaji Kumbha of Chittor Meera Bai from Merta
Krishna and Arjun with tiger for whom Ratan Kamal is sacrificed	Duryodhan insulting Draupadi <i>Dropda ka cheer haran</i>	Baba Ramdev's temple Patrons
Five Pandu brothers with their teacher Guru Durvasa		Kunta, mother of Pandavas <i>Mata Kunta</i> Queen Dropda, wife of Pandavas

Figure 4.24 Panel 6 *Pandavas ka paat*

Panel 6 has the *Pandava paat* (figure 4.24) on the front and the *jajman* or patron panel at the back. The *Paandavas paat* has images of various episodes from the Mahabharata and Krishna's life. This forms the first panel that is recited for a regular patron. The set of panels recited for a customary patron is called the open or *Khul paat* and includes the front part of panels 7 and 8, and front and back of panels 9 and 10.

The front of panel 7 is *Bhakti Mala paat*; back *jajman* or patron panel.



Meera Bai and Lord Krishna	Shreeyade <i>Bhagat</i> the potter-woman who saved the kittens with God's name	Lord Ganesh	God comes to rescue the holy men, <i>rishis</i> , from water fairies <i>Jal ki pari</i> , who are disturbing their meditation
Krishna <i>Khatri</i> carpenter	Neni Bai's <i>Mayera</i>		Ananda Sonar the goldsmith
Ginka Bai the sex-worker with her parrot	Sen Bhagat the devout barber	Bherji Bhati the generous one	Saint Nam Dev <i>Chipa</i> the block printer
Saint Kabir the weaver	Raidas the shoe maker Meera's guru	Kuba Kumbar, the generous potter	Dhanna Bhagat, a generous <i>jat</i> farmer

Figure 4.25 Panel 7 *Bhaktimala ka paat*

Bhaktimala ka paat (figure 4.25) has the Bhakti saints, like Kabir the weaver, Meera the poet, Nam Dev Chipa the block printer, Raidas the shoe maker who is also Meera's guru,

Narsinh Bhagat the poet. There are also folk heroes like Dhanna Bhagat the poor farmer, Kuba the potter, Shreeyade the potter-woman, Sen Bhagat the barber, Bherji Bhati the legendary generous Rajput and Ginka Bai the sex worker or *vaishya*. The figures look the same but what separates them from each other are the actions and the objects around them. Following the *Bhaktimala ka paat* is panel 8 is the *Badrinath paat* (figure 4.26) which is the most revered pilgrimage spot where even the non-devout (upside down) man gets deliverance. The back of this panel has patrons.

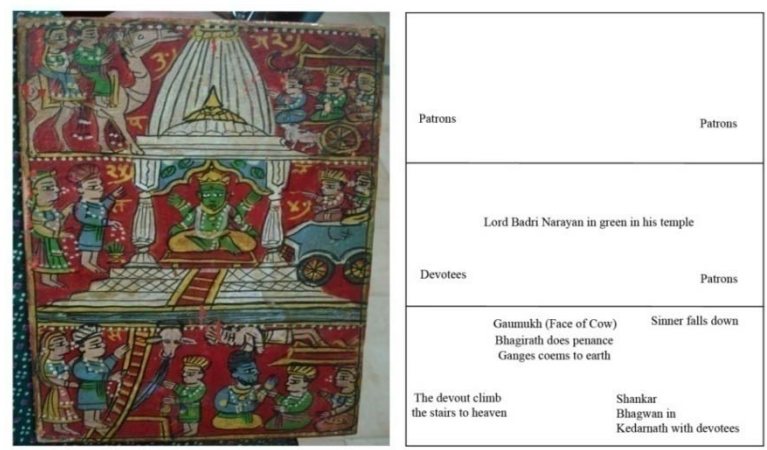


Figure 4.26 Panel 8 *Badrinath ka paat*

Panel 9 and 10 are the inner shrine doors to the sanctum sanctorum or *Thakur mandir* which has the figures of Lakshman, Sita and Ram. The front parts (figure 4.27) depict sinners and staunch devotees, non-believers like Duti Bai and believers like Raja Harishchandra and his family.



Figure 4.27 Panel 9 and 10 *Duti Bai and Raja Harishchandra*

The back of panels 9 and 10 (figure 4.28) have Lord Shankar with consort Parvati, goddesses Bemata and Jagdamba, Lord Vishnu in his *Baman* or dwarf avatar and Lord Krishna meeting his



Figure 4.28 Panel 9 and 10 Karma Jatni and Shraavan Kaavadiya

best friend Sudama. The most important figures besides the gods are Karma jatni who fed a stone god because of her staunch devotion, and Shraavan kumar who used the first *Kaavad*, and who is the ancestor of the storytellers *Kaavadiya Bhats*. The patron panels have a central deity (fig 4.29) surrounded by patrons riding various vehicles.



Figure 4.29 Panels with patrons and deities in the centre

The deity represents a pilgrim place and the patrons are from various villages around Rajasthan. Besides the central frames of deities the panels with patrons do not follow any place order. Patron figures vary in terms of what vehicles they ride and the donations made by them.

4.4.4 Colour and the representation of figures

The background is red as it is considered auspicious and therefore used profusely. Blue is used symbolically for the bodies of Vishnu, Ram and Krishna, but as colour for clothes. Yellow is usually used for ornaments and decoration as well as clothes, along with green and blue. Green is symbolically used for Baba Ramdevji's horse and Dhapu Gujar, who is an evil woman. White is used for Kabir as well as for eyes, dots and other decoration.

The central frame is often used for a deity or an important character. The deity is slightly larger than the other figures and usually has a bigger face. The figures are more or less the same size and their similarity of look seems to suggest a community-centric focus. Commoners are shown in profile whereas individuals like Gods and important saints are shown frontally.

Women are distinguished by their round nose with nose ring, big eyes, and an ornament on the head (*Bor*) and wear a *Kanchli* blouse, thick bangles (*kada*) and necklace (*Khungli*).



Figure 4.30 Moon and Sun panels

Each frame houses an event or the symbol of the event. For instance the sun and moon depicted on the front panels in their chariots represent the *Suryavanshis* (descendants of the sun) and *Chandravanshis* (descendants of the moon) as well the story of Ahalya, wife of Rishi Gautam, who was turned into stone (figure 4.30).

Places and people are delineated in the most basic form, almost abstract and serve as icons or aide memoires. Figures include deities, kings, queens, saints, donors and animals. Besides temples and the occasional hut, no other architectural element is represented. The figures exist in a space of their own with no context of location or place.

There is no chronological order or link between the narratives although there is a definite sequence in recitation. All the stories on the panel are visible at once. The images look

simplified and often similar to each other yet are recognized by the teller and his audience because of their shared knowledge.



Figure 4.31 Patron panel with Vishvakarma in the centre

Types of figures

There are three distinct kinds of figures represented in the *Kaavad*. One group of figures are the Gods and these are iconographic. Ram and Krishna are blue, Vishnu lies on the serpent, Durga rides a tiger and Visvakarma (figure 4.31) holds a setsquare.

Their faces are frontal, except for Durga's. The second group of figures are saints, local heroes and heroines. They are shown performing actions that are representative of their occupations or heroic deeds. Therefore *Sant* Kabir is shown with a loom bringing forth the connection with his profession and he has the frontal face, establishing him as an important personage.

Meera Bai is shown holding a musical instrument or a cup of poison given to her by her husband. As the patron is aware of the stories this image is sufficient to help them recall the music, the whole narrative and its implications.

King Mordhraj and queen Padmavati are shown sacrificing their own son Ratankamal with a saw-like branch suspended over his head. This image captures the moment when the parents have to make the decision to 'slice' their child. This moment is being watched by Krishna and Arjun with their tiger from another frame. This seems perhaps the only instance when two frames are connected by their narrative.

Ginka, who is a prostitute by profession, is shown with a parrot, a symbol of her devotion, because she taught him to chant the name of God. She may not be represented as a saint,

but she symbolizes the potential for anyone to rise above their status and position in society.

The third group are the figures of patrons who may be seen either riding a horse, a plane or a chariot or worshipping either the deities or *devi-devatas*. The vehicles provide mobility and a sense of empowerment to the devotees, who feel a sense of oneness with the gods. The figures comprise of the nuclear family of man, woman and their children. Sometimes it is only the couple on a vehicle of their choice. Next to them there is an image of a calf, or a Tulsi plant that are in a different scale, along with a letter form and some numbers. The smaller images of the calf and *tulsi* (holy basil) represent the donations made by the patrons. It implies that a calf was donated or that the donation was towards the upkeep of a calf. The alphabetical letter represents the beginning letter of the patron's name and the numbers denote the sum of the donation made. A single letter has the flexibility to stand for the names of several patrons.

The ambiguity of the figures representing the patrons is deliberate as it allows the storyteller to assign them different names and therefore allows them to use the same *Kaavad* for reciting the genealogies of various patrons.¹³

The relationship between spoken words and images is manifold; images validate what the storyteller is reciting and at the same time help the storyteller recall the sequence of the narrative. There is a dynamic relationship between the image, the narration and the patron. The image initiates the memory flow and speech of the storyteller. When he begins to recite the stories or events associated with the image the listener-patron begins to imagine the rest. Since the image is emblematic and does not really illustrate the event or story the listener patron has to exercise his imagination to complete the picture and the events in his mind. With this action the image is now embedded with more meaning than when the image is seen for the first time. The sound and story enhance the image.

¹³ Since the figures look similar they could represent any patron. The *Kaavad* is never left with the patrons, as it is considered too auspicious to be placed in a household. The patrons may view it once in a year and even commission an image of themselves or their loved ones, alive or deceased to be placed in the *Kaavad* panels. They may choose a vehicle of their liking or leave it to the storyteller. He will get a new *Kaavad* painted or take another one before he visits them again to prove that their wish has been granted by the priests in Kashi.

4.5 Narrative Structure



Figure 4.32 Kojaram Rav getting ready to recite in Sadhu Bheel ki Bassin

The *Kaavad* holds an ‘anthology’ of stories within its panels. Whereas the *Phad* has one epic that is spread across the scroll the *Kaavad* has multiple short narratives that are arranged across panels. This collection of tales may not appear to be linked to each but a closer examination reveals there is a thematic connection between stories depicted on individual panels.¹⁴ We were able to elicit fifty four stories from Kojaram Rav the storyteller from Kumbhara, Jodhpur.¹⁵ The storyteller recites what appear to be random snippets from a whole story or narrative. These constituents in fact are sufficient scaffolding for the narrative that is likely to be known to the patrons; the storyteller only just needs to remind them about it so that they may recreate them in their imagination. Depending on the story, he may recite the beginning, middle or end of the story; or he may recite the names of the characters of the story or he may just describe an ‘instance’, a single action performed by a character. Having introduced them, he moves to the next story so that the experience is of listening to an ‘index’ of the narratives (figure 4.32).

4.5.1 The *Kaavad* narratives

The *Kaavad* recitation is in verse and prose. Each teller has his own repertoire of stories; however when reciting the verse part of the narration the content remains same. The

¹⁴ The significance of this thematic arrangement of stories will be discussed at a later point in chapter 6.

¹⁵ The possible number of stories in a *Kaavad* cannot be exactly enumerated as it all depends on an individual storyteller and his memory. In this study, stories told by Kojaram Rav (K1-K54) have been recorded and translated. See Appendix I

narratives are drawn notionally from three sources; mythological, historical and local legends. The mythological narratives include instances from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and the Puranas. The narratives from the epics are different from the classical versions of Valmiki and/or Tulsidas.

For instance, the Ramayana of Valmiki or Tulsidas does not mention any details about the birth of Shravan Kumar who was accidentally killed by king Dashrath; whereas the storyteller Kojaramji recited an elaborate story about Shravan's parents, their relationship to Dashrath and how they came to lose their eyesight.¹⁶ Another example is that of the Pandavas and their teacher Durvasa. In classical Mahabharata it is Krishna that the five Pandavas go to meet before the battle. Here the five '*Pandus*' have invited their teacher Durvasa for a meal and the '*Kervas*' (*Kauravas*) are very upset with him for accepting the invitation. He tells them he will only dine with the true and the faithful. The *Pandus* are asked to prove their faith. The mother 'Kunta' and wife 'Dropda' plant the burnt seed of a mango, which germinates, proving their purity and faith.¹⁷ Other instances involve Krishna, not Vishnu, lying on the Shesh Naag under the sea at Dwarka and promising Ajmal Maharaj to be born as Baba Ram Dev in his house.¹⁸ Finally, the story of Ahalya and daughter Anjani being violated by the sun and moon instead of Indra as is found in several versions of this story.¹⁹

Narratives based on historical figures include the *Bhakti* saints or seers such as Kabir, Meera, Namdev, Raidas and Narsinh Bhagat. Local legends that are focused around local or folk deities, heroes and heroines include Dhanna Bhagat, Sen Bhagat, Sireeyade Kumbharan, Pabuji, Jagdev Punwar, Raja Harishchandra and Taramati Rani, Baba Ramdev and others.

There appear to be four types of narratives that may be categorized as stories of hardships, stories of charity, stories about lack and its fulfillment and stories about divine justice. Stories of hardships usually involve testing of faith and proving of loyalty. Meera has to drink poison to prove her faith in Krishna, Sireeyade has to likewise prove her faith by hugging a red hot column and Raja Mordhaj and wife Padmavati have to sacrifice their son to prove their devotion to Krishna. Acts of charity are found in stories about the seers and saints, who did not hesitate to donate half their earnings, shower gifts on holy men and

¹⁶ The story told by Kojaramji suggests that Shravan is born of an immaculate conception. For the complete story refer to K45 Appendix I.

¹⁷ Refer K19 and K20 Appendix I.

¹⁸ Refer K6 and K7 Appendix I.

¹⁹ Refer K 2 Appendix I.

sacrifice all their wealth and time for the good of mankind. Dhanna Bhagat gave away all his wealth to holy men instead of buying seeds for his farm, Kuba Kumbhar, Raidas Chamar and Kabir also donated half their earnings in charity every day. All acts of charity are always rewarded; therefore Dhanna Bhagat's farm grows diamonds and pearls and Raidas has the Ganges flowing into his tank (*kund*).

There are several stories about the key characters lacking something which is fulfilled, usually due to their belief in the divine and their acts of sacrifice and generosity. This lack could be that of children, of food, of acceptance from society; a lack of wealth or even the lack of a moustache. Stories of divine justice are usually connected to the ones about acts of villainy and how justice is finally meted out to those who commit these acts.

One specific group of stories is about the violations of interdictions and the results of such acts. Sometimes the acts are punished and other times the violation is actually rewarded. When the violation favours the divine over proud mortals or is an act of humility and love then the acts are rewarded. For example when Sireeyade does not heed the order of the king and continues to worship her god she is protected from the punishment given to her by the king. On the other hand if the actions are egoistic or villainous, then they are punished; an example being the punishment of Dutibai who does not believe in praying or doing her duties as a good mother-in-law.

When reciting the prose there are variations in style and delivery, but the content remains the same in essence. The recitation of stories is like reciting an index of stories; a short hand code. The storyteller only narrates the essence to an initiated listener.

4.5.2 The Navigation

The storytellers are concerned with the navigation of the panels and the stories portrayed on these panels. Therefore they have names for each panel that refer to specific stories. Typically, they will refer to panels such as *Pandava ka paat*, *Bhaktimala paat*, *Badrinath paat*, etc. when they need to communicate with their patrons or the *Kaavad* makers. When the *Kaavad* unfolds it simulates a journey from one threshold of the temple to another; with the first part opened there is a sense of arriving at the outer threshold of a temple.

As the storyteller opens panel (or *paat*) after panel there is a distinct feeling of travel within and this is further enhanced by the painted images that surround the viewer from both sides of the panels. The storyteller also covers the panels with several pieces of cloth that are then uncovered to reveal individual panels. Therefore, in addition to the panels

being revealed one at a time, and the sliding panels revealing and hiding some images, the cloth is used to motivate curiosity and interest.

The chronological order of the movement of the wooden panels invites the viewer to a journey into a new space and threshold, while the uncovering of the cloth on the panel invites a simultaneous viewing of the images painted on the panels. The storyteller uses the peacock feather to draw the attention of the listeners and speaks in the present tense so they have a feeling of ‘being there’ and experiencing the actions as they unfold in the recitation

4.6 Conclusion

The relationship between the physical structure of the *Kaavad*, its images, and the structure of narratives is close knit. It is not possible to have the same experience in the absence of one or the other; the images without the object will not create the same anticipation nor would the narratives work without the navigation. The structure allows for the stories and images to be revealed in time because the panels unfold in time, creating a sense of travel. The physical object not only reveals and conceals but also prompts movement or a journey. The narration invokes the meaning to be invested in the image and constructs the notion of being there, of experiencing the journey in the present moment.

The images are held together on a panel so that all stories with a specific theme can be clustered together. This lets the viewer see the set together as well as see them as individual stories. The grid divides and the background unites the image. The types of figures can be differentiated by their size, colour and iconography. Their visual similarity lets the storyteller assign different patrons so he is able to meet the requirements of varied patrons.

The stories are thematically similar, but may vary considerably in their plot structure and characters. Therefore, when the storyteller recites the ‘index’ of stories the patron can draw the connections between what s/he sees and hears. The movement from one panel to another is also reflected in the set of stories that appear on the next panel, giving us the sense of temporality and movement in the larger narrative. The images help the storyteller recall the narrative and follow the sequence and for the patron the image mirrors their aspirations and endorses the identity they seek.

This experience of traveling with stories of hardships, testing of faith, acts of charity and coming in contact with the divine is akin to performing a pilgrimage.²⁰ The various

²⁰ In one of the performance the storyteller repeats this several times. See Appendix III.

aspects of travel and its purpose are distributed between the *Kaavad* object, its images and the narratives. It would not be possible individually because the object, the image and the narrative with its narration have a structural relationship with each other. This relationship can be understood and further analyzed from a semiotic and structural perspective. Such an analysis will allow us to argue for the purpose and function of the *Kaavad*; which is proposed as an ‘experience of pilgrimage’ and a site for the ‘construction of identity’. The following chapter outlines the theoretical framework to approach the analysis.

Chapter 5

Theoretical Framework and Methodology

5.1 Introduction

The *Kaavad* which is ‘performed’, ‘consumed’ and ‘designed’ by a community and pre-dates the notion of ‘design’ in India may be defined as a folklore object; a complex phenomenon that needs to be studied from various perspectives so as to do justice to its multiple attributes and dimensions. The design of the *Kaavad* appears to hold various elements together contributing towards an experience of a pilgrimage through the movement of the panels with the painted images and the narratives connected to them. The narration and the performance on the other hand appear to bestow an identity for the patrons, creating a ‘liminal space’¹ in which they become whom they aspire to be. We would like to investigate the significance and role of the *Kaavad* towards creating this ‘liminal’ experience for its patrons. More specifically, we are keen to understand the distribution of the various components of information or communication embedded in the

¹ Liminality comes from the Latin word *limen* which means threshold. A liminal state is a period in transition when normal differences are ignored. Victor Turner, describes it as one of the three cultural manifestations of *communitas*—as a visible expression of anti-structure in society, but also a temporary state that ends when the anti-structure itself becomes the norm or structure. See Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*. (1969) pp. 94-129.

Kaavad. Some parts are narrated, others are carried in the memory of the listeners and yet others are alluded to by the images and the navigation of the *Kaavad* panels. Such a complex confluence of elements is examined by multiple methods, one of them being the ethnography of the carriers of the *Kaavad* tradition emerging from the conducted fieldwork. A study of the interaction between tellers and their audience reveals vital principles and patterns which generate modes for the dissemination of the knowledge related to these performances, in the form of what may be termed “mixed discourse.”

A Structural and Semiotic analysis of the *Kaavad* ‘text’² is found to be suitable for the study of *Kaavad*, as our concern is to examine a living tradition as it exists today. Our theoretical approach is therefore synchronic and structural. Traditional methods used for the study of folklore have been diachronic (concerned with the evolution and origins of tales) and synchronic (analysis of the narratives to uncover hidden meanings within the tales) (Berger, 1991; Handoo J. , 2000).

Two major proponents of these methods are Vladimir Propp (syntagmatic structural analysis) and Claude Lévi-Strauss (paradigmatic structural analysis), and it is their methods that provide the theoretical framework for the study of the *Kaavad* phenomenon. Syntagmatic analysis allows us to identify the key functions in the *Kaavad* narratives and paradigmatic analysis offers us the analytical tools to decipher the deep structure embedded within the narratives. Paradigmatic analysis also reveals the conflicts in the lives of the *Kaavad* community mediated by these tales. Freudian psychoanalysis might be latent in these interpretations, although here the approach is not directly from that perspective. While these approaches permit us to examine the narratives and performances, they also help us to define, describe and analyze images integral to the *Kaavad* phenomenon.

Before we describe in detail the methods for the purpose of our study it is pertinent to have a brief overview of the historical growth and development of major theories around the study of folklore, which will provide the context for the analysis. It is not within the scope of this study to give a detailed background of the copious range of scholarship dedicated to the field, instead, the attempt here is to summarize the broad directions of research that have informed our methods. We also discuss key figures and their contribution to

² ‘Text’ implies the verbal recitation by the storytellers and text inscribed on the *Kaavad*, the painted images that are found on the wooden shrine, the physical object with its various parts or panels hinged together, the narratives that are told or elicited from the storytellers and the narration or performance that contributes to the creation of meaning.

structuralism and semiotics with an emphasis on methods evolved by Vladimir Propp, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Ferdinand de Saussure and Charles Sanders Peirce. A sample analysis at the end illustrates how the methods have been employed.

5.2 The Study and Analysis of Folklore: A Background

Although folklore was studied in ancient and medieval times the term ‘folklore’ itself was coined in 1846 by William Thoms (Dundes, 1965) to describe customs, traditions and belief systems of the folk. The Brothers Grimm, Jacob (1768-1863) and Wilhelm (1768-1859) initially collected folktales because of their concern with the history and origin of German language and German grammar. In their time, it was believed that folktales originally came with the Aryans and fell apart in the course of their travel. By collecting sufficient fragments from the folk, the Grimm brothers were keen to reconstruct the original form and reconstitute the original tale to shed light on the evolution of language and its relationship to other languages and cultures. This interest, although grounded in linguistics, led them to collect a large number of stories and their variants. They painstakingly collected the tales and endeavored to note them down without any embellishments or modifications of their own. They compared the variants to identify linguistic subfamilies and this method, called ‘comparative philology’, was later extended to the study of folklore, religion and mythology by Max Müller who christened it ‘comparative mythology’ (Handoo J., 1983; Csapo, 2005).

Max Müller, a Sanskrit scholar, used the comparative methods to examine the creation of myth. He proposed that all Indo-European tales had Aryan origins and suggested that the distortion of words dimmed the true meaning of the narratives, leading to a ‘disease of language’ and over time the actual meanings of words were lost or obscured. The confused explanations for the words thus gave birth to myths. Max Müller interprets all myths developed during a ‘mythopoeic’ age³ to be actually concerned with poetically explaining celestial phenomena like the rising and setting of the sun and the ‘triumph’ of light over darkness (Dorson, 1955). This theory of ‘solar mythology’ which seemed to explain each and every myth as explanations for the movement of the sun and moon and every Indo-European tale to have Aryan origin drew a considerable amount of criticism, especially from Andrew Lang and Durkheim amongst others. Nevertheless, it kept alive the discussion on why there were resemblances between tales across cultures and comparative

³ Dorson describes this age as ‘when language could not convey abstract notions’. See Richard M Dorson, “The Eclipse of Solar Mythology” In *Journal of American Folklore*. (1955) p. 398.

methods continued to be used in anthropology, albeit very different from the one used by Müller.⁴

Around the same time Theodor Benfey (1809-1881), a German Indologist who was translating the *Panchatantra* into German, pointed out similarities between the Sanskrit and European tales. Developing a 'theory of borrowing' to explain the resemblances, he offered what is known as 'Migration Theory' which proposes that similarities in tales are due to cultural-historical relations or exchanges that take place between countries and societies. This happens through a process of diffusion; a result of travel, war or conquests between countries and people. He firmly believed India to be the origin of all stories and traced the routes by which the tales may have traversed to Europe. Though this theory has not received wide acceptance it did encourage scholarship in the area of folklore to develop a historical-geographical school also known as the Finnish School. Here, the emphasis is on presenting a complete history of a tale by analyzing the stories and all its variants and by considering all historical and geographical factors. This was achieved by collecting stories from various places, comparing the versions and identifying the principle characteristics, and then condensing them into archetypes to trace the geographical routes of transmission. This method was limited to reconstructing the 'hypothetical original form of the tale' (Dundes, 1962) and was not concerned with the structure of the tale, nor how or why the tales came to be, or continued to survive. The Anthropological School (early 20th century), which was also concerned with the question of how similar myths existed in various cultures, explained the genesis of folklore objects and oral narratives as a result of any culture evolving from savagery to civilization. This theory was reflected in the works of Edward B Tylor, Sir James Frazer and Andrew Lang.⁵

The methods discussed above were all dealing with materials from various sources and regions and therefore used comparison. Comparative studies needed suitable terms for identifying various parts of the folklorist items and to refer to these terms as a whole. And to make reliable comparison it was imperative to have comparable units (Dundes, 1962). This led to the creation of a classification system in the form of the motif index (Thompson, 1955-1958) and tale-type index (Aarne and Thompson 1961) that served well as 'bibliographical aids'. The motif is described by Stith Thompson (1885-1976) as the

⁴ Max Müller mapped comparative linguistics onto myths to support his arguments whereas James Frazer compared myths to myths.

⁵ In the twentieth century this position was challenged by several scholars like Durkheim, Malinowski and Lévi-Strauss.

smallest unit of the tale that continues to exist over time. The motif could be an actor, an object or single incident. This monumental task took into consideration tales from all over the world and categorized them thematically and by the kind of protagonists in the stories. For instance, all 'Cinderella type' stories were categorized as AT-510A,⁶ under the broader category of 'persecuted heroines'.

One of the major criticisms against this method of classification was that it allowed for the same tale to be classified in multiple categories. Both motif and type index thus came under scrutiny because the identification of motifs/ types was too dependent on the classifier, and therefore subjective, leading to a classification that could well be inaccurate. With this approach a tale could be classified in several categories making it difficult to decide what aspect of the tale was constant and what the variable was.⁷ Comparing tales with these tools was found to be inadequate and classification of tales, further problematic. In the 1880s and 1890s it appears as if the classification of tales and their content was that which pre-occupied most of the investigators. Typically, the journey of investigation begins by collecting of stories and their comparisons and categorisation.

These studies in folklore were primarily diachronic rather than synchronic⁸ and more concerned with the evolution and origins of the tale rather than its form, content or structure (Dundes, 1962). A gradual shift from a diachronic to synchronic approach was influenced by evolutionary changes taking place in several disciplines including linguistic analysis and literature. The work of Ferdinand de Saussure came to influence several fields outside linguistics, including folklore, sociology, anthropology etc; Structuralism and Semiotics came to be the legacy of Saussure.

Russian Formalism (1910s -1930s), also influenced by Saussurian thought was concerned with the taxonomy of the text, how it came into being and what the relationship were between the parts; in other words they were looking at structures and were also preoccupied with a scientific approach. The chief proponents of this movement were Victor Shklovsky, Boris Eikhenbaum, Boris Tomashevski, Roman Jakobson and Vladimir Propp amongst others. The latter extended this structural approach to the domain of

⁶ AT stands for Aarne (of Antti Aarne) and Thompson (of Stith Thompson) and 510 is the number given to the types of stories classified by them. For more details see D L Ashliman, *A Guide to Folktales in the English Language: Based on the Aarne-Thompson Classification System* (1987).

⁷ One such critic was Vladimir Propp who later went on to refine the method of classification through a focus on the actions or functions of the characters rather than the type of characters or incidents. See Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*. (1984) pp. 15-16.

⁸ The terms diachronic and synchronic were introduced by Ferdinand de Saussure and will be discussed in detail at a later point.

folklore. The study of folklore gradually shifted from a diachronic to a synchronic approach; an approach that had already been initiated by Saussurean linguistics.

5.3 Structuralism and Semiotics

One of the most cogent definitions of structuralism has been made by Jean Piaget. He asserts that structure can be found in any group of objects if they invoke the following notions or ideas: wholeness, transformation and self-regulation (Chatman, 1978). Wholeness stands for internal coherence. There is a relationship between the parts so that it is not simply a sum or aggregate of parts. Structure is not stagnant, it has the capacity to transform and also to self-regulate, by which it closes itself and needs no reference other than itself. For example, a language 'does not construct its formations of words by reference to other systems' (Hawkes, 1977).

Structuralism and Semiotics began in the area of linguistics and spread to a varied number of disciplines including anthropology, folklore, psychoanalysis, literary theory, social and other sciences.

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) did not use the word 'structure', but discussed the notion of 'system' in language and the need for a discipline of linguistics or semiology, urging for a science of signs:

"It is... possible to conceive of a science *which studies the role of signs as part of social life*. It would form part of social psychology, and hence of general psychology. We shall call it *semiology* (from the Greek *semeion*, 'sign'). It would investigate the nature of signs and the laws governing them. Since it does not yet exist, one cannot say for certain that it will exist. But it has a right to exist, a place ready for it in advance. Linguistics is only one branch of this general science. The laws which semiology will discover will be laws applicable in linguistics, and linguistics will thus be assigned to a clearly defined place in the field of human knowledge."⁹

Saussure radically changed the way language and its relation to meaning was perceived and understood. Before Saussure, the concern of linguists was focused on etymology or the roots of words. Saussure argued for a synchronic study of language because he proposed that the shifts in language were random and did not follow any order rendering them

⁹ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*. (New York , 1959) p. 16.

purposeless. The study of a language is both diachronic and synchronic; the former has to do with study of the historic evolution of language, whereas the latter is a study of the relation between the various parts of language at any given moment without any allusion to the past. This laid the foundation for structuralism.

Saussure also pointed out the changing relationship between words and meaning which until then were considered to be absolute and fixed. In fact, words and concepts are not derived from nature; rather they are created by language (Csapo, 2005). Language does not mean assigning names to things or ideas like a re-presentation, but rather also symbolizes meaning. For Saussure, a language is a system of signs in which the sign has a signifier and a signified. A signifier is the 'sound-image' and the signified is the idea or 'concept' that is suggested by the signifier, and the relation or connection between them is arbitrary. Further he makes distinctions between language and speaking. For him, language consists of a system which differs from its utterance. He identifies these as '*la langue*' and '*parole*' where '*la langue*' is the 'whole linguistic system' or 'the abstract system of language' and '*parole*' is the speech or utterance. *La langue* represents the social structure of language which cannot be changed by individuals, whereas *parole* denotes the individual aspect of language, which changes with every utterance. However, there can be no coherent utterance without language.

This anticipated a syntagmatic and paradigmatic structuralism that goes beyond linguistics to influence the study of narratives. Vladimir Propp pursues syntagmatic rules giving primacy to sequence and Lévi Strauss considers paradigmatic analysis to be significant for uncovering deep structures of narratives that go beyond what is obvious and stated directly.¹⁰

This notion of a 'science of signs' or semiology also known as 'semiotics' is separately envisioned by Charles Sanders Peirce, who proposes that 'logic is the science of signs'. Peirce offers a triadic model in which a sign or *representamen* is 'something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity'; it is 'anything which determines something else (its *interpretant*) to refer to an object to which itself refers (its *object*). Pierce proposes ten fundamental classes of signs that generate sixty six classes of signs etc.¹¹ It is not possible, or even pertinent, to discuss all of them in this study, rather it is

¹⁰ The two approaches to analysis will be discussed at a later point in detail.

¹¹ Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*. (1977) pp. 123-143.

appropriate to discuss the second ‘triad’ of signs that includes icon, index and symbol which are significant to the study of images and narration.

In an iconic sign the relationship between the signifier and signified is that of likeness, a resemblance that is clearly there in visual images like photographs, for instance. In an indexical sign the relationship is causal, more connotative in nature, and the symbolic sign is arbitrary and recognized by convention alone. Signs are paradigmatic and syntagmatic, they are denotive and connotive, the latter being metonymic or synecdochal. Paradigmatic signs are understood in opposition to all other signs, through contrast, whereas syntagmatic signs acquire meaning from signs around them. ‘Denotive signs’ are more descriptive and can be easily decoded, whereas connotive signs are more complex and carry multiple meanings at different levels. (Rose, 2001)

5.3.1 Vladimir Propp (1895-1970)

A Russian formalist, Vladimir Propp was not satisfied with the historical and comparative study of folklore prevalent in his time and was critical of the inaccuracies of those methods. He argues for a more precise study of the tale, its parts and their relationship to each other within its own material and across different tales, so that a correct classification of tales can be made (Propp, 1984). His contribution towards methods for classification actually extends to analysis that had far-reaching impact especially on the structural analysis of fairytales (Handoo L., 1994). Propp (1984) argues for a morphological investigation, for a closer scrutiny of the structure of the tale rather than its concept or content alone.

Propp holds:

“We shall insist that as long as no correct morphological study exists, there can be no correct historical study. If we are incapable of breaking the tale into its components, we will not be able to make a correct comparison. And if we do not know how to compare then how can we throw light upon, for instance, Indo-Egyptian relationships, or upon the relationships of the Greek fable to the Indian etc.? If we cannot compare one tale with another, then how can we compare the tale to religion or to myths?”¹²

¹² Vladimir Propp, *Morphology of the Folktale*. (1984) pp.15-16.

These questions lead him to develop a method of identifying analytical units of the tale which he calls functions. Just as sentences can be broken down into ‘morphemes’,¹³ he holds that tales can be broken down to their smallest indivisible narrative units which he calls functions. He claims that in a tale functions or actions of characters are more stable and constant than the characters and these functions are independent of how and by whom they were carried out. Further, these functions are limited in number, their sequence identical and thus he concludes all fairy tales (around a hundred odd Russian stories that he studied) are of one type with regard to their structure. And the task of the investigator is to identify these functions. He identifies 31 functions, although all of them need not be present in all stories. He groups some functions in binary pairs, such as interdiction and violation, lack and its liquidation, villainy and punishment etc, suggesting that they exist in relation to each other and in some instances one pair could not exist with another pair (Propp, 1984). These functions are carried out by characters that Propp identifies as the *Dramatis Personae*.

5.3.2 The Functions and Dramatis Personae:

For each function Propp gives a brief summary, an abbreviated definition in one word, and a conventional sign. These signs are then used to perform a schematic comparison of the structure of various tales.

After the initial situation is depicted or established, the tale takes the following sequence of 31 functions:

1. A member of a family leaves home (ABSENTATION) β
2. An interdiction is addressed to the hero; 'don't go there' (INTERDICTION) γ
3. The interdiction is violated (VIOLATION) δ
4. The villain makes an attempt to find information on intended victim (RECONNAISSANCE) ϵ
5. The villain gains information about the victim (DELIVERY) ζ
6. The villain attempts to deceive the victim to take possession of victim or victim's belongings (TRICKERY) η
7. Victim submits to deception (COMPLICITY) θ
8. Villain causes harm/injury to family member by abduction, theft of magical agent etc. (VILLIANY) $\mathbf{A}$

¹³ Morpheme is the smallest unit of language with meaning.

- 8A Alternately a member of family lacks something or desires something (LACK) **a**
9. Misfortune or lack is made known, (MEDIATION) **B**
10. Seeker agrees to, or decides upon counter-action (BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) **C**
11. Hero leaves home (DEPARTURE) **↑**
12. Hero is tested, interrogated, attacked etc, preparing the way for his/her receiving magical agent or helper (FIRST FUNCTION F DONOR) **D**
13. Hero reacts to actions of future donor (HERO'S REACTION) **E**
14. Hero acquires use of a magical agent (PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT) **F**
15. Hero is transferred, delivered or led to whereabouts of an object of the search (SPATIAL TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS) **G**
16. Hero and villain join in direct combat (STRUGGLE) **H**
17. Hero is branded; wounded/marked, receives ring (BRANDING) **J**
18. Villain is defeated (VICTORY) **I**
19. Initial misfortune or lack is resolved (LIQUIDATED) **K** (19+8:K+A is a pair)
20. Hero returns (RETURN) **↓**
21. Hero is pursued (PURSUIT/CHASE) **Pr**
22. Hero is rescued from pursuit (RESCUE) **Rs**
23. Hero unrecognized, arrives home or in another country (UNRECOGNIZED ARRIVAL) **0**
24. False hero presents unfounded claims (UNFOUNDED CLAIMS) **L**
25. Difficult task proposed to the hero (DIFFICULT TASK) **M**
26. Task is resolved (SOLUTION) **N**
27. Hero is recognized (RECOGNITION) **Q**
28. False hero or villain is exposed (EXPOSURE) **Ex**
29. Hero is given a new appearance (Transfiguration) **T**
30. Villain is punished (Punishment) **U**
31. Hero marries and ascends the throne (WEDDING) **W**

Dramatis Personae

The distribution of functions is spread among the seven *dramatis personae* and their spheres of action and they are:

Villain Constituents: Villainy (A); a fight or other forms of struggle with the hero (H); pursuit (PR).

Donor Constituents: Preparation for the transmission of a magical agent (D); provision of the hero with a magical agent (F)

Helper Constituents: Spatial transference of the hero (G); liquidation of misfortune or lack (K); rescue from pursuit (Rs); the solution of a difficult task (N); transfiguration of the hero (T)

Princess and her Father Constituents: Assignment of a difficult task (M); branding (J); exposure (Ex); recognition (Q); punishment of a second villain (U); marriage (W)

Dispatcher Constituents: Dispatch (connective incident B)

Hero Constituents: Departure on a search (Ç); reaction to the demands of the donor (E); wedding (W)

False Hero Constituents: also includes (C↑), followed by E and a special function L

This method opens up a whole new way of approaching tales and although Propp had applied this method to Russian fairy tales (or ‘wonder tales’ [*skazki*] as he describes them), in particular it was found to be useful by several investigators and scholars who used and refined Propp’s model further as in the case of Dundes (1964),¹⁴ Greimas(1971), Meletinsky (1974), Handoo (1978) and L. Handoo (1994).

5.3.3 Claude Lévi Strauss (1908-2009)

For Claude Lévi Strauss, structuralism explains and organizes real data in the simplest effective way. He observes there was a similarity of tales across cultures, even though the tales appear to be arbitrary and fantastic. This he attributes to the existence of universal truth at a structural level, which is not visible on the surface and requires expertise in decoding. Drawing upon the work of Roman Jakobson, Lévi-Strauss claims that myth functions like language; he extends the hierarchy of levels existing in language such as phonemes, morphemes and semantemes (an indivisible unit of meaning)¹⁵ to narratives coining the term ‘mytheme’ as a basic fundamental unit of a myth, that are put together by

¹⁴ Alan Dundes tested the Proppian model on American Indian Tales and found it to be effective despite the fact that they were culturally diverse from the Russian tales on which Propp had based his model.

¹⁵ A phoneme is the smallest sound unit which when combined creates morphemes which further combine to create semantemes, which are the unit components of a sentence.

certain rules of combination and omission. The logic of the relation between phonemes and morphemes is applied to mythemes; each mytheme is therefore described as a 'bundle of relations' which create meaning when these bundles are combined together like sentences. Another way in which myth behaves like language is in its temporal dimension, which is diachronic and synchronic. The telling of the myth is like *parole*, nonreversible, following a linear sequence. However, myth itself is timeless, like *langue* it exists as an abstract system outside of measurable time (Csapo, 2005). With regard to the function of myths Lévi-Strauss (1955) states:

“..the purpose of myth is to provide a logical model capable of overcoming a contradiction”.¹⁶

This overcoming need not be logical but it appears to be so; serving the deep function of relieving anxiety since 'real' contradiction is insurmountable. This task of overcoming a contradiction is entrusted to a mediator. In other word, in a myth the binary oppositions are mediated by a third referent that resolves the incongruities; and it is usually an entity belonging or residing between the spaces of the opposing forces. Lévi-Strauss gives examples of coyote and raven as mythic mediators, who mediate between life and death; clothing as mediator between nature and culture, garbage and ashes mediating between high and low status.

Lévi-Strauss' analysis of Propp's model showed how the tales were similar, but not how they differed from each other. The dichotomy between form and content, between the concrete and abstract in Propp's way of approaching folktales does not exist in the Lévi-Straussian structuralism. (Lévi-Strauss, 1984).

Lévi-Strauss looks at myths from the perspective of form and content, studying the myth not in isolation, in its 'given' structure or syntagmatic order, but its meaning, and therefore reduces the structural components into meaningful paradigms; his method sometimes referred to as 'paradigmatic' structural analysis (Handoo J., 2000). He uses the syntagmatic chain in order to arrive at the paradigmatic structure. Syntagmatic analysis identifies the manifest meaning, whereas paradigmatic analysis finds the latent meaning in any text. For Lévi-Strauss myths are coded messages that may be found by 'cracking the code'; in other words the objective should be to find the hidden meaning, rather than how the story is told.

¹⁶ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Structural Study of Myth*. (1955) p.443.

5.3.4 Algirdas Greimas (1917-1992)

Algirdas Greimas draws upon Propp's morphology and other structuralists to create his own model, the semiotic square, in which he introduced paradigmatic logic of the binaries to the syntagmatic Proppian sequence. Therefore meaning is articulated not only by the binary opposition of contraries, but also their contradictions. He reduces Propp's thirty one functions to twenty by arranging the binary opposites in pairs and the seven spheres of action to six 'actants' arranged in a set of three binaries. His interest and preoccupation with 'deep structure' and narrativity leads him to bring together Lévi-Strauss' structuralism and Barthes' semantics, symbolic and cultural codes to bridge form and meaning.

5.3.5 Roland Barthes (1915-1980)

Roland Barthes asserts that the world we live in is not a world of facts but of 'signs' about facts which we constantly encode and decode. With regard to the substance of the signifier Barthes says it is always material:

“In semiology, where we shall have to deal with mixed systems in which different kinds of matter are involved (sound and image, object and writing etc.) it may be appropriate to collect together all the signs, *inasmuch as they are born by one and the same matter*, under the concept of the typical sign: the verbal sign, the graphic sign, the icon sign, the gestural sign are all typical signs.”¹⁷

Secondly he points out that the relationship of the signifier and signified is more about 'equivalence' rather than 'equality', that it is not a question of one explaining the other but a correlation that brings them together (Hawkes, 1977). While 'denotation' represents the first order of the sign, 'connotation' represents the second order. Barthes argues that 'myth'¹⁸ is a second order semiotic system in which first order sign (an associative total of signifier and signified) becomes a simple signifier for the second.

This is explained with the following metaphoric diagram (figure 5.1) by Hawkes (1977).

¹⁷ Roland Barthes, *Elements of Semiology*. (1967) pp. 35-48.

¹⁸ His conception of myth has less to do with 'classical mythology' and more to do with it 'as a complex system of images and beliefs which a society constructs in order to sustain and authenticate its own being: i.e. the very fabric of its system of 'meaning'. For an excellent exposition of Barthes' contribution to semiotics see Terence Hawkes, *Structuralism and Semiotics*. (1977)

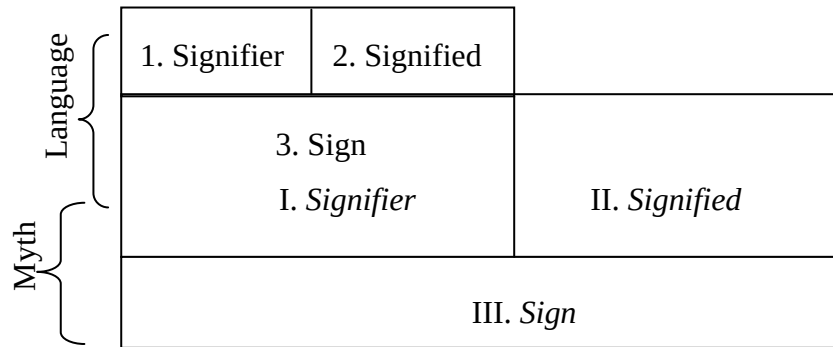


Figure 5.1

He proposes that a narrative has structural features that are brought together in different ways. Despite their differences narratives have underlying codes that are the organizational structures. He offers five codes, of which two codes are temporal (Hermeneutic, which codes a question and Proairetic, which is the action code, also sequence). The other three are ‘outside the constraints of time’ (Semantic code that is connotations, Symbolic code of groupings that may also repeat and Cultural code which is also a ‘reference’ code referring to accepted knowledge) (Hawkes, 1977). With regards to Propp’s commitment to sequence and temporality, Barthes asks if there is ‘an atemporal logic lying behind the logic of temporality?’ Consider the following:

“..temporality is only a structural category of narrative (of discourse), just as in language (langue) temporality only exists in the form of a system; from the point of view of narrative, what we call time does not exist, or at least only exists functionally, as an element of a semiotic system. Time belongs not to discourse strictly speaking but to the referent; both narrative and language know only a semiotic time, ‘true’ time being a ‘realist’, referential illusion, as Propp’s commentary shows. It is as such that structural analysis must deal with it.”¹⁹ (Barthes, 1977).

In the *Kaavad* recitation, sequence is central to the narration of stories and the turning of the panels, but time here is not real time; it is an invocation of a timeless time for the patron.

¹⁹ Roland Barthes *Image Music Text*. (London 1977) p. 99.

5.4 Material Culture and Ethnography

For the patron, seeing the *Kaavad* may be an occasional activity that he may revere but for the storyteller and the maker it is a part of their everyday life, a means of livelihood and a stamp of identity. How they acquire expertise over their tools becomes as relevant as what they do when not engaged with the object, because as Handoo (2000) points out:

“...folk life studies do not focus on the remnants of so-called ‘primitive cultures still alive today’, instead such studies focus on the individual in the midst of social conflict, the present and the future.”²⁰

An ethnographic approach allows us to understand the socio-economic forces that contribute to the tradition in the present scenario, and appreciate individuals and communities with respect to their myths and the cultural objects produced by them.

Jan Brouwer (1995), describes in great detail the six crafts of the Visvakarmas in Southern Karnataka viz. blacksmithy, carpentry, braziers, foundry, sculpture and goldsmithy. His study includes materials used and their procurement, the products conceived and made, the tools used with their origin myths and images. In some cases, he also records the rituals that precede and follow the making as well as the interactions between the makers and their patrons. Through this study of products, their processes and the myths he comes to several conclusions regarding the social structure of the communities concerned.

Another example of an ethnographic study is by Deepak Mehta (1997) about a Muslim community of weavers in North India, their products, both ritualistic, as in the case of a funerary shroud, and quilts for everyday life. Mehta adopts a semiotic approach to examine the processes of making which are intrinsic and integral to the lives and rituals of the community. A recent example is Alka Hingorani's (2006) dissertation,²¹ concerning the *Mohras* of eastern part of Kullu area, Himachal Pradesh, that make an annual pilgrimage to the main deity Raghunathji, in Kullu. The *Mohras* or mask-like faces representing village deities, made of gold and silver, belong to and represent a village's wealth. Their making involves a public participation or performance of the high and low caste for a specific period of time in a sense creating a 'liminal space', in which the secular co-exists with the religious. Hingorani's study of the art, artisans and community involved in the making,

²⁰ Jawaharlal Handoo, *Theoretical Essays in Indian Folklore*. (Mysore, 2000) pp. 37-38.

²¹ Alka Hingorani, *Making Faces-Of Gods and God-makers of the Kullu Valley*. (2006) pp. 13-15.

commissioning and traveling with the deities draws on art history, anthropology and material culture.

The above studies acquire an understanding of the community by relating the products, the means of production, and their consumption to the everyday life of the community. They reveal how objects define their makers and consumers. The examples cited, offer frameworks useful and appropriate to study the *Kaavad* 'text' in its cultural context.

5.5 The *Kaavad* 'Text'

Structurally, the *Kaavad* comprises of three distinct 'texts'²² (i) the object or artifact which is the portable shrine and which is manipulated by the storyteller, (ii) the painted images on the shrine that are viewed by the patron and (iii) the stories that are narrated. Each 'text' requires its own specific method for examination even though all three 'texts' are related to each other and consequently inseparable. For example, the physical object of the *Kaavad*, with its hinged doors or panels and shrine-like structure, cannot be separated from the painted images on it but needs to be examined with different theoretical tools a little different from the ones used to examine the narratives recited by the storytellers. The images, on the other hand, are related both to the object and to the narratives as well as the storytellers, but they too need to be considered with tools that best explain their significance. Therefore different methods are being used to investigate the *Kaavad* 'texts'.

5.5.1 The Object

As material culture the *Kaavad* can be approached from a structural and semiotic perspective because the object is also a symbolic code, a sign for something other than what it literally is. For the maker, it is a product for sale, although he is aware of its ritualistic purpose. For the storyteller it is a means of livelihood and for the patron a sacred shrine. The object is thus both a commodity and a sacred experience.

Ian Woodward (2007) comments:

“Objects enter into and out of spheres of commoditization, so that an object that is now a commodity might not always remain a commodity due to its incorporation into private or ritual worlds of individuals, families and cultures.”²³

²² For the purpose of this study we will use the term 'text' for any specific element/attribute of the *Kaavad*, such as the narratives, the images, the physical object and its navigation etc.

²³ Ian Woodward, *Understanding Material Culture* (2007) pp. 14-15.

In the case of the *Kaavad* it is both a commodity and a ritual object. Thus, the object can be interpreted in multiple ways and can come to mean different things over time because all of its attributes are not invested in the object alone. They are also invested in the viewer. For instance, the *Kaavad* object serves as a trigger for memories and also stands for the whole experience, a synecdoche for the notion of a liminal space, a virtual pilgrimage. For the patron, the *Kaavad* is a sacred object that comes to sanctify his home and give him a new sense of self. The *Kaavad* can never be owned; for it would lose its sacredness if it were to be placed in the house. As Lévi-Strauss asserts:

“It could even be said that being in their place is what makes them sacred for if they were taken out of their place, even in thought, the entire order of the universe would be destroyed. Sacred objects therefore contribute to the maintenance of order in the universe by occupying the places allocated to them.”²⁴

The sacred object in this case is the ‘nomadic agent’. In conventional pilgrimages, the pilgrim is the nomadic agent. In some sense, this ‘sacred’ arrives from ‘elsewhere’.

5.5.2 The Image

The painted images on the *Kaavad* panels are referents and can be ‘read’ by the initiated. Even within that, some images can only be ‘recognized’ when the storyteller identifies them because the same image is used to represent multiple patrons. What is significant here is that the image does not hold too much information. It relies on the prior knowledge of its viewers. All characters, except Gods and saints look similar and the only way they are distinguished is through the narration. The storyteller names the characters or the patrons and thus endorses their identity. Contrary to practices where the image particularizes the word as in the case of illustration, here the word or text particularizes the image. The storyteller uses the same image to identify patrons from various villages. The image is polysemic and therefore can be interpreted in several ways given the context, which determines its specific meaning. The purpose of examining the images on the *Kaavad* is to decipher their function and role in the creation of the narrative and its relationship to the unfolding of the *Kaavad* shrine. We therefore do not take a diachronic approach, although it could also be applied to the imagery to trace its relation to other art practices and through those connections arrive at a probable date of the *Kaavad*’s

²⁴ Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind*. (1962) p.7.

inception. This would be useful and relevant, especially if the tradition was no longer active, and a reconstruction was only possible through the analysis of the images, stories and myths. However, the practice is still alive and our concern is that of understanding the role and meaning of paintings within the shrine, especially as they are not illustrative and hold minimum of information. There are layers of meanings that operate at the denotative and connotative levels which need to be investigated further. The ‘visual text’ or the images of the *Kaavad* can be therefore examined through a semiotics lens, often used to study signs in their contexts.

5.5.3 The Narration and the Narratives

A comparison of *Kaavad* recitations or narrations performed by different storytellers for their patrons is made with those recorded by other scholars to establish and identify core characteristics of the recitation and its significance for the patrons. This reveals changes over time; since the first recording²⁵ was made in 1975, the second in 1982 and the ones recorded by us from 2007-2010.

Units of comparison include the syntagmatic order of the performance; the number of narratives recited or alluded to, the length of the performance, the ratio of time divided between narration of stories and narration of genealogies etc. Such a comparison allows us to identify the stable elements and the variables of performance over time and its interpretation by different storytellers.

The *Kaavad* has an anthology of narratives thematically distributed around specific panels. Each panel has a cluster of stories independent of each other but sharing a common theme. Questions regarding the existence of the stories together and the manner of their revelations can be answered by identifying the underlying structures of the narratives. These will bring to light the relationship and rationale of the arrangement and syntagmatic order. The narratives of the *Kaavad* can be examined structurally using Propp’s methods for their appropriateness in identifying the repetitive functions in the *Kaavad* narratives and classifying the types of narratives. Proppian analysis has been successfully tested by Lalita Handoo (1994) on Kashmiri Folktales and presents a framework to study Indian folk tales.

²⁵ Recordings of *Kaavad* recitations available to us have been made by Mahendra Bhanawat in 1975 in Udaipur and by Komal Kothari in 1982 in Jodhpur.

5.6 A Proppian approach applied to Indian Tales

Jawaharlal Handoo (1983) successfully analyses a Kannada tale, using Propp's model to test its validity across cultures; that is in a non-Russian culture.²⁶ Lalita Handoo (1994) uses the Proppian method on tales from a non-Russian, non-European culture; the Kashmiri Tales. Her detailed analysis and examination of a collection of folktales by J. Hinton Knowles, *Folk- Tales of Kashmir*, addresses the question of 'a cross-cultural application of Propp's morphological-structural approach and its validity across tales',²⁷ leading her to identify the characteristics of the Kashmiri tale. This study offers an appropriate framework for our investigation of the *Kaavad* narratives from Rajasthan.

As the above examples amply demonstrate the suitability of Proppian analysis for cross-cultural narratives, we use the Proppian methods in an attempt to isolate the repetitive functions in the *Kaavad* tales. Once identified, the functions will let us understand the nature of tales and explain why a set of stories exist together on a single panel of the *Kaavad* and the relationship between sets of tales across various panels. This will further allow us to examine the relationship between the tales, between tales and their narration and finally between the tales and the images that represent them.

5.6.1 A sample analysis using Proppian methods

Story K02 Ahalya and the sun and moon

Ahalya is a beautiful woman married to Gautam Rishi (initial situation α). Her husband leaves every morning for his ritual bath to the Ganges (absentation β). The sun and moon are besotted by her beauty and desire her (implied interdiction γ). They decide to seduce Ahalya and her daughter (violation δ). They study the movements of her husband (reconnaissance ϵ). They find out he wakes up to the sound of the rooster and leaves for his bath (delivery ζ). The sun and moon imitate the sound of the rooster (trickery η). Gautam Rishi responds to the call and leaves home (complicity θ). The sun forces himself on Ahalya and the moon rapes her daughter Anjani (villainy A). They both cry for help but no one comes to their rescue (Lack a). Rishi comes home and finds his wife with the sun and daughter with the moon (departure $\uparrow$). He gets angry and curses them; he hits the moon with his wet towel (first function of donor D). Anjani buries the lower part of her body under the ground, angry Ahalya keeps quiet (hero's reaction E). Ahalya is turned to stone;

²⁶ Jawaharlal Handoo, "Morphological Analysis of the Folktale" *Folklore of Rajasthan*. (Mysore 1983) pp. 47-73.

²⁷ Lalita Handoo, *Structural Analysis of Kashmiri Folktales*. (Mysore, 1994) p. xii.

Anjani gives birth to Hanuman through her ear (provision or receipt of a magical agent F). Ahalya suffers in silence for twelve years (struggle H). Vishnu's feet touch her and she is restored to her human form (lack liquidated K). She returns to her husband (return ↓).

The functions are: $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \epsilon \zeta \eta \theta Aa \uparrow DEFHK \downarrow$

If we examine the functions we notice that the act of villainy (A) is not followed by punishment whereas lack (a) is followed by liquidation of lack (K). In fact it is Ahalya the victim that is punished rather than the sun and moon who are the real villains in the tale; they are not punished and get away unscathed. Further, the victim does not continue to remain a victim; the victim has an opportunity to be eulogized, (Anjani gives birth to Hanuman from her ear and is immortalized and Ahalya is 'touched' by Vishnu and is made whole and immortal). If the Sun and Moon represent the *Suryavanshis* and the *Chandravanshis* then the story is also subversive and alludes to similar circumstances possibly faced in real life. Propp's model is useful in extracting the key drivers of the *Kaavad* stories which in turn reflect the concerns and worldview of the community.

5.6.2 A sample analysis using Lévi-Straussian methods

Story K02 Ahalya and the sun and moon

Let us examine the same story mentioned above from a Lévi-Straussian approach to identify paradigms that may not be obvious using syntagmatic analysis.

The Sun and Moon are celestial beings, one representing day and another night. But the sun also implies the high caste Rajput descended from the sun or *Suryavanshis* and the moon represents those descended from the moon or *Chandravanshis*. They are above while Ahalya and Anjani are below, both physically by virtue of being on earth and metaphorically in terms of status. As celestial beings or those in power the Sun and Moon remain untouched or unpunished although they 'touch' Ahalya and her daughter Anjani who are on earth, are 'mortal' and powerless.

When Ahalya is 'touched' by the Sun (implied *Suryavanshi/Kshatriya*) she is punished by her husband (a Rishi/Brahmin) to become a stone (leading to a loss of identity) but when she is 'touched' by Vishnu/Ram (God) she is restored to life (unique identity known to the world). The binary oppositions that may be identified are high and low, powerful and powerless, male and female, *kshatriya* and Brahmin, loss of identity and its restoration.

When Ahalya has an identity (of a wife or a lower caste status) and is 'touched' by a higher caste she is punished and reduced to a stone leading to a loss of identity. When she has 'no

identity' or 'no sensation to touch' (being a stone) she is 'touched by the divine feet of god' and is restored back to her human form and thus regains her identity. The oppositions are thus mediated by 'touch'.

5.6.3 A sample analysis using Semiotic Analysis

Story K02 Ahalya and the sun and moon

Ahalya and her family are not represented; it is the sun and moon that metonymically signify the tale. The image clearly shows the power they exert; the halo around their heads signifies their godlike status and the chariots signify the means and power they have. The story of Ahalya is only told if asked for, or else the image is used to sing the praises of the Suryavanshis and Chandravanshis. The absence of the image of Ahalya also suggests that she connotes the position of the oppressed, who cannot come out and voice their feelings. At a syntactic level the white horse denotes day and the black deer denotes night. The white horse defines the sun and the black deer the moon because in the absence of the horse and deer it may be difficult to recognize the faces as sun and moon.

5.7 Conclusion

The *Kaavad* 'text' is a composite of structures that create a larger whole which is more than the sum of its parts. It constitutes the carriers of the tradition; the makers, the storytellers and the patrons, the physical artifact or object, the narratives, the images, the narration and the navigation. Each element needs to be examined individually and in relation to each other. Structuralism, both syntagmatic and paradigmatic, allows us to study the sequence of narrative and navigation and to investigate the deeper structure within the contradictions. Semiotic analysis offers adequate tools for visual analysis and their meanings are also verified by the ethnographic fieldwork carried out earlier. Ethnography allows us to relate the findings from structural analysis to the universe of the *Kaavad* community and its worldview. Both methods therefore support and enrich the analysis.

Proppian analysis when applied to *Kaavad* narratives reveal a clearer picture of the repetitive functions of the characters and suggests the types of tales they belong to. Propp's methods have already been applied and tested for the study of Indian tales and as the sample analysis indicates this method as suitable for the analysis of *Kaavad* tales. The objective is to discover the underlying structure of these narratives and not to simply surmise similarity of tales but to find the specific similarities of the tales. While Proppian methods isolate key functions of the narratives and the logic of their sequential order,

Lévi-Straussian methods identify the mediators that mediate the contradictions and contraries reflective of the *Kaavad* society. The sample analysis above recognizes the anomalies, contradictions, aspirations and fears expressed through repetitions and description of characters - the deeper structure which cannot be addressed by syntagmatic analysis alone.

Chapter 6

A Structural and Semiotic Analysis of *Kaavad* and its Discourse

6.1 Introduction

The *Kaavad* is a multidimensional object and this is reflected in its physical construction, its arrangement of images and the narratives that are recited while navigating the journey from panel to panel. It transports the viewer from the outside to the innermost shrine; the abode of the deities. The object is highly symmetrical, the images on the panels being placed in a grid format and the recitation in conjunction with the unfolding of the panels following a specific order: clearly indicative of a deep structure that needs to be deciphered. Using the analytical tools of structuralism and semiotics we will critically examine discrete parts and their structures as each part needs a specific investigative tool. These parts also relate to each other, and therefore we will examine the parts in relation to the whole. This relationship of parts reveals the significance and underlying function of the *Kaavad*'s narratives and its performance for its community. With the theoretical framework described in the previous chapter we shall probe how the 'designed' object and its narration deliver an 'experience of a pilgrimage' and an 'elevation in status' for its patrons.

It is not the *Kaavad* object alone that delivers this experience; it is also the images and the narratives associated with it that together invest meaning in the *Kaavad*. Finally, it is not

only that which is invested in it by the makers and the storytellers but also the listener patrons, who decode the form and the content with their memory. This gives them the experience they seek or desire.

We begin with a syntagmatic analysis of the stories and the *Kaavad* narration as they are recited in a sequential order. Proppian analysis of individual stories is followed by analysis of panels and then the clusters of panels termed as the closed or *Bund paat*, hidden or *Gupat paat* and open or *Khul paat*. The same method is also applied to the *Kaavad* narration or performance for the patrons.

Following this, a Lévi Straussian paradigmatic analysis is applied to the stories across panels and to the physical object of the *Kaavad* shrine to locate the contradictions and mediators in the *Kaavad* phenomenon. This also takes into consideration the context of the *Kaavad* community.

Lastly the *Kaavad* images are examined using semiotic analysis to understand their role in the narration and representation of the stories.

6.2 Syntagmatic Analysis

Although Propp's morphological model was designed to study and analyze the wonder tales in Russia it has been tested on stories across cultures (Dundes, 1962; Handoo J., 1983; Handoo L., 1994). Alan Dundes tested Propp's framework for American Indian folk tales by adopting terminology and theory from Kenneth L Pike and modifying Propp's function to 'motifeme' to identify key patterns of a move from disequilibrium to equilibrium in these narratives. Jawaharlal Handoo analyzes a Kannada tale with the Proppian model and observes that tales with 'lack' do not always have the preparatory functions described by Propp. Consider the following:

“...tales which begin with any form of lack do not necessarily require the first seven functions or the preparatory part, because such tales certainly do not begin with villainy (although it may occur, sometimes, as a mediatory element) for which the preparatory part becomes a necessary prerequisite.”¹

This is a significant observation and has bearing on our analysis of the *Kaavad* tales, since there are several examples of stories with 'lack' and its 'liquidation'. Lalita Handoo has

¹ Jawaharlal Handoo, "Morphological Analysis of the Folktale" In *Folklore of Rajasthan*. (Mysore, 1983) p. 62.

tested Propp's model for cross-cultural and cross-generic conditions by applying it to Kashmiri folktales and legends without modifying the framework. Using this model she has identified patterns unique to these tales and thereby she has classified these folktales as per the 'moves' in the narratives.²

We accept the Proppian model and use it without modifications:

1. We analyze individual stories to isolate the functions that are peculiar to the stories in the *Kaavad*.
2. We examine the cluster of stories placed on each panel and the order in which they are narrated on that panel. This indicates why the stories are clustered together and what the collection implies.
3. We analyze the chronology of the unfolding of the panels independently, and with the storyteller, as he navigates his listeners through the journey of the *Kaavad*.

The stories labeled K1 –K54³ were elicited by us as they were not recited in such minute detail to the patrons because the patrons are assumed to know them. These stories are represented on a *Kaavad* belonging to Kojaram Rav. Our analysis also includes an examination of the performance in the field, where the *Kaavad* is recited at the patron's residence.⁴

6.2.1 Syntagmatic Analysis of Individual Stories

Table 6.1 Syntagmatic Analysis of Individual Stories

Story no:	Description/Title	Proppian functions
K1	Poliyas or Jai and Vijai	$\alpha\gamma\delta B\uparrow$
K2	Ahalya and sun and moon	$\alpha\beta\gamma\delta\varepsilon\zeta\eta\theta AaBC\uparrow DEFGHK\downarrow$
K3	Baba Ram Dev and Harji Bhati	$\alpha\beta aBDEFKQ$
K4	Shravat Bheelni	$\alpha aDEFKQ$
K5	Sita's Abduction	$\alpha\beta\gamma\delta\varepsilon\zeta\eta\theta AaBC\uparrow DEFGIKU$
K6	Krishna and Ajmal Maharaj	$\alpha\beta aBC\uparrow DEFK\downarrow$
K7	Krishna, Ajmal Maharaj & Meghwal	$\alpha\beta aBC\uparrow DEFGHKQ$
K8	Baba Ram Dev and Dali bai	$\alpha aBC\uparrow DEFGQ$
K9	Hanuman bringing Sanjeevani Buti	$AaBC\uparrow DEGHJIKQ$

² Lalita Handoo, *Structural Analysis of Kashmiri Folktales*. (Mysore, 1994) pp. 206-212.

³ K1-K54 are fifty four stories narrated by storyteller Kojaram Rav with letter K denoting his initials. The translated stories can be found in Appendix I.

⁴ Three recitations by three different storytellers were recorded on location and later transcribed. See transcriptions and their translations in Appendix III.

	Description/Title	Proppian functions
K10	Puran Sinh and Sani Maharaj	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta A a B C D E F K \downarrow$
K11	Garud Devji	$\alpha \beta a B C \uparrow D E F K$
K12	Kundana Bai	$\alpha \beta \gamma a \uparrow D E F K Q$
K13	Kabir near the butcher	$\alpha \gamma \delta a D E F K$
K14	Raavan and his pride	$\alpha \gamma \delta U$
K15	Hanuman visits Sita in Lanka	$\alpha a B C \uparrow D E F K$
K16	A Sati being taken in a palki	$\alpha \beta a B \uparrow F G K Q$
K17	Dhapu Gujar	$\alpha \gamma \delta U$
K18	Raja Dashrath and his queens	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta A a B C \uparrow D E F H U$
K19	Pandavas	$\alpha \beta a B C \uparrow D E G J$
K20	Kunta and Dropda	$\alpha \gamma \delta a B D F K$
K21	Meerabai and Rana	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta A a B C D E F G K U$
K22	Krishna found in Kashi	$\alpha \beta a B C \uparrow D E F H K$
K23	Padmavati, Raja Bisal & Raja Mordhaj	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \epsilon \zeta \eta \theta A a B C D E F G I K W$
K24	Raja Mordhaj, Krishna and Arjun	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta a B C D E F G I K Q$
K25	Chandra Gujodi & Kaanji Maharaj	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \epsilon U$
K26	Holka(Holika) and Prahlad	$\alpha \gamma \delta U$
K27	Indrapankh Bird attacking the elephant	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \downarrow P r N$
K28	Dhanna Bhagat and his Kheti	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta a B F K Q$
K29	Kubaramji Kumbhar	$\alpha a B C D E F K Q$
K30	Raidas Chamar, guru of Meerabai	$\alpha \gamma a B C D E F K Q$
K31	Sant Kabir and his chela Kamaal	$\alpha \beta a B C D E F G H K$
K32	Ginka bai	$\alpha a B C H K Q$
K33	Sen Bhagat	$\alpha \gamma \delta a B C \uparrow D E F K Q$
K34	Narsinh Bhagat	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \epsilon a B C D E F K Q$
K35	Krishna Khati	$\alpha \gamma \delta \epsilon a B D F K Q$
K36	Rana wants to accompany Meerabai	$\alpha \gamma \delta a B D E F G U$
K37	Shri Yadey who saved the kittens	$\alpha \gamma \delta a B C D E F K M N Q U$
K38	Why Ganesh is worshipped first	$\alpha \beta a B C \uparrow H I K Q$
K39	Krishna taking care of rishi munis	$\alpha \gamma \delta a B C G K$
K40	Bhagirath got the Ganges to Earth	$\alpha \beta a B C D E F G H I K Q$
K41	Stingy Laluprasad	$\alpha \gamma \delta A D E F G$
K42	Raja Harishchand and Taramati Rani	$\alpha \beta a B C \uparrow D E F G H I K Q$
K43	Duti Bai	$\alpha \gamma \delta A U$
K44	Hanuman the protector of Ram & Lakshman	$\alpha a B C \uparrow G K$
K45	Shravan's parents	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta A a B C \uparrow D E F H K W$
K46	Shravan's wife Revati	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \epsilon \zeta \eta \theta A a B C D E F G K U$
K47	Shravan Kaavadiya	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta A a B \uparrow Q U$
K48	Ma Durga Ambe on Lion	$\alpha \beta a B C \uparrow D E F K Q$

	Description/Title	Proppian functions
K49	Mata Saraswati or Bemata	$\alpha\alpha BC\uparrow DEFGKQ$
K50	Karma Jatni feeds stone God	$\alpha\alpha BDEFKQ$
K51	Raja Bali	$\alpha\beta\eta\theta A\uparrow DEFQ$
K52	Sudama friend of Krishna	$\alpha\beta aB DEFGKQ$
K53	Shankar Bhagwan on Kailash	$\alpha\beta aBCDEFGKW$
K54	Jagdev Punwar	$\alpha\beta\varepsilon\zeta ADEHJIQ$

Proppian methods are applied to individual *Kaavad* tales to identify the repetitive functions characterizing the stories.⁵ Each *Kaavad* story is analyzed and the functions identified and tabulated (Table 6.1) in the order in which the stories are portrayed and narrated by storyteller Kojaram Rav. In (Table 6.1), stories are numbered after Kojaram (K1 to K54) followed by a brief title of the story, the Proppian functions identified in the stories and key functions that were prominent.

Propp contended that some functions often exist in pairs; for instance an interdiction is likely to be followed by a violation of the interdiction. In Proppian narratives an act of villainy is punished and the one who is punished is usually the villain, or lack is followed by liquidation of lack etc. These functions have also been examined in the *Kaavad* tales.

This method facilitates not only in quantifying the number of times a function occurs but also highlighting the nature of correlation that exists between the pairs (Table 6.1).

Table 6.2 Significant Proppian functions in the *Kaavad Tales*

1. Absentation 31		
2. Interdiction 29	11. Departure 22	22. Rescue 0
3. Violation 26	12. First Function of Donor 40	23. Unrecognized arrival 0
4. Reconnaissance 8	13. Hero's reaction 38	24. Unfounded claims 0
5. Delivery 5	14. Receipt of Magical agent 39	25. Difficult task 1
6. Trickery 5	15. Spatial Transference 20	26. Solution 2
7. Complicity 4	16. Struggle 12	27. Recognition 27
8. Villainy 13	17. Branding 3	28. Exposure 0
8a. Lack 44	18. Victory 8	29. Transfiguration 1
9. Mediation 41	19. Lack Liquidated 39	30. Punishment 11
10. Counteraction	20. Return 3	31. Wedding 3
	21. Pursuit 1	

⁵ Proppian analysis of individual tales may be found in Appendix II.

6.2.2 Proppian Functions in *Kaavad* Stories

Significant functions from (Table 6.2) are isolated and we find fifteen functions have a strong correlation. The correlation between lack and its liquidation is significant when the instances of lack are examined from the given stories (Table 6.3).

Table 6.3 Significant Recurring functions in the *Kaavad* tales

Lack 44	Hero's reaction 38	Violation 26
Mediation 41	Counteraction 32	Spatial Transference 20
First Function of Donor 40	Absentation 31	Departure 22
Receipt of Magical agent 39	Interdiction 29	Punishment 11
Lack Liquidated 39	Recognition 27	Villainy 13

There is a direct correlation to the kind of lack experienced by the community in their everyday life, which is possibly fulfilled through stories. The instances of lack in the stories are lack of male children, lack of security for women, having to prove one's innocence or faith, lack of mobility, lack of dignity or social status and the need for release or *Mukti* and recognition.

The liquidation of lack is always due to divine intervention because the recipients are devoted and faithful to god. Gods appear when the faithful call for help and punish those who are faithless. They also test and reward their devotees beyond their expectations.

The function of Absentation is also significant as it correlates to the notion of travel that is echoed by the movement of the *Kaavad* panels. The storyteller keeps unfolding them and inviting the patrons to enter the shrine to view the deities.

The relation between interdiction and violation is also found to be quite significant. Violation of an interdiction can either lead to punishment, (even in the absence of villainy) or it can lead to reward and recognition. If the violation is immoral it leads to punishment and if the violation is doing *Bhakti* or worshipping Ram then it is rewarded. In all instances the intervention is divine. And in instances when the judgment is unjust the intervention is human, which is later corrected by divine intervention.

Lack and its liquidation emerge as the largest number of functions in the *Kaavad* narratives. They possibly suggest a main function of a *Kaavad* is its service as wish-

fulfillment. Could this imply the wish to perform a pilgrimage or to reinforce identity and status within the community?

The absence of some functions like Rescue (Rs), Unrecognized arrival (o), Unfounded claims (L) and Exposure (Ex) also suggest that human intervention is low or ineffectual since all these actions are pre-empted by divine intervention. And very few instances of wedding imply that it is not a matter of significance since everyone does get married but the three instances in the stories deal with issues of marrying outside of the class or community (Princess Satviksha marries a Brahmin, Princess Padmavati marries a peacock) and incest (Shankar Bhagwan and Parvati). One of the reasons cited by patrons for the importance of reciting the genealogies is that the patrons can avoid all possibilities of incest if they know the name of the village and name of other patrons with whom they may share kinship bonds.

There is a correlation between villainy and punishment, but the instances are fewer compared to lack and its liquidation. Acts of villainy are carried out by the high caste or celestial beings, both of which are exempted from punishment. The correlation between violation of interdiction and punishment is stronger than villainy and punishment. While the ocean is punished for its pride (K14) the Sun is not punished for violating Ahalya's body (K2).



Figure 6.1 Panel 1 and 2(front)
Guardians or *Poliyas ka paat*



Figure 6.2 Left: Panel 1 and 2 (back) Sun or *Suraj ka paat*, Centre: Panel 3 Serpent *Naag paat*,
Right: Panel 2 Moon or *Chandrama ka paat*

6.2.3 Syntagmatic analysis of the cluster of stories on panels

Each panel has a cluster of stories narrated by the storyteller in a particular order. Repetition of functions by various characters reiterates code of conduct and certain values that are upheld within the communities. Sometimes the set of stories are similar to each other and sometimes they are in direct contrast (panel 9 and 10) to each other although they

share the same theme. For instance panel 6 (*Pandavas paat*) has a group of stories that are all about hardships and test of faith, panel 7 is about Bhakti saints and local heroes and panel 8 is about Badrinath, a pilgrimage centre.

There is an order in which the panels are unfolded during a recitation. If the recitation is carried out for a patron who wishes to remain anonymous, then the panels unfolded for them are the hidden or *Gupat paat* (panel 1-3). If the recitation is for a new patron then the panels unfolded are the closed or *Bund paat* (panel 4-5) and if it is being recited for a customary patron then the storytellers reveal the open or *Khul paat* (panel 6-10).

Panel 1-3: Hidden or *Gupat paat* (K1-K13)

This cluster is recited for those who wish to be anonymous, and want to keep their donations secret. These patrons believe that wishes are granted by being deserving and through sheer devotion and not by vain display of generosity or excessive demands.

The stories in these panels, therefore, are about the fruits of endurance and the penalty for violating the social order. Examples of violations are the gatekeepers, *Poliyas*, (fig 6.1) who violate an implied interdiction of desiring their stepmother (K1), just as the Sun and Moon desire Ahalya and Anjani (K2) and later Raavan desires Sita (fig 6.2) (K5). All desire a married woman and at least some of them are punished.

On the other hand, role models like the modest Harji Bhati (K3) and Shravat *Bheelni* (K4) have no desires, so they are rewarded beyond their expectations; they are 'recognized'. Lack is liquidated by divine intervention when humans are humble, make the effort and also endure hardships (K6, K7, K8, K9). Fate is also turned around with faith (K10, K11).

The secrecy involved in the reading (*Gupat paat*) is reflected in the story of Kundana Bai who must not be seen by men and so hides behind a panel (K12).

As this is recited for anonymous patrons the stories reassure them of merits due to them, even if they the patrons remain hidden.

The opening of the panels suggests crossing a threshold, a readiness for travel. In consonance many characters from the stories in these panels are on the move. The gatekeeper *Poliyas* are moved from the palace to the gates (K1), the Sun and Moon traverse the sky each day, Gautam Rishi goes to bathe in the river every morning (K2), Harji Bhati is gifted with a horse to move (K3) Ram and Lakshman are moving in the forest and Raavan flies off with Sita (K5). Ajmal travels to Dwarka (K6, K7), Baba Ram Dev and Dali Bai take *Samadhi* and travel to the other world (K8), Hanuman travels/flyes to get the

medicine *Sanjeevani Buti* for Lakshman(K9), Garud Dev travels between heaven and earth (K11) and Kundana Bai transits from being a child to an old lady all through the day, every day(K12). In contrast, the only characters that do not travel and remain static are Shravat Bheelni (K4) and Kabir (K13).

As this set of stories (K1-K13) also belong to the first three panels of the *Kaavad* they have more emphasis on the notion of travel, of crossing a threshold, which is also resonated by the doors of the outer shrine.

Panel 4-5: Closed or *Bund paat* (K14-K18)

Narration of this cluster of panels called the closed or *Bund paat* is recited for new patrons. Pride and ego cannot come in the way of devotion, nor can lack of faith; both lead to punishment, Raavan is killed, the tree turns black and the ocean turns salty (K14-K15), faithless Dhapu Gujarji goes to hell (K17). On the other hand unconditional devotion is always rewarded by god, a devoted wife who sacrifices herself on her husband's funeral pyre is venerated as a *Sati* (K16). It does not matter how important a person- even a king like Dashrath, father of Ram, must pay for his sins (K18). For new patrons this is a form of indoctrination. The interdictions are now implied but the consequences of violating the interdictions are explicit. If the interdictions are adhered to, then rewards are on the way. What is required of the new patron is devotion and faith. Through the stories the new patron or *jajman* is asked to enter the membership without pride, to have unconditional faith or else face the consequences. After crossing the threshold the next step is therefore to enter a new space with humility and devotion. This is the process of initiation into becoming a patron.

Panel 6-10: Open or *Khul paat* (K19-K54)

In this reading the syntagmatic order of the panels on which the stories are located suggest a journey being undertaken. When a person enters a space with humility and devotion they willingly endure hardships and are ready to be tested. Their faith is strengthened by inspiring role models from their own community. Giving up of the egoistic identity, the person acquires another identity shared with the community. Charity brings merit and rewards. By losing the self, a new sense of self is granted and 'recognized'.

Wishing for something entails making a pledge, enduring hardships, making sacrifices, and entering unknown territory. There may be disappointments too, but the faith has to remain intact. There will be tests of endurance, testing of one's faith in god which will have to be

proved through sacrifice (K19, K20, K21, K23, K24), charity and devotion (K28, K29, K32, K33). There will be encounters with saintly persons who will show the way, and inspire with their generosity and exemplary charitable behavior (K31, K34, K37). Making a pilgrimage is a way of reforming, of purifying oneself, equivalent to doing penance (K40, K41). Sometimes one may be required to renounce everything, become anonymous and enter an unknown, unfamiliar, uncomfortable space, (K42) but if faith is retained nothing will be lost. Bad behavior will destroy the very being (K36, K43), whereas good behavior will make a person's name immortal (K42, K54). Strength of character is required even though circumstances push a person into a situation they did not deserve or create (K45). If the wish is made in earnest it will be granted (K40, K50). The attitude has to be that of a selfless devoted friend or spouse ready to give up everything including the sense of self (K44, K52, K54). This leads to a vision (*darshan*) of the divine and a transformation in identity.

The above analysis is concerned with three kinds of recitations. We will now examine the *Kaavad* box along with its narratives in the absence of the storyteller. We approach it knowing the stories but without the knowledge of how it needs to be navigated so we open the panels and doors as the design of the *Kaavad* invites us to do so.

6.2.4 Proppian Analysis of the *Kaavad* object with its narratives

When Proppian methods are used to examine the *Kaavad* panels together with the stories on each panel (in the absence of the storyteller) we may observe the following similarities in functions:

Table 6.4 Proppian Analysis of the *Kaavad* object with its narratives.

Step #	<i>Kaavad</i>	Proppian function
1	Entry into the shrine. The devotee has decided to get the <i>Kaavad</i> read	Absentation or Departure β
2	The guardians, the lions, the ticket on the front doors seem to suggest that entry is by permission. The narratives associated on the front panels also alert the devotee. There is the Lakshman rekha for Sita not to cross the threshold.	Interdiction γ
3	The <i>Kaavad</i> is opened, Sita crosses the threshold.	Violation δ
4	This is not the true entry although a deity lies there on a snake. Sun and Moon also deceive Ahalya and Gautam Muni.	Deception η

Step #	<i>Kaavad</i>	Proppian function
5	Shravat <i>Bheelni</i> wants Rama and Lakshman to visit her, Harji Bhati also wants to meet God, Lakshman needs Sanjeevani Buti, <i>Kaavadiya</i> needs an identity, a job.	Lack a
6	Lack is made known. The doors are closed and the panel is turned so that the real entry into the shrine may be made. The journey begins.	Mediation B
7	The panels are turned to reveal the world of Raavan on the left and Pandavas on the right. One path has to be chosen. If the left is chosen it does not take the traveler anywhere because the doors of the sanctum sanctorum are behind the panels on the right. The only way is to the right.	Beginning Counter Action C
8	Departure is thus made on the right. Right side panels are opened.	Departure $\uparrow$
9	Images of tests of all entities. Hardship stories, tests of faith. Story of Pandavas doing penance for twelve years. Kunta is asked to grow a mango from a burnt seed, Meera is asked to drink poison, Raja Mordhaj asked to sacrifice his son. Prahlad has to sit with Holka in fire	Hero is Tested D
10	Pandavas give up, Kunta sows the seed with faith, Meera drinks the poison, Raja Mordhaj sacrifices his son. Prahlad sits with Holka	Hero's Reaction E
11	Divine interventions take place. Kunta's mango tree grows, Meera's poison turns to elixir, Raja Mordhaj gets his son back, Kunta has children, and Holka is burnt and Prahlad is saved from fire.	Receipt of a magical agent F
12	The panel is turned. Entry into Bhaktimala <i>paat</i> .	Transference to a new kingdom G
13	Caste recognition takes place through the patron saint of each caste. Acts of charity, by Dhanna Bhagat, Kuba Kumbhar, Bherji Bhati, Narsinh bhagat, Kabir The notion of Communitas.	Initial Lack is resolved K
14	The panel turns and reveals the panel of Badrinath. Bhagirath does penance for twelve years standing on one leg, to bring the Ganges to earth.	Difficult Task M
15	The panel turns to the ones with the patrons and then the inner shrine doors are revealed. King Harishchandra and his family lose their identity and are recognized after proving their faith. Karma Jatni is recognized because she feeds a stone god. Shravan is recognized as the nephew of Dashrath and therefore related to lord Ram. The storyteller being the progeny of Shravan is also recognized as the one close to the lord through a kinship bond.	Recognition Q

β γ δ η aBC↑DEFGKMQT

The navigation of the *Kaavad* panels is in consonance with the narratives that are attributed to each panel. The stories on each panel have a common thread which is reiterated through repetition (Table 6.4):

Panels 1 and 2 (outer doors) introduce the idea of travel or being on the threshold; of entering the shrine or space (Absentation). As the doors open, the ticket along with the lions and the guards warn about the entry being only for the privileged. An (Interdiction) is given which is reiterated by the stories on the inside doors of panel 1 and 2. Sita is warned about crossing the line and as she crosses the line (Violation) so do we as we open the doors.

This entry is not a true entry to the inner shrine where Ram Sita and Lakshman reside. This entry is deceptive (Deception) just as Raavan deceives Sita and the Sun and Moon deceive Gautam Rishi.

Like the characters of Shravat Bheelni and Harji Bhati in search of God, or the *Kaavadiya* in search of an identity, a need (Lack) is felt to find the true entry to the inner shrine. This is enacted by (Mediation) by closing the doors and opening (Counter action) the open or *Khul paat*. The panel on the left (panel 4) does not lead to the shrine so a (Departure) is made to the right to (panel 6). All stories on panel 6 (*Pandavas paat*) relate to hardships and testing of faith (Hero is tested by future donor), the characters endure the pain and act in faith (Hero's reaction) and more often than not saved by miracles or invested with special boons (Receipt of a Magical agent). The journey continues by a turning of the panel (Transference to a new kingdom) when it turns to panel 7. Here the sense of community is experienced as patron saints from each community are recognized. Reclamation of identity (Initial lack liquidated) takes place through a sense of 'Communitas'.⁶ The panel turns to complete the arduous task (Difficult Task) of reaching a pilgrim place like Badrinath which is one of the toughest pilgrim centres. Here too, the one who reaches can hope to get their wish fulfilled like Bhagirath (K40), despite being stingy (K41) because the traveler has reached a very sacred place. The rest of the panels with images of couples and families on various vehicles suggest aspirations of the patrons and their need for mobility.

Panels 9 and 10 emphasize the importance of recognition which can only be achieved by initially losing the social identity. King Harishchandra and his wife must lose all identity, leave the palace, suffer all humiliations and then regain a status higher than the one they

⁶ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* .(1969)

lost. Similarly Sudama, Shravat (Shabri), Karma Jatni and Shravan acquire a higher status by being close to beings with a higher status in different sets of relationships and thereby gain attention. The oral recitation of the genealogies along with the stories foregrounds the notion of recognition. We will now analyze the *Kaavad* recitation as performed by the storyteller.

6.3 Structural Analysis of a *Kaavad* Recitation or Performance

The recitation has an internal system, its own structure.⁷ When the *Kaavad* is recited the storyteller unfolds the panels while reciting the narratives both in prose and rhyme, pointing at images in a specific order, inviting the patron on a journey within the *Kaavad* making him aware of where he is each time, introducing him to the figures and describing the situation. Guiding his listeners/patrons while opening the multiple doors and unfolding the narratives the storyteller transports his audience from the outside to the inner sanctum sanctorum where the deities reside. This travel through the shrine is considered equivalent to a pilgrimage by the patrons.

We will examine a recitation as it took place in its natural settings to later compare it with the performance of elicited stories. Three recitations have been transcribed and translated (Appendix III) of which we shall examine the one performed by storyteller Kojaram Rav.⁸

6.3.1 Narration or *Kaavad Baanchana* and the sequence of a performance

The narration begins with a chant-like invocation to the five Gods: Sarasvati, Ganesha, Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh seeking their protection and blessings. The storyteller does not open the panels with the gatekeepers *Poliyas*;⁹ instead he goes straight to panel 6 (*Pandavas paat*). The journey begins with the storyteller using the peacock feather to brush the images and opening the panels as he goes on describing the figures and telling the stories in brief. The saints Kabir and Tulsidas are invoked and their verses are used to endorse the value of charity. The storyteller then introduces all the figures and provides a

⁷ This was observed over two years with five storytellers using their *Kaavads* at different times of the year and in different places including rural and urban areas, for a diverse group of traditional patrons and urban audiences.

⁸ This recitation by Kojaram Rav was for patron Askaran Sinh, in village Jinjaniali, recorded by us on 10th December 2008. See Appendix III.

⁹ These panels known as the *Poliyas* or Jai Vijay paat are called the hidden or (*Gupat paat*) panels. They are locked or closed and may have a wooden tablet attached to them which is called a ticket by the storyteller. This ticket is the license that permits the teller to tell and specifies the rate for reading a *Kaavad* which has two sides, left and right. For reading one side (usually the right side) the rate is Rs 51 and for reading the full *Kaavad* it is Rs 101. If the patron wishes to have their name written inside (painted) then they have to pay Rs 501. If they wish to ride a vehicle then they have to pay Rs 1100.

synopsis of the stories to follow. He does not narrate the whole story as it is assumed that the stories are already known to the patrons. The few lines serve as reference points or simply invoke the memories of the patrons. The stories are thematically arranged on the panels and begin with stories of lack, followed by stories of hardships and a test of faith to those of virtues of charity and lives of saints. Following this, the panels open onto the pilgrim site Badrinath where the notion of purification by the Ganges is extolled. All along, the storyteller introduces the figures in the present tense, creating a sense of travel and the notion of being in the presence of the deities. Gradually he opens up the panels that have images of the patrons. Here he begins reciting their genealogies, calling out their names, praising them and telling everyone what donations were made by those patrons in various villages, including the one he is visiting. The patrons ‘recognize’ their ancestors on the panels and are satisfied that they are well looked after in the other world.

Customarily he opens only half of the *Kaavad* which is to the right of the viewer. This part is called the ‘open’ or *Khul paat* which has the panels on the Pandavas, Krishna, Bhakti saints, Badrinath and the patrons. As he keeps unfolding the panels and approaches the sanctum sanctorum he reverts to reciting stories about complete submission to God and unconditional love that include stories of Shravan Kumar, Karma Jatni, Raja Harishchandra and Taramati Rani, Sudama and several others. Finally he reveals the deities in the shrine: Ram, Sita and Lakshman for the grand vision, *Darshan*. The patrons fold their hands in worship and bow their heads as they would in a temple, chanting *Jai ho* several times. When this ritualistic reading concludes, the gathering is invited to make their donations. The patrons donate food, cash, jewelry and animals or whatever they can afford to give.

The Kaavadiya Bhat enters the names of his patrons in his book and records the donations made. He writes in his own script called the *Modi Bhasha*. If the patron wishes for his image to be placed in the *Kaavad*, then the expenses are discussed and paid for by the patron. This information gets shared with the community the next time he visits the patron.

6.3.2 A Comparison of *Kaavad* Recitations

Several performances or recitations were recorded on location in the natural settings during the month of December 2008. During the course of the study we followed five storytellers to their patrons from different communities that included the Kumbhars, Nais, Rajputs, Meghwals, Suthars, Malis, Bheels, Jats etc. Of these recitations three are fully transcribed

and translated here. Of the five storytellers, we chose three storytellers with varying capabilities of narrating and remembering the stories. One storyteller did not remember the order and often mixed up the characters of one story with another. This resulted in some laughs amongst storytellers, although the patrons did not pay much attention to the stories as long as he mentioned the known names of characters. They were keener to listen to their genealogies. One storyteller was well-versed with the stories and the other was an excellent narrator. The selection of the recitations was based on the willingness and availability of the storytellers, as each one has a different environment and patron from a different community. Each recitation was recorded on audio and video tracks. Two storytellers were invited to Mumbai to help with the transcriptions and translations as the language and dialect spoken is too specific to the area they come from. They were also contacted on the phone several times to decipher some of the terms that were difficult to follow. On such occasions the storytellers also offered other significant information which may have not emerged if we did not seek the clarifications. For instance, the terms *Thakur* and *Kunwar* which are used for the patron have specific meanings. *Thakur* is used for a man whose father has died and *Kunwar* or *Banna* are for a man whose father is alive. Similarly, the donation (*daan*) made has different terms. If it is obligatory it is called *daan*, if it is given even if all obligations are over it is called *seekh*, and if it is for the peace of a soul it is called *punya* or *dharma*. In some instances, the patron wanted to gift a horse but instead gave a goat and a parrot in lieu of a horse. So in the recitation it would be said that the patron paid for the upkeep of a horse by giving a goat and a parrot. In other instances, the patron would pay for an image of themselves on a camel and donate a goat and clothes etc. This kind of information could not be elicited without going through the process of translation and discussing the details with the storytellers afterwards.

The first recitation is by storyteller Narsinh Rav from village Hari Sinh ki Bassini. He recited the Kaavad for his patron Bhomram from the potter community in village Balao near Dechu. Their patron saint is Seeriyade, the potter woman who is represented in the *Kaavad*. The patron had his neighbours attend the recitation and food was served at the end of the recitation. The patron is fairly well-to-do and although he belongs to a potter community he is a weaver and makes floor coverings that are exported. Narsinh also helps them in selling the floor coverings from village to village that he travels to and earns a small commission for the job. The second recitation is by storyteller Pappuram Rav from village Kumbhara and he recited for his patrons Hukmaram and Taggi Bai from the Jat

community in Paanylakala. The patron is a farmer and the recitation took place in a remote place where the couple lives when they are farming. They also herd goats. They live in a small hut and their neighbours live far away. Their patron saint is Dhanna Bhagat and they believe they came from the locks of hair (*jatas*) of lord Shiva.

The third recitation is by storyteller Kojaram Rav from village Kumbhara and he recited at the house of his patron Askaran Sinh from the Rajput community in village Jinjaniyali. The house was in a farm land and the recitation took place in a special outhouse (*kothadi*) meant for visitors. The patron was well-to-do. He works some months as a mason in nearby towns and farms for some months and chooses to be unemployed for some months. For a comparison we have selected these three recitations recorded by us in the natural settings in December 2008, one recitation recorded by Mahendra Bhanawat at the Lok Kala Mandal, Udaipur, in 1972¹⁰ and another recitation recorded by the late Komal Kothari in 1982 at the Rupayan Sansthan, Jodhpur.¹¹

Table 6.5 A comparison of the Performances/Recitations is shown below.

Sr. no.	Recitation 1 by Narsinh Rav From village: <i>Bassini</i> <i>Hari Sinh ki</i> for a patron in Balao Recorded by Nina Sabnani	Recitation 2 by Pappuram Rav From village: <i>Kumhara</i> for a patron in Pokharan Recorded by Nina Sabnani	Recitation 3 by Kojaram Rav From village: <i>Kumhara</i> for a patron in Jinjaniyali Recorded by Nina Sabnani	Recitation 4 by Shaitan Sinh From village: <i>Bhopalgad</i> Recorded by Mahendra Bhanawat in Udaipur	Recitation 5 by Gumanram Rav From village: <i>Govindgad</i> Recorded by Komal Kothari in Jodhpur
	Ritual	Ritual and Invocation	Ritual and Invocation	Introduction by storyteller	Introduction by storyteller, invocation
Panel 1& 2	K1 Poliyas	K1 Poliyas			K1 Ajai Vijai Poliyas

¹⁰ Mahendra Bhanawat recorded the recitation on 14th July, 1972, transcribed and translated the recitation in Hindi for his book *Kaavad*, published by the Lok Kala Mandal in December 1975, pp. 13-29.

¹¹ We are very grateful to Kuldeep Kothari of Rupayan Sansthan, Jodhpur, for bringing this recording to our attention. It was recorded on 25th November 1982 in Jodhpur. The Rupayan Sansthan has painstakingly digitized hundreds of recordings of folk music in Rajasthan and a rich resource of several discussions with the late Komal Kothari had with artists and performers over decades.

	Recitation 1	Recitation 2	Recitation 3	Recitation 4	Recitation 5
Panel 3		Jaswant Maharaj			K9 Hanuman
Panel 3					K11 Garud dev
Panel 4					K14 <i>Raavan</i> and his pride
Panel 3					K10 Sani Maharaj
Panel 5					K18 Raja Dashrath
Panel 6	K19 <i>Pandavas</i> do penance	K19 <i>Pandavas</i> do penance	K19 <i>Pandavas</i> do penance	K19 <i>Pandavas</i> do penance	K19 <i>Pandavas</i> do penance
Panel 6	K20 <i>Kunta Dropda</i> Have to prove their faith by planting a burnt mango seed	K20 <i>Kunta Dropda</i> Have to prove their faith by planting a burnt mango seed	K20 <i>Kunta Dropda</i> Have to prove their faith by planting a burnt mango seed	K20 <i>Kunta Dropda</i> Have to prove their faith by planting a burnt mango seed	K20 <i>Kunta Dropda</i> Have to prove their faith by planting a burnt mango seed
Panel 6	K21 Meera Bai has to drink poison to prove her faith	K21 Meera Bai has to drink poison to prove her faith	K21 Meera Bai has to drink poison to prove her faith	K21 Meera Bai has to drink poison to prove her faith	
Panel 6	K37 Sireeyade has to prove her faith, saves kittens			Kansa ki duti	
Panel 6			K22 Krishna found in Kashi on a banyan leaf, survives sucking toe		K23 Rani Padmavati and Raja Bisal
Panel 6	K24 Raja Mordhaj has to sacrifice son to prove his loyalty		K24 Raja Mordhaj and Padmavati Rani		K24 Raja Mordhaj and Padmavati Rani

	Recitation 1	Recitation 2	Recitation 3	Recitation 4	Recitation 5
Panel 6		K25 Kaanji Maharaj steals butter is punished	K25 Kaanji Maharaj steals butter is punished	K25 Kaanji Maharaj steals butter is punished	
	K22 Krishna found in Kashi	K23 Rani Padmavati and Raja Bisal(whole story)		Bherji Bhati a very generous patron	K22 Krishna found in Kashi On a banyan leaf
Panel 6	Bherji Bhati	K22 Krishna found in Kashi		K24 Raja Mordhaj and Rani Sanjhavati	K21 Meera Bai and Rana Kumbha
Panel 6	K25 Kaanji Maharaj steals butter is punished			K22 Krishna found in Kashi On a banyan leaf	K25 Kaanji Maharaj steals butter is punished
	Panels	turn			
Panel 7	K28 Dhanna Bhagat donates seeds and reaps pearls	K28 Dhanna Bhagat donates seeds and reaps pearls	K28 Dhanna Bhagat donates seeds and reaps pearls	K28 Dhanna Bhagat donates seeds and reaps pearls	K28 Dhanna Bhagat donates seeds and reaps pearls
Panel 7	K29 Kuba Kumbhar the generous potter	K29 Kuba Kumbhar the generous potter	K29 Kuba Kumbhar the generous potter	K29 Kuba Kumbhar the generous potter	K29 Kuba Kumbhar the generous potter
Panel 7	K30 Raidas chamar the generous Guru of Meera	K30 Raidas chamar the generous shoe maker Guru of Meera	K30 Raidas chamar the generous shoe maker Guru of Meera	K30 Raidas chamar the generous shoe maker Guru of Meera	K30 Raidas chamar the generous shoe maker Guru of Meera
Panel 7	K31 Kabir the weaver, poet saint	K31 Kabir the weaver, poet saint	K31 Kabir the weaver, poet saint	K31 Kabir the weaver, poet saint	K31 Kabir the weaver, poet saint
Panel 7		K32 Ginka Bai the sex worker teaches parrot	K32 Ginka Bai the sex worker teaches parrot	K32 Ginka Bai the sex worker teaches parrot	K32 Ginka Bai the sex worker teaches parrot
Panel 7	K33 Sen Bhagat Krishna in disguise	K33 Sen Bhagat Krishna in disguise	K33 Sen Bhagat Krishna in disguise	K33 Sen Bhagat Krishna in disguise	K33 Sen Bhagat Krishna in disguise

	Recitation 1	Recitation 2	Recitation 3	Recitation 4	Recitation 5
Panel 7	Pipaji	Bherji Bhati	Bherji Bhati	Namdev	Bhersinh Bhati
Panel 7	Vishvakarma			Andaji Sonar	Namdev
Panel 7	K34 Neni Bai's <i>mayero</i>	K34 Neni Bai's <i>mayero</i>	K34 Neni Bai's <i>mayero</i>	Dungarpuri Maharaj	Anada Soni
Panel 7	K52 Sudamaji	K38 Ganesh worshipped first	K38 Ganesh worshipped first	K38 Ganesh worshipped first	K39 Krishna protecting rishis
Panel 7	Krishna on snake	K37 Sireeyade has to prove her faith, saves kittens	K37 Sireeyade has to prove her faith, saves kittens	Gopis bathing	K38 Ganesh worshipped first
Panel 7	K3 Baba Ramdev and Harji Bhati			K39 Krishna with snake turns dark with poison	K37 Sireeyade has to prove her faith, saves kittens
Panel 7	K38 Ganesh worshipped first				Krishna turns black while fighting the snake
Panel 7					K34 Neni Bai's <i>mayero</i>
Turns Panel					
Panel 8	K53 Shankar Bhagwan	K40 Badrinath and Bhagirath	K40 Badrinath and Bhagirath	K40 Badrinath and Bhagirath	K40 Badrinath and Bhagirath
Panel 8	K40 Badrinath and Bhagirath				
Turns panel					
Back of panel 6, 7, 8	Patrons names recited	Patrons names recited	Patrons names recited	Patrons names recited	
Panel 9 and 10	K43 Duti Bai evil woman	K42 Raja Harishchandra the honest king and queen Taramati	K42 Raja Harishchandra the honest king and queen Taramati	K43 Duti Bai evil woman	K42 Raja Harishchandra the honest king and queen Taramati

	Recitation 1	Recitation 2	Recitation 3	Recitation 4	Recitation 5
Panel 9 and 10	Jaswant Maharaj	K43 Duti Bai			K49 Bemata
Panel 9 and 10	K47 Shravan	K45 Shravan Kumar	K45 Shravan Kumar		K48 Kalkadevi Sinh ki savari (Jagdamba)
Panel 9 and 10	K51 Raja Bali	K48 Jagdamba	K48 Jagdamba		K45 Shravan
Panel 9 and 10	K50 Karma Jatni	K49 Bemata	K49 Bemata		
		K50 Karma Jatni	K50 Karma Jatni		K50 Karma Jatni
		K4 Shabri Bheelni			K52 Sudamaji
	Jai ho	Jai ho	Jai ho		K51 Raja Bali
	END of Recitations 1, 2 and 3				Jai ho
Panel 1 and 2				K1 Poliyas	END of Recitation 5
Panel 1 and 2				K5 Sita's abduction	
Panel 1 and 2				K4 Shabri Bheelni	
Panel 1 and 2				K3 Baba Ramdev and Harji Bhati	
				Patrons	
Panel 3				Naukuli Naag	
				K9, K10, K11 Garud, Hanuman, Shanidev	
Panel 4				K15 Raavan's pride	
				Kumbhakaran Patrons	
Panel 5				K18 Dashrath	
				Patrons	

	Recitation 1	Recitation 2	Recitation 3	Recitation 4	Recitation 5
Panel 9 and 10				K42 Raja Harishchandra	
				Patrons	
Panel 6				K37 Sireeyade the potterwoman saves the kittens	
Panel 9 and 10				K49 Vidhata (Bemata)	
Panel 9 and 10				K48 Kalkadevi Sinh ki savari (Jagdamba)	
Panel 9 and 10				K45 Shravan	
Panel 9 and 10				K50 Karma Jatni	
Panel 9 and 10				K51 Raja Bali	
Panel 9 and 10				K52 Sudamaji	
				Jai ho	

The table (Table 6.5) shows the panels and the narration that accompanies it. Some parts of the narration are references to stories and others are introductions to figures who are important for the community. In the case of recitation 5 there is no narration of the genealogies because it was recorded for the sake of documentation and no patrons were present. Together the recordings reveal there is a pattern in the narration and choice of stories.

It may be noted that of the five recitations, the first three have been recorded in their natural settings; the other two were recorded by scholars without the presence of patrons. The year of recordings also differs which may explain changes in order of some of the stories, and the number of stories recited. However, there is no difference in the order of stories narrated for the *Bhaktimala* panel (K29-K34), which indicates it is the most recited in detail. Besides stories, emphasis is also given to exemplary characters such as Bherji Bhati, a very generous patron. Finally all storytellers invite the viewer patron to have a vision (*darshan*) of gods and speak in the present tense.

We will now discuss the recitations made for patrons in their natural settings (Recitation 1, 2 and 3). All three recitations begin with a small ritual of lighting an incense stick and invoking the gods. Recitation 1 has the shortest storytelling and the longest recitation of genealogies. Recitation 2 has the longest storytelling and a shorter recitation of genealogies. Recitation 3 has an average number of stories and genealogies. The syntagmatic order of recitation 2 and 3 is more or less similar. Recitation 1 differs from the other two in its syntagmatic order because the storyteller was not able to remember the order. Even so, he does not deviate much from the order of panels and the stories selected are the same as those in Recitation 2 and 3.

Besides the reference to stories all three recitations have other comparable characteristics. While reciting the stories the storyteller never says that the characters he is talking about are present in the *Kaavad*. He simply points at the figures in the *Kaavad* with his peacock feather. However, when it comes to reciting the genealogies he constantly states that the said patrons are ‘being recited in the *Kaavad*’¹²; in a way suggesting that they are privileged to have their names in a place where they possibly do not belong.

Each storyteller repeats a particular phrase that makes it distinctive from each other. In recitation 1 the storyteller constantly reiterates the idea of the *Kaavad* as a sacred object (*sat ri Kaavad*). In recitation 2 the storyteller periodically reminds the patron how the recitation of the *Kaavad* is equal to bathing in the Ganges (*satyara daan hai ganga ra snan hi*) and in recitation 3 the storyteller through repetition emphasizes the value and benefit of making donations; he reiterates ‘Eons may pass but their name will never be obliterated’ (*yug jaave naam ri nishani nee jaave*).

If we examine the syntagmatic order of the recitations then we may observe that the recitation begins with the opening of the *Pandava paat* (panel of the Pandavas) which is

¹² In recitation 1, the storyteller repeated this sentence approximately a hundred times.

the first panel of the *Khul* or open *paat*. On this panel are stories of hardship and tests of faith. Of the nine stories represented on the *Kaavad* the storytellers choose to tell between six and eight stories. The stories selected by all three storytellers are those of the Pandavas (K19) and their mother Kunta's (or Kunti's) test of faith (K20), Meera's test of faith (K21), Raja Mordhaj and Padmavati's test of faith and sacrifice (K23 and K24), Krishna's hardship in childhood (K22).

This is followed by the opening of the *Bhaktimala paat* which is about the patron saints of all communities. The order of telling is followed by all storytellers in this panel. The saints are role models that show the way. Kabir is the most celebrated of the saints as is Meera Bai, her guru Ravidas, Narsinh Bhagat and other local saints like Sen Bhagat the patron saint of barbers, Sireeyade the potter's saint, Peepa the patron of tailors etc. Each storyteller begins with Dhanna Bhagat, the patron saint of Jats. On this panel with fifteen images representing stories the storytellers select according to the patrons they are reciting for. However all recite the names and glory of Dhanna Bhagat (K28), Kubaram (K29), Ravidas (K30), Kabir Das (K31), Sen Bhagat (K33), Narsinh Bhagat (K34), Sireeyade (K37) and to Bherji Bhati¹³ a legendary patron. Some refer to Ginka Bai (K32) and to Namu *Chipa* (block-printer) and Anada *Soni* (goldsmith).¹⁴

The panel *Badrinath paat* has only one narrative of Bhagirath (K40). They do not refer to the stingy Laluprasad but point at the upside down figure of a stingy man, after which all three storytellers turn to the patron's panels and recite their genealogies. When reciting the patrons' genealogies each storyteller follows a similar pattern of reciting the name of the patron, the name of their village, what donation was made by the patron and to what end. In between the storytellers extol the virtues of charity and its benefits. This is usually repeated as a constant refrain. Each patron is 'recognized' and his contribution is also made known to the community, which raises his status amongst his peers. In recitation 1 the storyteller also jeered at a patron from another village who did not make the requisite donation mentioned against his name. The storyteller showed the gathering a picture of a couple on a camel that was painted upside down which was meant to depict the erring patron. The gathering giggled nervously and someone in the gathering promised to make up on behalf of that patron so that he could be set right in the *Kaavad*.

¹³ There is no story associated with Bherji Bhati, a very generous patron; but he is represented on the panel.

¹⁴ There are images of Namdev *Chipa* the block-printer and the goldsmith Anada *Soni*; however, Kojaram Rav had no stories to tell with these images.

Finally when the patrons' panels are recited the storytellers return to stories on the inner shrine doors. The stories selected recap the notion of faith and emphasize what happens when faith is strong and when someone is faithless through a choice of opposing stories; the honest King Harishchandra and his family are tested by god and undergo severe hardships and do not lose their faith (K42) and Duti who is faithless and therefore goes to hell (K43). Finally the epitome of good faith and sacrifice is the ancestor of the storyteller Shravan Kumar who spends time with his parents and takes them to all the pilgrim places (K47). That faith pays is again repeated with the stories of Karma Jatni (K50).

The stories of Gods are not recited, the patrons are introduced to them and invited to have a vision of them (K48, K49, K53) before the ultimate vision of the three deities inside the sanctum.

Recitation 4 and 5 are not performed for the storyteller's patrons so the length of time spent on reciting genealogies cannot be considered. However, both have the recitation of stories also from the closed or *Bund paat* K9, K10, K11, K14 and K18 and recitation 4 has stories from the hidden or *Gupat paat* K3, K4 and K5.

What is evident therefore is that there is a definite order in which the narration takes place and there is a particular point after which (K40) the genealogies of patrons are recited and the recitation is brought to a close once the inner shrine doors are opened to reveal the figures of Ram, Sita and Lakshman.

6.3.3 Proppian Analysis of a recitation of the Open or *Khul paat*

When we examine a recitation made for a patron together with the stories and the navigation we observe the following (Table 6.6):

The *Khul paat Kaavad* recitation for a customary patron¹⁵ βaDEFGKMQT

Table 6.6 *Proppian Analysis of a recitation of the Open or Khul paat*

Step #	<i>Kaavad</i>	Proppian function
1	Panel 1 and 2 Entry into the shrine. The devotee has decided to get the <i>Kaavad</i> read or 'opened'. Patrons leave their work and settle down.	Absentation or Departure β
2	<i>Opens panel 6 with Pandavas</i>	
3	Panel 6 Pandavas want a moonless Monday night, Kunta wants children, Meera wants to be with Krishna, God is hungry, Raja Mordhaj wants God to have a meal with him and his queen Padmavati, Krishna wants butter, Devotee has a wish, he may lack something	Lack a

¹⁵ The Storyteller recites the *Khul paat* for a known and customary patron which is the typical performance.

Step #	<i>Kaavad</i>	Proppian function
4	Panel 6 Hardship stories, tests of faith. Pandavas asked to do penance for twelve years, Kunta asked to plant a burnt mango seed, Meera asked to drink poison, God asks Raja Mordhaj and Padmavati to slice their son to feed Krishna's lion, Devotee knows s/he will be tested	Hero is Tested D
5	Panel 6 Pandavas do penance for twelve years, Kunta plants a burnt mango seed, Meera drinks poison, Krishna survives sucking his toe, Raja Mordhaj and Padmavati slice their son's body to feed Krishna's lion	Hero's Reaction E
6	Panel 6 Divine interventions take place. Kunta has children, Meera's poison turns to elixir, Raja Mordhaj gets his son back, and Prahlad is saved from fire.	Receipt of a magical agent F
7	<i>Opens Panel 7 with Bhakti saints</i>	
8	Panel 7 Sense of <i>Communitas</i> , Miracles happen in this place. Devotee also recognizes his own patron saint. Jats recognize Dhanna Bhagat, potters find Kuba Kumbhar, and Siriya Devi, Raidas Chamar, Sen Bhagat Nai, Anada Sonar, all are equal and placed together, each one is charitable, role models show the way	Transference to a new kingdom G
9	Panel 7 Devotee gathers faith from examples. All acts of charity, by Dhanna Bhagat, Kuba Kumbhar, Bherji Bhati, Narsinh bhagat, Kabir are rewarded twofold	Initial Lack is resolved K
10	<i>Opens Panel 8 with Badrinath</i>	
11	Panel 8 Bhagirath stands on one foot for twelve years to bring the Ganges to earth. Devotee may need to sacrifice something. Getting a <i>Kaavad</i> read is as good as going to Badrinath, a difficult task, if the patron does not go to Badrinath he will remain sick, he will not be purified	Difficult Task M
12	<i>Opens Panels with Patrons</i>	
13	Back of panels 6, 7 and 8 Now the teller recites the genealogies, 'recognizing and identifying' the patrons and their forebears and donations made, Devotee may update their family records.	Recognition Q
14	<i>Opens panels 9 and 10 Thakur Mandir ka paat</i>	
15	Panel 9 and 10 Reiteration and repetition of tests of faith, hardships, charity and filial piety, Raja Harishchandra gave up everything, Shravan never leaves his parents, Karma feeds a stone God. Whatever donation is made it impacts the life of a patron beyond death.	Move 2: DEFGKMQ
16	<i>Opens the door to innermost shrine</i>	
	Innermost shrine The devotee has the <i>darshan</i> (vision/glimpse) of the presiding deities and is transformed. The patron feeds the storyteller and others present.	Transfiguration T

6.4 Pilgrimage

If we were to examine the notion of pilgrimage on a universal plane then we would agree that it is a journey undertaken to a sacred place on account of a self-defined goal; a journey that requires some amount of commitment on the part of the pilgrim. Pilgrimages are undertaken to seek cures, to fulfill a vow or pledge, to give thanks for a wish granted or to perform death rituals (Eck, 1981). Some pilgrimages are undertaken annually, others could be as rare as once in a life time. During the course of this journey, a pilgrim experiences the life of the 'renouncer' (Dumont, 1988; Gold, 1990) where s/he lives the life in direct opposition to that of a householder. Pilgrimage has also been defined as a 'liminal phase' where pilgrims experience '*communitas*', a deep sense of community with their fellow travelers that transcends all barriers of caste and class (Turner 1969). Some religions consider pilgrimage as obligatory and see it as an integral part of life, although they may exempt the ill, feeble and poor. For others it is a voluntary gesture that is encouraged, but not enforced. For example, the Varkaris of Maharashtra walk voluntarily every year to Pandharpur (Turner 1969), in Spain pilgrims walk to Santiago de Compostela (Sepp, 2007), and believers walk to Sanwariyaji in Rajasthan.¹⁶ A pilgrimage in Rajasthan usually involves travel to a sacred place when pilgrims wish to make a pledge, immerse the ashes of departed ones, or seek peace and prosperity for themselves and their family, not only for the present but for the life after death (Gold, 1988, 1990)

6.4.1 The Sequence of a Hindu Pilgrimage

Proppian Analysis of a Pilgrimage: $\alpha \beta a D EF GKQT$

Table 6.7 Proppian Analysis of a Pilgrimage

Step #	Pilgrimage Action	Proppian function
1	Person decides to make a pilgrimage	Initial Situation α
2	The pilgrim leaves their home or is obliged to go.	Absentation or Departure β
3	S/he lacks something. Gives up familiar identity	Lack a
4	The journey is arduous and difficult, test of faith	Test of the Hero D
5	There are other travelers with them and they encourage each other to continue with struggle	The agent offers help EF
6	They arrive at the sacred place, purification by water, bathing in a sacred river etc.	Transference to a designated place G

¹⁶ Sanwariyaji is a local pilgrim centre near Chittor, Rajasthan.

Step #	Pilgrimage Action	Proppian function
7	They locate their priest who takes charge and discusses all the rituals that need to be performed. The pilgrim may make some sacrifices or pledge something. The priest performs the morning rituals and then takes them around the temple and they perform the circumambulation.	The route is shown to Hero G
8	The pilgrim has a ' <i>Darsan</i> ' of the deity.	Lack is liquidated K
9	The pilgrim pays the priest. The priest enters their names in his record book. The pilgrim is 'recognized'. Reclaim identity.	Recognition of the Hero Q
10	The pilgrim returns home feeling renewed and is greeted with respect. The pilgrim feeds the whole village/community. The pilgrim reintegrates into the routine life with a sense of achievement.	Transfiguration T

A typical sequence of a Hindu pilgrimage can be summarized in ten steps/actions. The first step is the decision to go on a pilgrimage. This may be for several reasons. It could be to seek peace, prosperity, and good health of oneself or one's dear ones, to atone for one's sins, immersing of ashes, doing penance; essentially to fulfill a lack that the seeker experiences. The pilgrim then sets out on the journey. This could take hours or days and sometimes months. A pilgrim typically chooses an arduous path which could involve walking, crawling, climbing stairs, climbing mountains and hill tops alone or in company of fellow pilgrims. Through the journey the pilgrim chooses to live frugally, eating sparingly, praying and sleeping on the floor. Through the journey pilgrims share a bond and help each other whenever needed, mostly encouraging each other to keep going when the journey looks too tough. When the pilgrim reaches the sacred spot they are surrounded by many more pilgrims and need to find their own priest who will help them with their rituals. Rituals may include purification by bathing in the sacred waters and offering prayer at the temple or shrine. The priest whom they patronize is known to them over several generations. He guides them around the temple. They circumambulate the shrine and have the '*Darshan*' of the deity. Then the pilgrim offers an agreed-upon donation to the priest and gives alms or food to the poor and needy. Finally the priest updates his patron's records in his book of genealogies. The pilgrim feels revived and content and returns home with a sense of achievement and renewal. After returning home the pilgrim invites his entire community and friends for a feast and to share the blessed food s/he has brought with them from the pilgrim place. This may also include sharing of the holy waters.

Let us examine a pilgrimage by applying Propp's methods and functions (Table 6.7)

6.4.2 Similarities between functions in *Kaavad* Narratives, Performance and Pilgrimage

Using Proppian methods for the *Kaavad* narratives and the actual performance or recitation in its natural setting we may find the Proppian functions are identical as the stories reflect and perpetuate social behavior.¹⁷ When we examine the Proppian functions identified in all three situations together we find the following:

Kaavad Narratives: $\beta \gamma \delta \eta \text{ aBC} \uparrow \text{DEFGKMQT}$

Kaavad Performance or Recitation: $\beta \text{ aDEFGKMQT}$

Pilgrimage: $\beta \text{ a D EF GKQT}$

Structurally the *Kaavad* recitation imitates the model of a pilgrimage, as we have found whilst applying a Proppian model to them. All three begin with *Absentation* and a *lack* that is liquidated only after the protagonists have endured hardships, passed tests of faith, made sacrifices and accepted the magical agent, however challenging it may have been. The initial liquidation of lack is followed by a difficult task put before the devotee and the end always leads to recognition of an ‘identity’. There is a similarity between the *Kaavad* performance and a pilgrimage and between the *Kaavad* narratives and the pilgrimage because both are reflective of life itself. This is further corroborated by the storyteller and his patrons. A pilgrimage is an act of re-invention, an egalitarian feeling of being a part of the larger world, of connecting with others. We may also examine this connection with other structural tools and methods.

6.5 Paradigmatic Analysis

For Lévi-Strauss the myth functions as a way to deal with contradictions in society. The resolution provided by myth is never logical and cannot be. There would be no use of myths if the problems could be resolved rationally. Stories from the epics that are included in the *Kaavad* shrine are often the ones where an impossible relationship has been forged between two castes that may otherwise never eat or drink together. The conflict experienced in real life is resolved by the story which serves as a ‘mechanism to relieve anxiety’ (Csapo, 2005). The solution to the contradictions is mediated and the mediators could be persons, objects, actions etc. Examples from the *Kaavad* stories where caste

¹⁷ The stories are never recited fully the way they are elicited; still they share functions that make the *Kaavad* distinct from other tales.

distinctions are mediated by food and water are of Karma Jatni, Shravat Bheelni and Raidas Chamar.

Karma Jatni offers a rice dish, *Kheech* to a stone figure of God (K50) and pledges she will neither eat nor drink till he complies. The name Karma Jatni includes her caste Jat, which is lower in status compared to god who is either a Brahmin or a Kshatriya. In reality, as we also experienced at the place of a patron, water and food is shared with those who are equal in status and can be offered to those lower in status but not the one above.¹⁸ In this story Karma Jatni is a very devout woman whose devotion cannot be ignored by god. The reason why she cannot be ignored is because she is also very innocent. When she offers the food and the stone figure of god does not eat it, she thinks he is shy to partake of the food, so she lifts her skirt to create a curtain between herself and him. God is so embarrassed that he quickly eats the food. The contradictions that exist are exaggerated in the story by the god being made of stone who is being offered cooked food. The mediator in this case is the action performed by the woman when she lifts her skirt to create the curtain between them. Karma Jatni becomes immortal as a result of god eating her cooked food. Her status is elevated and a day in the year is dedicated to her memory when everyone cooks the meal she did and eats it on that day.

Shravat the tribal *Bheelni* offers half-eaten berries to Ram and Lakshman (K4). Her intentions are pure like Karma Jatni; she does not want Ram and Lakshman to eat sour berries so she tastes them before giving it to them. Ram eats it with love but Lakshman hides them in his turban and throws them away later. Then when he is hurt in the battle it is the medicine from these berries that saves his life.¹⁹ As a result of her devotion and love Shravat despite being a tribal *Bheelni* becomes immortal. This acceptance from god gives her recognition. The mediator in this case is the half-eaten berry which later saves Lakshman.

Raidas (K30) was a devout shoe-maker who generously donated two pairs of shoes every day. Since he belonged to the *Chamar*²⁰ community he was not allowed to draw water from the village well. Because of his devotion or *Bhakti*, the river Ganga came to reside in the water tank that he used to soak the leather. Whoever dared to drink from that tank

¹⁸ In the course of our fieldwork we observed in several places, a person considered lower in status was not allowed to sit with us to eat. He was given a special bowl and he was asked to sit outside of the guest house, called *kothi*.

¹⁹ See K 30 *Kaavad* Tales from Kojaram Rav in Appendix I.

²⁰ The *Chamar* community that works with leather was considered very low in status and were not allowed to mingle socially nor allowed access to water. This is as told by Kojaram Rav while explaining the story.

would be blessed with the knowledge of the three worlds. Meera Bai who became his disciple drank water from the tank and was enlightened. The contradictions here are those of the village water being denied to Raidas but him allowing anyone to drink from his tank which is purified by the holy river Ganga. The mediator is the river Ganga and it is because of its purity Meera comes to Raidas and his status is elevated and he finds recognition.

6.5.1 Binary systems in individual *Kaavad* stories

The paradigmatic method of Lévi-Strauss allows us to examine ethnographic details such as name, caste, community and food etc as they give a lot of information about the communities, their conflicts and values they uphold or reject. The narratives have internal contraries within individual stories, between stories on each panel and across the panels. We will first examine some of the individual stories to identify key mediators in the *Kaavad* lore.

Ahalya, the Sun and the Moon (K2)²¹

"Ahalya was the beautiful wife of Gautam Rishi. The Sun and Moon were besotted by her beauty. Even though they had traversed the world every day they had not seen a more beautiful woman. She had been pious and devoted in her life (had practised *Bhakti*) which is why her nails, hands and arms were golden. The sun and moon were so desirous of Ahalya that they decided to seduce her. They began to observe the routine habits of her husband. They noted that Gautam Rishi woke up every morning when the cock crowed and went immediately to bathe in the river Ganga. So the Sun and Moon imitated the call of the bird in the night and as was his routine, the Rishi woke up, took his towel and left for the river. When he reached, the river Ganga was not ready to meet him. She was still naked and asked him to stay away with his back to her. She asked why he had arrived at 3 in the night when his usual time was later at 5am. He told her he always followed the call of the bird. She cautioned him, suspecting that someone was out to cheat him and suggested he return home quickly, but Gautam Rishi insisted he must take his bath. As she was not quite ready she said she would turn her back and he could soak his towel in the water and wipe himself in lieu of a bath. Gautam Rishi did this and then left for home. When he returned he saw that the Sun and Moon were indeed with his wife Ahalya and daughter Anjani. The sun escaped as soon as he saw the rishi but the moon was slow and Gautam Rishi

²¹ Story told by Kojaram Rav in March 2008. For more stories see Appendix I *Kaavad* Tales from Kojaram Rav.

managed to hit him with his wet towel,(which explains the dark marks on the moon). He cursed his wife Ahalya telling her that she would turn to stone on the banks of the Ganga in Haridwar for 12 years. Only when Lord Vishnu visits the Kumbh mela will she turn back into a human. Till then she will be a stone on which people will come to bathe, wash clothes, walk over her and subject her to all humiliation which she will suffer in silence because she will be speechless. To his daughter he said she will be an unwed mother and will give birth to a boy. Ahalya was so angry with her husband for doubting her, that she did not offer any explanation and kept quiet. Anjani buried half of her body in the earth and did not come out for months hoping that this way she could avoid giving birth to a child. But Gautam Rishi's word was sacred so a child was born from her ear. This child came to be known as Pavan putra Hanuman. When Vishnu visited the Kumbha Mela after 12 years his foot accidentally hit a stone that was Ahalya and she came back into her human form. She was then re-united with her husband."

Ahalya is 'touched' by the Sun (*Suryavanshi rajput*) and is cursed by a Brahmin (her husband) to become stone. Then again she is 'touched' by (God) Vishnu's foot and she is restored to her original form and returns to her husband (act of purification?). One form of touch defiles her, she is as good as dead, and another touch purifies her and revives her back to life. 'Touching' is the mediator between being alive and being dead. But in both times Ahalya is mute, unwilling and then unable to speak or assert.

Let us take another example of a story which centres on the notion of faith and loyalty.

"Story of Padmavati, Raja Bisal and Raja Mordhaj (K23)

Raja Bisal had seven daughters. One day he asks them to tell him who provides for their well being. All but one (Padmavati) said our father the King is our sole provider. Padmavati however said it was not he but her own fate and god who provided for her. This made the king very angry. He called for the Brahmin and ordered him to go out of the gates of the village and find the first being to get Padmavati married. When the priest came out in search of the groom for the princess, he could not see anyone except a peacock with a broken leg. He felt sad for the princess as he has seen her grow; and fearing for his own Karma he returned and told the King that he did not find anyone. The king sent him again the next day and again he found the peacock with a broken leg there. He returned and said the same thing to the king as the previous day. The king was now in a rage and threatened the Brahmin that if he does not find anyone this time his head will

be chopped off. Therefore when the Brahmin found the same broken-leg peacock for the third time he resigned to the idea that this is probably the fate of the princess. He offered a coconut to the peacock and told him to come to the palace on a particular date when he will be married to the princess Padmavati. Meanwhile the king also arranged the weddings of his other daughters. While all others received chariots full of gifts, Padmavati went to the jungle on a cheap cart with the broken-leg peacock. While they were in the jungle the peacock kept flying away from Padmavati and she kept calling out to him to have his meal as she was now a dutiful wife and could not think of eating without feeding her husband first. However, the peacock went and perched himself on a tall tree. A storm brewed in the night, breaking the branch he was on and the peacock fell to his death. Padmavati called out to the Gods wailing why she suffered such a destiny when she had been faithfully devoted to the gods. The gods Shiva and Parvati heard her plea and came down to ask her why she was in distress. After listening to her they decided to transform the broken-leg peacock into a man. Padmavati asked them not to do that since her father may think she had run off with another man. Therefore they transformed the peacock into a prince with the crown of the peacock (Raja Mordhaj) and gave him a kingdom. They also transported them to a new kingdom where they lived happily. When Padmavati's father heard of a new kingdom in his neighborhood, he decided to befriend his neighbors. There he recognized his daughter and she told him how her fate had provided for her always. He accepted her argument and was ashamed."

Padmavati is a princess and the peacock is a bird from the wilderness. She lives in a palace, he in the jungle. She represents culture and he nature. When she rebels against her father, a mortal she is punished by him but she is loyal to God so she is saved. The peacock she has been married to is turned into a prince by divine intervention. A marriage between a peacock and human, between someone from a jungle (low caste) with someone from the palace (high caste) is therefore impossible. The peacock has to die and then be reborn as a prince (with divine intervention). And the only sign he retains of the peacock is the crest which is a symbol of a crown. There is 'recognition' on both accounts; the social status of a prince who also acquires a palace of his own and the peacock crest. Disloyalty to the father who is a King pushes Padmavati out of the palace, but loyalty to god restores the

palace and a princely husband to her. The crest of the peacock is like a hook to reality, making the impossible marriage appear to be plausible.

Lévi-Strauss points out that several cultures that believe mankind to be autochthonous cannot reconcile this theory to the knowledge that humans are actually born from the union of man and woman. Only through myths (and Lévi-Strauss uses the Oedipus myth as an example) do they offer a logical explanation. In the *Kaavad* tales also we find one such myth concerning the birth of Shravan Kumar, from whom the storytellers claim descent and who is the nephew of King Dashrath. We will examine the story of how Shravan's parents became blind. This story is unique to the *Kaavad* as it has not been mentioned in any of the texts (Valmiki or Tulsidas) that talk about Shravan Kumar.

Shravan's Parents (K45)

"Shravan's parents were not always blind. Shravan's father Dhanishta had renounced all pleasures. He went to Lord Vishnu seeking his advice for a quiet place to meditate. He was told to go where Ram lived. He entered a cave and as he kept going he began to feel lighter and better till he felt very calm in one place and he settled there. This was the place just below Shri Ram's house. Ram's house was above and Dhanishta sat below underground. As it happened to be a household, Satviksha, King Dashrath's unmarried sister was cleaning the floor and she swept the dirty water from above into a hole from where it trickled down and touched the meditating *rishi*, who got defiled. As a result a vine of desire grew from his navel and emerged above the ground. The lady of the house saw the vine and began to water it. It grew. Someone else tied it to a branch and it climbed. And finally it came to the floor where Satviksha lived. A flower grew from the vine and gave off a heady perfume. She took the flower and rubbed it in her hands. With that action she became pregnant. When the household noticed her condition they sent Sita to inquire about the man in her life. The young woman said she has only seen her father, the sun and the moon. And yes, after rubbing the flower from the vine she had noticed changes in her body. Sita divined Dhanishta with her powers and told the family where he could be found. They followed the vine underground and discovered the meditating Dhanishta. He was told either to marry the lady or die. He married the lady on a condition that he would never see her face. So he gouged out his eyes and donated them. The young lady also did the same. She too did not wish to see him. And so Shravan was born of an immaculate conception. And the storyteller *Kaavadiya Bhat* is the progeny of Shravan Kumar."

Dhanistha is a Brahmin and Satviksha a Kshatriya Rajput, and marriage between the two is impossible. It is only possible if they are blind. Dhanistha is meditating below the earth and Satviksha lives above on the second floor. He has no home and she lives in a palace. He is a renouncer and she is a part of a household. The mediator is the dirty water or urine that sets the story in action.

The story further unfolds when Shravan grows up and is married to Revati.

"Shravan's wife Revati does not look after his blind parents and gives them inadequate food for many years. On knowing this Shravan feels very guilty. Being a dutiful son, he takes his parents on a pilgrimage. Shravan leaves home carrying his parents in a *Kaavad*. His mother feels thirsty so she asks him to stop and get her some water. As he is leaving she warns him to make a noise before filling the water in the gourd. He forgets to make the noise and fills the water straight away. King Dashrath hears the sound and imagines it to be a wild animal. He kills Shravan with an arrow of fire, the *agnibaan*. When he realizes he has mortally wounded his nephew instead of an animal he asks Shravan to forgive him. Shravan does not curse him but asks him to deliver the water to his parents. When Shravan's mother realizes that Dashrath has killed her son she curses him to die of the same arrow. Fearing harm, Dashrath files the arrow down to a pin and leaves it there. The royal barber chances upon this and decides to use it for cleaning the King's nails. When cleaning the King's nails one day he touches a broken skin on the King's finger with that pin. It creates a huge amount of heat in Dashrath's body. He feels as if his body is on fire. And the only way he can keep the fire down is to place his finger in his Queen Kekayi's mouth, as she is blessed with a very cool tongue. As long his finger is in her mouth he is fine but the moment he pulls it out he is miserable. Kekayi bargains for her son to become king for the return of such a service where she is not able to do anything or go anywhere. King Dashrath agrees and sends Ram away. But one day when Kekayi has to leave him to go for a bath king Dashrath dies of the heat in his body. And the curse comes true. Shravan's son Jeyshtha continues carrying the Kaavad for his clan and the *Kaavadiyas* are his children."

In the end, Dashrath has to pay the price of killing Shravan by dying of the same arrow. No matter how hard he tries to ward off the curse laid on him by his own sister he cannot escape his death. Divine justice prevails even on a king. This is what appears to be the first level of meaning conveyed by the narrative; villainy is punished. But at another level we

may see this as a battle between the itinerant family with the *Kaavad* and the settled King, between a sister and a brother, between the blind and the sighted. They converge at a threshold place which is outside the city near a water body in the dark. Dashrath is as blind as his sister finally because he is not able to see Shravan and mistakes him for an animal and kills him. The arrow is the reason for the death of both, both experience guilt for different reasons. Shravan is guilty because his wife has mistreated his parents for many years and Dashrath is guilty for killing his nephew Shravan. Shravan's wife is guilty because she has mistreated her parents-in-law and she is punished by becoming a widow.

If we were to consider this story from Lévi-Strauss' 'avunculate system' then Shravan's relationship to his maternal uncle Dashrath is inversely co-related to Shravan's relationship with his father Dhanishta. Similarly his mother Satviksha's relationship to her brother Dashrath is inversely co-related to her relationship with her husband Dhanishta. Could Dashrath have harbored anger towards his sister because she became pregnant by a man below their status? The death of Shravan may not be an accident after all. Dashrath punishes his sister for having a libido but himself becomes its victim because of her curse, which eventually causes his death.

6.5.2 Binary systems in *Kaavad* stories across panels

The *Kaavad* stories are also about maintaining social order; failure to follow results in punishment and success results in reward (figure 6.3). The rewards and punishments are meted out by divine interventions and human interventions. The law breakers, the non-believers and the arrogant are punished whereas the devout, the charitable, the faithful and the humble are rewarded. And when human judgments go wrong the divine intervenes for the faithful and the innocent.

The king's sons are turned to soldiers and sent away, Raavan is killed, Duti and Dhapu go to hell, the Chirni tree turns black and the ocean becomes salty. All these punishments are delivered through divine interventions. Humans intervene but their punishments are overruled by the divine because the characters are devout and faithful. Meera's poison turns to elixir, Ahalya is restored to her human form and Puran Sinh is proved innocent.

Divine intervention also rewards Harji Bhati with a horse and a cow (mobility and sustenance), food is accepted from low caste Shravat *Bheelni* by high caste Ram, Ajmal Maharaj is blessed with a son and given a moustache and Padmavati's dead peacock

husband is turned to a prince. Human interventions appear to be inconsequential. Dhanna Bhagat,

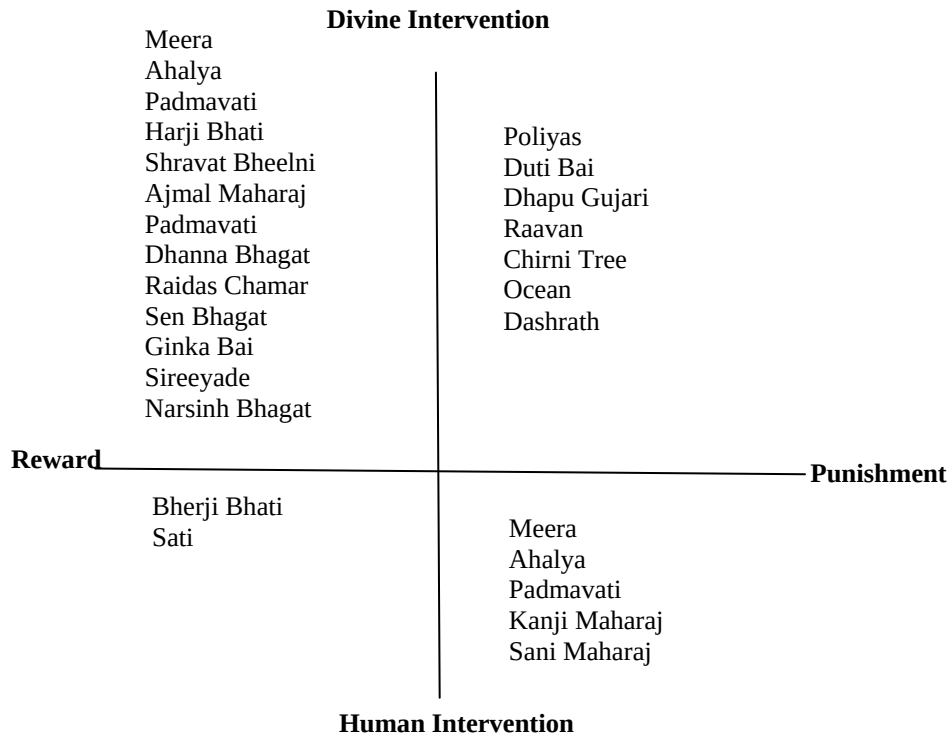


Figure 6.3 Binary System in *Kaavad* stories

Raidas, Sen Bhagat and others are rewarded for their generosity through a divine intervention. The higher caste has to perform far more difficult tasks and make sacrifices to prove their faith whereas the lower caste need only have patience and faith and be willing to share their wealth in half. The only reward through human intervention is given to a *Sati* woman who immolates herself on her husband's funeral pyre or to Bherji Bhati the generous patron by the storytellers who praise him in every recitation. The only way, it appears, to merit and recognition in this life is to therefore be a generous patron. The mediator in all is hardship, faith, humility and charity.

6.5.3 Binary Systems in *Kaavad* Narration

Invoking the gods that protect him the storyteller prepares the patron for his journey. By doing this he makes it known that he is an envoy, who has a special connection with the divine and has the permission to carry the sacred space and the license to invoke the gods and goddesses for the benefit of the patron. Entry to the shrine involves agreeing to some conditions. The patron needs to comply with some rules regarding the opening of the

Kaavad. The ticket on the one hand acts as a license for the teller and a token of agreement by the patron. The ticket and the guardians together with the seated lions challenge the patron to make a commitment and enter with all consciousness.

The story behind the guardians that is not always recited is about two sons of the sultan (K1) who intend to seduce their stepmother and are discovered by God who makes them into guardians (*Poliyas*). This is because thinking about something is as good as committing a crime. This may also be read as an act of subversion since the sinners are named after the king's sons although they have been given the place of honor to guard the shrine. This suggests that those who sin still have a choice to make amends and transform themselves, provided the rules are accepted and followed.

The storyteller quotes Tulsidas:

*"Tulsi in sansaar mein
Dhara dekhi doi
Dhun bhav toh dharam karo
Aur Mukti naam se hoi."*

Tulsi says there are two streams available to the devotee
If one likes riches then one must be charitable
If one wants to achieve release from worldly life
Then one must chant god's name.

He extols the virtues of both streams. The notion of binary pairs is reflected in the choices given in the narration, in the symmetrical order of the images and their distribution on the left and right panels or doors.

The storyteller recites from the poets Tulsidas and Kabir, to encourage the patrons to be charitable, by which he clarifies that it is not him the storyteller but these great seers who have spoken about the fruits of generosity and charity. Eventually, whichever path the patron chooses he will need the *Kaavadiya Bhat*, the storyteller to mediate on his behalf.

Every storyteller repeats a certain phrase which emphasizes the reason why the *Kaavad* is being recited. In one case it is the donation that acquires importance when he says, a donation or *daan* given with honesty is equivalent to bathing in the sacred river Ganga, or that whatever is given in good faith returns manifold to the patron. Some storytellers repeat how the *Kaavad* is a sacred space. Through repetition he ensures the patron that the obligatory donation he is about to make is going to bring the patron good luck. By reciting

the genealogies the storyteller recognizes the patron's family ties to a higher being, praises the charity of the patron's ancestors and elders and berates those who failed to be kind and generous to him.

6.5.4 Binary Systems in the *Kaavad* Object

The *Kaavad* object has a symmetrical construction that also divides it between left and right, inside and outside, revealed and hidden, open and closed. The central shrine mediates the left and right panels and the action of opening and closing the panels mediates the inside and outside, the concealed, the open and the closed panels or *paats*.

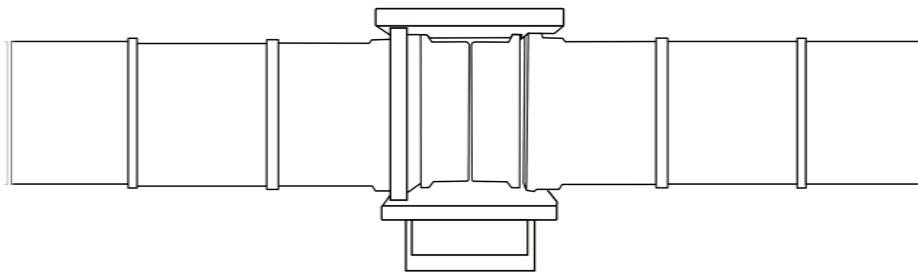


Figure 6.4 The *Kaavad* Object and its symmetry

The left side has images from Ramayan, with the Sun (for the *Suryavanshis*²²), Dashrath, Ram, Sita and Lakshman. It is also called the hidden or *Bund paat*. The right side has the Moon (for the *Chandravanshis*), Krishna, and Pandavas and is called the open or *Khul paat*. The central image of Vishnu (or Krishna as the storytellers define him) in the outer shrine, the hidden or the *Gupat paat*, mediates the *Suryavanshis* and *Chandravanshis*, on the left and the right. In the innermost shrine Sita mediates between Ram and Lakshman.

The physical wooden object is symmetrical and this is seen in the arrangement of the panels about the central shrine. This symmetry may also be seen as a conjunction of opposites as shown in the figure above (figure 6.4). The panels are equal and opposite; three to the left and three to the right. Even in their nomenclature the right panels are called the open or *Khul paat* and the left ones are the closed or *Bund paat*. In a reading for a customary patron the *Khul paat* is recited and for a new patron the *Bund paat* has to be

²² Colonel Todd has an impressive genealogy of the descendants of the Sun (*Suryavanshis*) and Moon (*Chandravanshis*). Ram belongs to the Sun and Krishna to the Moon. For an early study of the region of Rajpootana see L C Todd *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan or The central and Western Rajpoot States of India* Vol 1&2 Asian Education Services 2001.

recited first. For those who want to be anonymous (which is rare) the *Gupat paat* or hidden is recited.

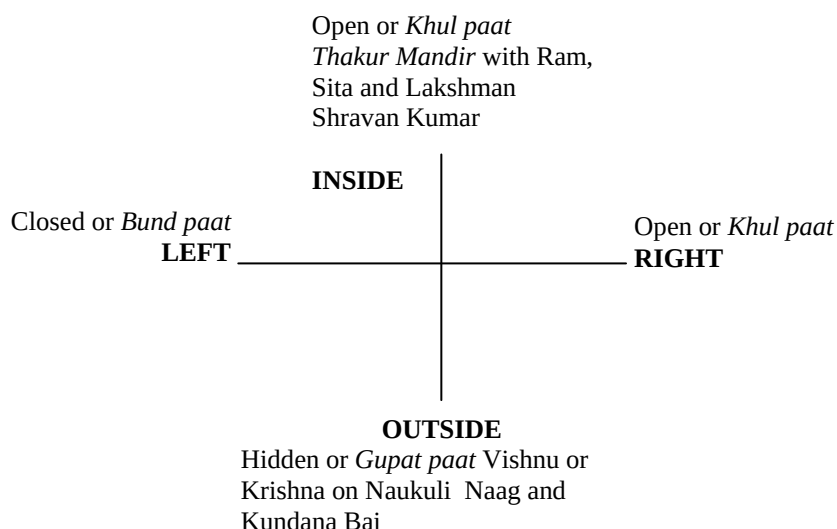


Figure 6.5 Binary System in the *Kaavad* Object

The *Khul paat* therefore is opposite to the *Bund paat* in the right and left orientation and it contrasts with the *Gupat paat* in the inner and outer orientation (Figure 6.5).

The outer shrine of the hidden or *Gupat paat* is in a binary opposition to the shrine (*Thakur Mandir*) embedded inside the open or *Khul paat*. The rarely opened hidden or *Gupat paat*²³ is in effect more accessible since it is on the outside of the *Kaavad* and the open or *Khul paat* which is opened for a regular patron is actually not so easily accessible. The terms are therefore in contrast with regards to the accessibility of these panels. This portends a journey through the open or *Khul paat* in order to reach the inner shrine or *Thakur Mandir* (which houses the three figures of Lakshman, Sita and Ram).

The panels within the *Gupat paat* however, are in consonance with the term ‘hidden’. Behind these closed doors is a sliding panel with images on the front and the back that conceals the anonymous patrons. When this panel is moved it reveals images of the various life stages of Kundana Bai²⁴ that are painted on the back wall. Kundana Bai was not supposed to be seen by men so she is concealed in the *Kaavad* and is rarely revealed (figure 2). Kundana Bai could only be seen by women and was attended upon by young

²³ These panels have been explained in detail and with illustrations in chapter 4.

²⁴ For the story of Kundana Bai see K12 *Kaavad Tales* from Kojaram Rav in Appendix I

girls between the ages of ten to twelve years old. She is believed to have given the storytellers their first *Kaavad*.

Just like Kundana Bai, the storytellers too conceal their storyteller identity within their own villages.²⁵ Like her, they too have multiple identities. Whether she was created to explain their own situation in their village is a matter of conjecture. The storyteller acknowledges his special relation to Kundana Bai when he is with his patrons who make their donations in her name. However, it is Shravan Kumar who is claimed as the ancestor of the storytellers, and has a distinct place of honour, fully revealed and represented in the *Khul paat* on the inner shrine doors of the *Thakur Mandir*. This identity of being the progeny of Shravan Kumar is acknowledged with pride by the storytellers in the presence of their patrons.

The symmetrical structure of the *Kaavad* divides the customary patrons from new ones, the acknowledged ones from the anonymous patrons, and the hidden benefactor from the revealed ancestor. Besides this, the structure makes the navigation or journey possible as the panels unfold in time.²⁶ At a syntagmatic level, the physical structure performs a journey and at the paradigmatic level it reveals the contraries that are mediated by the storyteller. It is however, impossible to study the structure without the images that give each part or panel its unique identity.

6.5.5 Binary Systems in the *Kaavad* Images

Since the images serve as links to relate object and narratives it is pertinent to examine one example in which the visual plays a significant role to demarcate the contraries and identify the players.

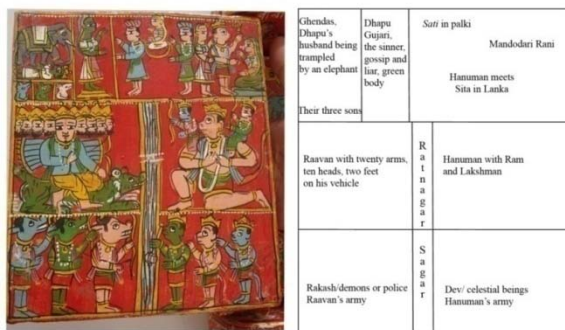


Figure 6.6 *Raavan paat* Panel 4 Binary System in *Kaavad* images

²⁵ The storytellers cannot reveal their storyteller identity in their village for fear of losing their status as has been explained in chapter 3.

²⁶ The chronology of panel numbers will change depending on the type of patron, whether the recitation is for a new patron, anonymous or a known one.

The *Raavan paat* is on the left of the *Kaavad* shrine and forms a part of the closed or *Bund paat*. In the *Raavan paat* the image is visually divided into left and right (Figure 6.6) and the vertical division denoting water is connotative of a conceptual division of above and below, Ram and Lakshman are carried by Hanuman who flies through the air and Raavan riding on a crocodile clearly suggests his belonging to the netherworld, below water. The water body divides the good from bad, the left from right and the good wife in the form of Sita and Sati from the bad wife in the form of Dhapu Gujar. The left is therefore representative of bad and below while the right represents good and above. The characters are recognized by their iconography (Raavan has ten heads, Hanuman has a monkey head, Ram is blue), color symbolism (Sati wears white, Dhapu is green). Characters like Sita and Lakshman are recognized by the presence of Hanuman and Ram in their vicinity. The fallen husband of Dhapu connotes the fall from grace on account of his wife. The stories alluded to this panel are those of pride and ego (K14) on the one hand and humility and loyalty on the other (Hanuman, Sita, Sati).

6.6 Semiotic Analysis

Images are signs that can be interpreted in several ways. Ferdinand de Saussure (1959) divides the sign into two parts; the signifier or ‘sound-image’ and the signified or ‘concept’; the relationship between them being arbitrary. Charles Sanders Peirce on the other hand defined the sign as ‘something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity’ (Berger, 1991). Images in the *Kaavad* are not illustrations alone; they are signs with specific meaning. The *Kaavad* images are invested with meaning by the storytellers as they point at them and recite the stories. They are also imbued with meaning by the patrons who see their own reflection in the images they have commissioned.

Restricted Code

The *Kaavad* recitation uses a restricted code as the stories are known to the patrons as are the symbols and iconography of figures. There is a close connection between the stories and the images that represent them and this relation is not illustrative; rather the image is a referent which is generic as most figures have a visual sameness to them. The image is particularized with words uttered by the storyteller. The images are emblematic and invoke the memory of the storyteller, helping him recall the whole narrative and that of his listeners who can visually connect all the narratives on one panel to a particular theme.

Each image represents a story and when they are grouped together on a panel they indicate the common thread or theme; visually suggesting the connection between them. As a genre, the categorization is created on the panels. The images have a fixed place in the panel which contextualizes them, the gods have a fixed place, and the patrons have their fixed panels, but are themselves interchangeable with other patrons.

Each frame houses an event or the symbol of the event. For instance the sun and moon depicted on the front panels in their chariots represent the *Suryavanshis* (descendants of the sun) and *Chandravanshis* (descendants of the moon) as well the story of Ahalya, wife of Rishi Gautam, who was turned into stone. So the image is polysemic and holds multiple meanings. Places and people are delineated in the most basic form, almost abstract, and serve as icons or aide memoires. In an inclusive manner, figures of deities, kings, queens, saints, patrons and animals are represented in the same scale. The figures float freely in a space of their own without any pictorial background. This allows for free associations by the listener as well as the teller.

All the stories on the panel are visible at once, conveying a feeling of all times and all spaces existing at the same time.

The images are arranged in a grid-like format and each image represents one story, although they can be used in some instances²⁷ to tell multiple stories by the storyteller. The images referring to stories are fixed and can be found in the same configuration in all *Kaavads*²⁸ examined; with one or two images being interchanged in some. The rest of the panels have images of the patrons. The images invest meaning into the different parts of the structure. Images define the physical structure and they in turn are defined by the narrative. For instance panel three has Sani Maharaj painted on the outside of the sliding panel and Kundana Bai on the hidden part and this is so because Kundana Bai was not supposed to be seen by men (figure 6.7). This part is concealed by a 'veil' of the sliding wooden panel.

²⁷ Shravan Kumar's image is used to tell different stories from Shravan's life. The length of stories varies depending on the time the patron has and his interest. As was observed in the field most patrons were keener to listen to their genealogies and then to an origin myth of their community.

²⁸ Seven samples dating from different times and sourced from museums, storytellers and private collection were selected for the narrative and visual analysis. In some the figure on the extreme top left corner of panel 1 and 2 had different images while the rest remained the same. For details see comparison of *Kaavads* in Chapter 4.

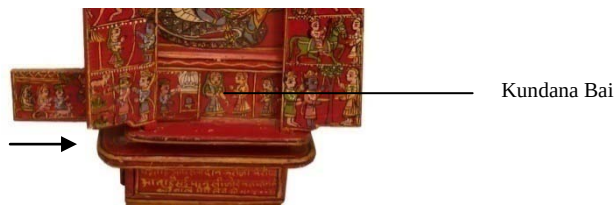


Figure 6.7 Kundana Bai hidden behind the sliding panel

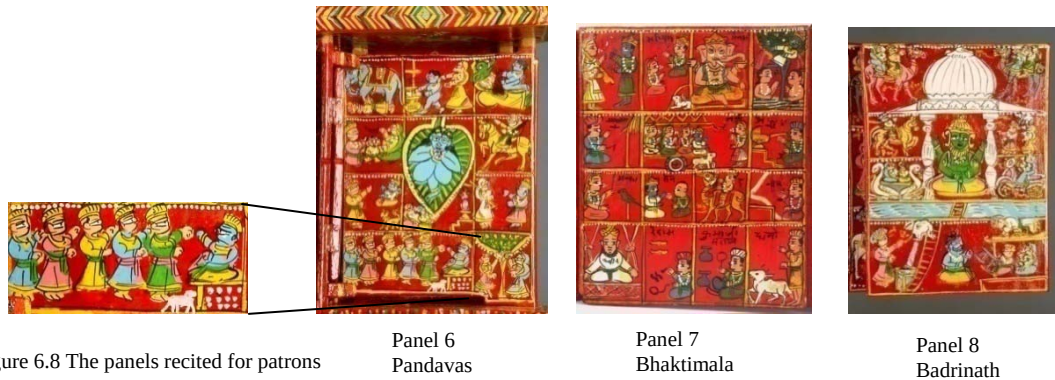


Figure 6.8 The panels recited for patrons

Panel 6
Pandavas

Panel 7
Bhaktimala

Panel 8
Badrinath

Each image is a story and each panel is a cluster of stories and the panels together unfold a journey (figure 6.8). The images are revealed and concealed as the recitation progresses.

6.6.1 The Images and their Narratives

The *Kaavad* has a highly evolved symbolic language for its images which can only be deciphered by the initiated, the figures being almost emblematic than illustrative.

The images are referents for the stories as they do not directly communicate the stories they represent. For instance the story of King Bisal and daughter Padmavati has no visual representation for king Bisal, and princess Padmavati is shown as King Mordhaj's wife, about to slice her son Ratan Kamal in half as an offering for god Krishna's tiger (figure 8). Some images are culturally coded which the community recognizes with bare description; for example the image of Ginka Bai the prostitute. The word Ginka or Ganika means a sex worker and she is shown with a parrot. She does not look any different from other female figures represented on the *Kaavad* in terms of her dress, gestures or attitude. Only the word description and her name distinguishes her.

The images are iconographic as in the case of gods and deities and emblematic when representing patrons or legendary figures; conceptual rather than realistic. On the one hand the images evoke the memory of the storyteller to follow the sequential order of the narration and on the other hand they guide the viewer to make thematic connections

between the stories. For the patron they validate the stories and their own identities as they are acknowledged in the *Kaavad*.

The text on the *Kaavad* doors reads:

“If you get this *Kaavad* recited get it done after lighting incense, then for seven generations you will go to heaven. You must believe this to be true. If you don’t believe this then for seven generations you will go to hell. Signed by Kundana Bai from Kashi.”

The *Kaavad* embodies an anthology of narratives. The collection of stories is thematically arranged on individual panels. For instance, stories with a common theme about hardships are placed on the Pandavas panel (figure 8). This is not to say other panels do not have hardship stories, but in this particular panel most stories have this common focus and the visual representation foreground these themes. The stories are represented by images that are painted on the various panels that make up the *Kaavad* artifact. Each image is placed in a frame and it is this visual system of the *Kaavad* that allows for the narratives to be told seamlessly.

The arrangement of the narrative images of the *Kaavad* and its visual language together contribute towards its distinctive appearance and function. The images hold a significant place in the *Kaavad* lore. On one level the images connote the sacred and the profane. The images represent Gods, Saints, Local heroes, ordinary folk along with their vehicles and animals. On another level they represent the caste identities, family genealogies and serve as an invocation to memory. The patrons are also painted along with the Gods on these panels; a case of the historic and mythic existing together. Therefore even if they may not always be referred to in the narration, the imagery of Gods and the patrons are equally important, as they validate the existence of each other.

Images on both sides of the panels connote the three-dimensional space of a shrine which the patron may ‘visit’. The patrons ‘recognize’ themselves, although there is no verisimilitude in the imagery. The recognition takes place when the figures are ‘identified’ by the storyteller. The images therefore ‘illustrate’ that which the storyteller defines in words. Why is the imagery required when it cannot be deciphered by the viewer?

The imagery of Gods is important as mentioned in the *Vastusutra* Upanishad,

"From the contemplation of images grows delight, from delight faith, from faith steadfast devotion, through such devotion arises that higher understanding that is the royal road to liberation. Without the guidance of images the mind of the devotee may go astray and form wrong imaginations. Images dispel false imaginations and point out the right way of worshipping for the devotee".²⁹ Pippalada

This cannot be said for the *Kaavad* images, because the images are almost emblematic and the patron barely engages with them. The storyteller also does not always reveal all the images so there is no time and space for contemplation of the image/s. And yet, the patron will not accept the storyteller and his recitation without the *Kaavad* and its imagery. This is because the images have a unique function in the *Kaavad*. They are visual genealogies and invoke and endorse identity.

The imagery is a structural part of the *Kaavad*'s anatomy and performance. The imagery appears to have a distinct personality of its own which contributes towards its role in the larger scheme of the *Kaavad* recitation and its goals for the communities involved. The manner in which the images are located in the *Kaavad* has significance for its community of tellers, patrons and makers; it signifies their social standing in the community. How this is achieved is partly through its visual elements as well as the manner in which the images are created and come together to create meaning/s.

When we examine the *Kaavad* panel by panel we find that the figures represented can be categorized as iconographic, emblematic and conceptual. Figures are polysemic and synecdochal; the same image represents several patrons, or represents a place. Images signify place and space; they give the patron a place in the social order and they represent pilgrim places where the deities are known to dwell.

Panel one and two (figure 6.1); represent access which has to be earned by good intentions and permission of the guardians (Poliyas or Jai and Vijai). The other side of panels 1 and 2 (figure 6.2) show iconographic images of Ram, Lakshman, Sita, Raavan, Baba Ram Devji etc. Other characters are recognized by virtue of being in the company of iconographic figures (Shabri Bheelni is recognized because she is seen with Ram and Lakshman) The third panel which is only seen by anonymous or new patrons represents timelessness

²⁹ Alice Boner et al, *Vastusutra Upanishad*. (Delhi 1996) p.10.

(Vishnu or Krishna and Kundana Bai) and a control over time or being controlled by time (Sani Maharaj), or having objects associated with them. The fourth panel, which is about Raavan, is divided to show good against evil. The good characters are depicted on the right and they are Ram, Lakshman with Hanuman, Sita, a Sati and the soldiers. The evil characters are Raavan, the ten-headed figure riding a crocodile, faithless Dhapu who is green, and the monster soldiers of Raavan. Dashrath and his wives form the fifth panel. They are recognized because king Dashrath (with halo) is shown frontal with three women (his wives) and Ram (blue) and Lakshman who is always with Ram. The image makes sense to those who know the Ramayana about Dashrath's decision to send Ram away and are aware that Ram is depicted blue. From a semiotic perspective, this frame symbolizes the root of all problems in the story. It represents that moment which initiates the chain of events to follow. Panel six is about hardships, sacrifice and test of faith and this is visually represented by Meera drinking poison, Padmavati and Mordhaj about to slice their child, Kunti and Dropdi growing a mango tree, Krishna sucking his toe in lieu of food etc. The seventh panel is about devotion, charity and caste recognition, the narration lays emphasis on devotion and the images focus on caste recognition based on profession. Here Nam Dev Chipa the blockmaker is blockprinting, Kuba Kumbhar the potter has pots around him, the goldsmith is making jewelry, Kabir is weaving and Sen Bhagat the barber is shaving his client. Through the objects or their actions the figures represent the patrons and their saints simultaneously. Panel eight has the image of a temple representing Badrinath, the pilgrimage center and the staircase to heaven. It depicts purification by water at the pilgrimage center while the narration equates the recitation of the *Kaavad* to bathing in the sacred waters of Ganga. The last two panels which form the doors of the inner shrine show Shravan carrying the *Kaavad* with his parents amidst King Harishchandra, Karma Jatni, Sudama, gods and goddesses. The proximity of Shravan, (the ancestor of the storyteller) to lord Ram is reiterated by the story narrated and by the image painted on the inner shrine doors, closest to the three figurines of Ram, Sita and Lakshman in the innermost shrine. This establishes the storyteller as the mediator between the gods and mortals, elevating his status to that of a priest during 'sacred time' for the patron.

6.6.2 The Signifiers and the Signified

The *Kaavad* signifies a portable site that is inclusive and allows for multiple identities to co-exist and aspire for mobility in terms of a sacred journey and an elevation in their social

status. The signifiers are the polysemic images, the vehicles that the figures ride, the co-existence of multiple images and stories on a single panel, and the donation given by the patrons.

Polysemic images and Multiple Identities

The polysemic images of the *Kaavad* may be interpreted in several ways. The human figures on the *Kaavad* all appear to look the same. Except for the professionals, where the tools of their trade are placed above them, it is hard to tell what these images represent. Once the stories are known then the images change for the viewer, becoming imbued with meaning. The images then appear to denote a profession, a community, a collective whereas the narratives provide an individual identity.



Figure 6.9 Sireeyade saves kittens

The human figures on the *Kaavad* have a sameness to them which has a distinct role and function; they are necessarily abstracted. On the face of it they represent every person but the sameness of the figures allows for multiple patrons to be represented. The same image is used by the storyteller to identify the patrons belonging to different communities. The *Kaavad* images derive their meaning from the narration and the figures are recognized not by the way they look but by other elements in the frame which could either be the presence of another entity or an object. For instance the figure of a woman when portrayed next to a parrot signifies Ginka the prostitute but when the same figure has a monkey figure next to it is instantly identified as Sita. And further if the female figure is with a cat on the panel with Bhakti saints then it is Sireeyade (figure 6.9).

The panel on which the figures appear, the objects or entities that are placed next to them play a major role in their identification. The relationships between figures, their size and the panel on which they are depicted also determine the identity of the figures. For instance, a woman with a parrot on the Bhakti Mala paat will be identified as Ginka bai but a similar looking female figure on a smaller scale with a parrot and other figures on the patron panel will be identified as a patron (fig 6.10).



Figure 6.10 Ginka with parrot (left), patron with parrot (centre) from the patron panel (right)

The placement of a figure in the centre of a grid signifies its importance. One of the patron's panel has Visvakarma in the centre surrounded by the suthar patrons. The central image then defines the surrounding figures. Visvakarma also signifies a pilgrim place for the *Suthar* patrons.

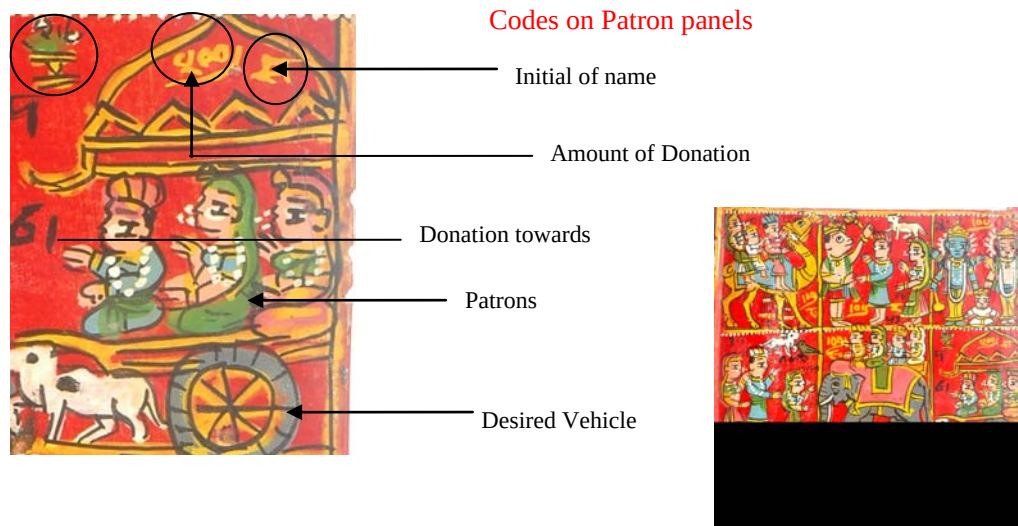


Figure 6.11 Codes for patrons on the patrons' panels

The space of the frame is divided to accommodate iconic and symbolic codes. The symbolic or indexic codes are usually smaller (mnemonic-like) and consist of numbers, a letter form and a figure of a cow, calf, bird or plant. The numbers represent money that is given or owed, (fig 6.11) the letter is the initial of the patron's name, and the figure represents the recipient of the donation. It could be towards feeding of cows or birds or for the worship of the holy plant *Tulsi*. Black cows represent ghosts for those who did not donate. The animal when placed at the bottom of the frame signifies the debt has been paid. Such a patron can donate whatever they wish but they are not duty bound to give anything. Even a meal would suffice.

Patrons can only be represented on certain panels. They can be represented on all panels that are on the left of the *Kaavad* shrine. The earliest appearance of patrons on the right panels in a typical narration is on the Badrinath panel as it represents a pilgrim centre.

Prior to the Badrinath panel, the panels on the right of the *Kaavad* depict gods, saints, local heroes and demons. This could imply that a patron needs to make a pilgrimage before they can be placed near divinity.

The figures usually include a couple or couple with a child or a family. Single persons are rarely portrayed as patrons. Single persons usually signify saints, gods or demons. The patrons and their vehicle are represented iconically. Quite often a local deity is represented on a patron panel but it depends on which patrons the storyteller has. If he has several patrons that are Meghwal or Rajput then he will have images of Baba Ram Dev. Usual deities are Dwarkapuri, Char Bhuj, Visvakarma, Satyanarayan, Yam Dev, Jogmaya etc. Minor deities that are worshipped on particular days or for specific needs also find a place on the patron panels. For example a deity that helps find lost things (Anusuya) is placed on a patron panel that may be opened on a Friday. Similarly, the panel with Satyanarayan will be read on a Saturday. The iconography helps identifications.

Frontal figures

Gods, saints and other extraordinary beings are shown frontally (figure 6.12).

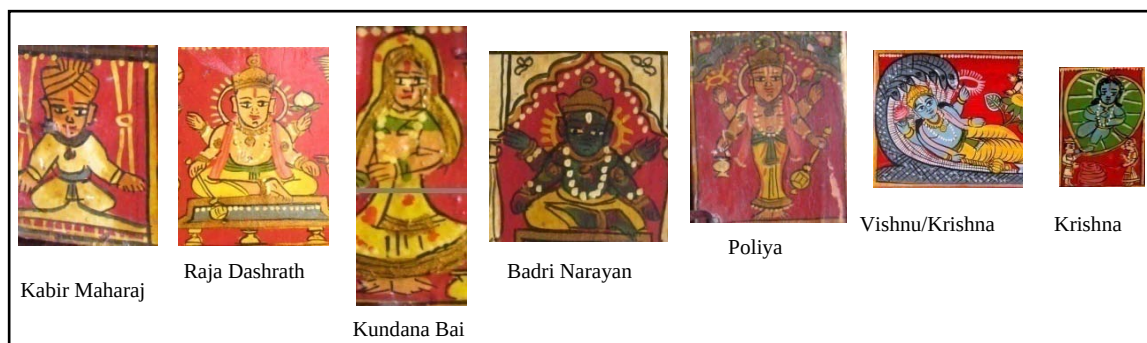


Figure 6.3 Frontal figures of Kabir, Dashrath, Kundana Bai, Badri Narayan, the guardian Poliya, Vishnu and Krishna

Gods and saints are the ones the patron wishes to connect with and so they are depicted frontally. Royal figures like King Dashrath are also depicted frontally, because he is the father of god Rama, or *Poliya*s because they are the sons of a Sultan. As some storytellers also call the *poliyas* Jai and Vijai they could be the celestial beings guarding Vishnu's door, and therefore have a similar iconography to him. Frontality signifies Godliness, saintliness or high social status. However all gods or goddesses are not represented frontally. Ram and Krishna, when they are interacting with others, are shown in profile. Goddesses, even when they are by themselves, are shown in profile, for instance Bemata and Jagdamba are portrayed in profile and without halos.

Vehicles or *Vaahans*

Each *Kaavad* has its own sets of figures that represent the patrons. Any form of anticipated change can be achieved only if there is a movement and this movement is represented by the vehicles, both animal and motorized. Each couple rides a vehicle of their choice or the ones assigned to them by the storyteller. There is a hierarchy in the kind of vehicle provided in terms of what status it has and what price it demands (Figure 6.11). Riding a plane or an elephant is superior to riding a cart. Ancestors may also be shown on flying chariots. Just as Gods have a vehicle of their own so do patrons. The vehicle thus signifies empowerment, social status and travel.

Donation or *Daan*

The notion of giving alms or donation is not unique to the *Kaavad* community. As has been observed and noted by Marcel Mauss (1954, 1990, 2002)

“Alms are the fruits of a moral notion of the gift and of fortune on the one hand, and of a notion of sacrifice, on the other. Generosity is an obligation because Nemesis avenges the poor and the gods for the superabundance of happiness and wealth of certain people who should rid themselves of it. This is the ancient morality of the gift which has become a principle of justice”.³⁰

The donation given by the patron signifies their generosity and is reciprocated by the receiver storyteller when he praises the patron in the presence of all gathered for the recitation. He recites the genealogy of the patron and also loudly proclaims the kindness of the patron, his noble ancestry and connection to higher beings. He points at ‘their images’ with a peacock feather and informs the gathering about the gifts he has received from the patron in the past and the place of honor he has thus earned in the *Kaavad*. This raises the status of the patron in the gathered community and would impact future interactions within the community.

Social Mobility

If we consider the universe of the *Kaavad*, the characters in its narratives are elevated from their existing positions by a leap of faith, through change and movement. Patrons who aspire for similar reversal of status or elevation of status need to achieve this through a conceptual movement of travel or pilgrimage, even though the walls that divide them are

³⁰ Marcel Mauss *The Gift* .(London, New York 2002) pp. 23-24.

impermeable. Conceptually, 'Above' belongs to the realm of Gods and mythical figures. 'Below' is the world of humans where some may achieve higher status through noble deeds or charity. From the narratives we can see whether 'above' or 'below', there are constants and variables (figure 6.13). The constants are the Gods and the patrons and the changeable are the demi-gods and local saints. Gods reside in sacred places that the devotee must travel to enduring hardships.

For social mobility too, a change is required which is manifested by a sacred journey that mediates the two realms.

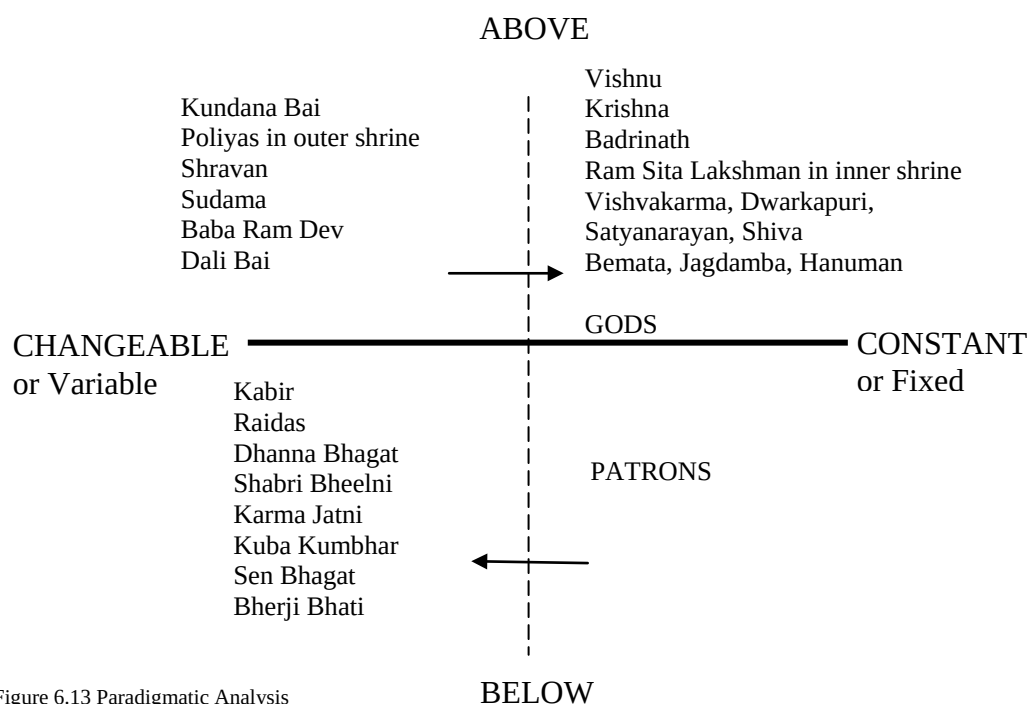


Figure 6.13 Paradigmatic Analysis

The walls between 'above' and 'below' are impermeable whereas those between the 'fixed' and the 'variable' are permeable and it is possible to go across these walls. The gods are in their places; they are in a state of being, deathless and 'constant' representing timelessness. Vishnu/Krishna forever resides on the Naukuli Nag and so do Ram, Sita and Lakshman in their shrine. Hanuman and Goddesses such as Bemata and Jagdamba³¹ make a move from their earlier places to acquire the powerful positions they now assume.

Kundana Bai, Baba Ram Dev, and Dali Bai die voluntarily (take *Samadhi*) even though they are considered immortal. Shravan, though mortal, is related to Ram through a kinship bond. Sudama acquires a position by virtue of being close to Krishna. They are higher in

³¹ Bemata had to move from Raavan's service to acquire her new powerful job and Jagdamba had to leave her home in Himlad and fight her way across to immortality. See K48 and K49 in Appendix I

position and status than the saints and the patrons below. They have the possibility of crossing across the permeable wall to be considered godly. Baba Ram Dev and Dali Bai have temples in their names. Kundana Bai is revered by the storytellers.

In the realm of 'below', ordinary beings like Dhanna Bhagat and others mentioned in (figure 6.13) acquired positions of higher status on account of being charitable and generous. They were able to change their lot by being humble, charitable and generous. They were rewarded twofold for their selflessness. The aspiring patron has some hope to change his fixed position. For a patron whose social status is fixed by birth, one of the ways to elevate the status is through a movement of travel or sacred pilgrimage and making generous donations.

6.7 Conclusion

A structural analysis of the *Kaavad* phenomenon reveals there is a strong connection between the object, its images, its narratives and the lives of the *Kaavad* community. And the whole experience of seeing, listening and traveling within the *Kaavad* with the storyteller is comparable to a pilgrimage. The experience of the pilgrimage is distributed between these elements that come together to make the whole. It is based on a belief that the fruits of a pilgrimage can only be earned through an acceptance of hardships and penance. The individual must face some difficulty, live the life of a renouncer for a period of time, and lose the identity, become one with the others and then only at the end of the journey experience the renewed identity. The comparison may be summarized in the following way.

For the *Kaavad* the journey begins with an invocation and for the pilgrimage with a ritual. The *Kaavad* invocation asks the devotee patron to choose a path that leads to God or else repent when it's too late. The ritual for the pilgrim involves taking the blessings of *Pathwari Mata* (path mother) and pledging to live the life of a renouncer for the period of the pilgrimage. The journey in the *Kaavad* begins with the turning of the panels and reciting of stories about hardships. The pilgrim, too, encounters arduous paths that s/he must brave and cross. As the panel is turned, once more the storytellers recite a set of stories about acts of charity by patron saints of their profession. These serve as role models for the status, less patron who is listening to the recitation with his family and others from his village, all sharing one role, that of listeners. A pilgrim, too, is inspired and encouraged by his fellow travelers and experiences a sense of 'communitas', a sense of oneness when

differences are dissolved and the goal to reach the sacred space binds everyone together. At the next turn of the panel the storyteller introduces the pilgrim centre Badrinath and the stories reiterate the need for charity, sacrifice and purification. The storyteller chants, and equates the recitation of a *Kaavad* to a bathe in the *Ganges*. When pilgrims arrive at their destination they make contact with their priest and undergo purification rites, usually at the site of a sacred river or lake. The storyteller turns the last panel on his left to reveal images of all patrons depicted on the *Kaavad*. He recites the genealogies and acknowledges the family by their names including those of the ancestors. The pilgrim too is 'recognized' by his priest who has a record of his ancestors, who are also worshipped. Finally, the storyteller opens the door to the innermost shrine so that the patron may have a *Darshan* (a viewing) of the deities. The pilgrim also visits the shrine of the deity at the pilgrim centre. Both experience a sense of renewal. The storyteller records the donations made by his patron, accepts the gifts, shares a meal and leaves with the *Kaavad*. The pilgrim makes a donation at the shrine and also showers gifts on the priest who has guided them through the rituals and begins the return journey. On their return they thank the *Pathwari Mata* and throw a feast for their kith and kin.

The patron *jajman* thus traverses the realm of the ordinary and everyday into the realm of the myth. As the storyteller unfolds the narratives that seamlessly blend a timeless world with that of the patron's history, the patron is placed together with the Gods and saints in a tangible portable shrine. This *Kaavad* shrine, recited with rituals of lighting incense and brushed with a peacock feather offers a liminal journey, an intangible pilgrimage, through the act of narration, and folding and unfolding of its panels. Through this journey, the *Kaavad* recitation restores a sense of dignity and gives a new sense of self to its community. The patron feels purified, his space sanctified and his identity glorified. The storyteller reasserts his identity and connects himself to mythic heroes. In the act of 'recognizing' the patron he appropriates a space for himself.

Chapter 7

Conclusion

The *Kaavad* Universe

The *Kaavad* object brings together themes of pilgrimage, storytelling, identity and design. Analysing an object which is still an active part of the folk milieu has required the employment of methods from various disciplines using folklore theory, ethnography and visual design methods. The understanding of the narratives would not have been possible without the fieldwork. It provided the context in which to locate the concerns embedded in the stories. A structural and semiotic analysis has revealed a similarity between a pilgrimage and *Kaavad* recitation. The analysis also explains why the genealogies and stories are recited together. The *Kaavad*'s design contributes to a 'simulated experience' of a pilgrimage; transforming from an object to a context. The object acts as a springboard for narration, taking a leap of memory and imagination, affirming community values and functioning as rehearsing of genealogies. As a 'portable shrine', the *Kaavad* denotes a sacred space or conceptual place of a pilgrimage, offering a 'liminal' experience of travel in space and time. It creates a sacred space and includes the secular, making seamless the boundaries between the real and mythical.

7.1 *Kaavad* as Pilgrimage

The *Kaavad* phenomenon of Rajasthan offers its community a unique experience; an experience made possible by a complex set of relations between the community and the *Kaavad* object. The many parts of the *Kaavad* object – the multi-paneled wooden structure, the painted images, the stories and the genealogies narrated by the storyteller – cohere to create an experience of a sacred journey for its patrons.

The experience of a pilgrimage begins with travel, as an extraordinary experience, of leaving behind all that is mundane, routine and anchored in the everyday practice of life; journeying towards a sacred space. In the *Kaavad* this rites of passage can be equated to the act of turning the panels or doors and entering new spaces.

Losing all identity like a pilgrim, s/he becomes a traveler and a listener. S/he experiences this ambiguity while also experiencing a sense of camaraderie or ‘communitas’ with fellow listeners. Pilgrims endure hardships on their path to the pilgrim place, and derive encouragement from fellow travelers. Patrons identify with hardships of travel and tests of faith endured by the characters from the stories and ‘experience’ these hardships by proxy. The various thresholds of a temple are simulated through the multiple panels/doors that have images on both sides. When a pilgrim arrives at the pilgrimage site, s/he performs a circumambulation or *parikrama*.¹ In the *Kaavad* the images on all sides of the panel invoke this experience for the patrons. Some of the spaces are depicted as images of a temple, or gods and deities, and the storyteller guides the patron through these spaces all the way till they reach the final destination - the sanctum sanctorum. After successfully reaching their destination, pilgrims are re-instated with their individual identity by a priest who records their family details in the book of records. The priest represents the community and by keeping their records he validates the pilgrim’s family as well as community identity.

In the *Kaavad* recitation, the storyteller confers desired identities for his patrons. The invocation of identity is achieved through the narration of stories that are populated by individuals cherished by the community, or who represent the community, consolidated through the narration of genealogies of the patron’s family. The genealogy represents the time dimension of the community which exists in the memory of the patron and the storyteller; by reciting them this existence is reinforced.

¹ *Parikrama* is a ritual of going around sacred objects or temples in a clock-wise fashion.

The *Kaavad*'s distinctive characteristics lie in its ability to negotiate *place* and *space*, the *sacred* and *secular*, *myth* and *reality*, *time* and *memory*. Let us examine these characteristics:

7.1.1 Place, Space and Liminality

The *Kaavad* shrine is a metaphoric place, a conceptual model of a sacred place, a virtual pilgrimage. A pilgrimage site is a 'place' where a pilgrim must travel to because it is the 'place' that is imbued with divine powers to grant wishes. The deity in a pilgrim site is invested with more power and travel to the site becomes imperative. Place is location and everything in its proper location invokes stability and security. Place and space are often used interchangeably but here we make a distinction between them. Place exists and is located in a fixed position. Space on the other hand is enacted, occupied or claimed.²

Michel de Certeau (1984) makes a distinction between place and space:

“Place excludes the possibility of two things being in the same location (place). The law of the ‘proper’ rules in the place; the elements taken into consideration are beside one another, each situated in its own ‘proper’ and distinct location, a location it defines. A place is thus an instantaneous configuration of positions. Space is composed of intersections of mobile elements... In short, *space is a practiced place*.”³

In the *Kaavad* place and space both hold value. As an object it offers a 'place' to the gods and as a performance or recitation the *Kaavad* represents space; the conceptual temple space and as social space for its patrons. Even as the *Kaavad* does not represent an existing 'place', in it the gods have their designated 'place'. The Bhakti saints are mentioned by names and the 'place' of their origin; for instance Meera is from Merta and Rana from Chittor. Similarly, Kundana Bai is from Kashi and Raavan from Lanka. When the storyteller brings the *Kaavad* to the patron, it is the patron's 'place' which gets sanctified. When patrons listen to the *Kaavad* recitation they are keen to know the name and 'place' of origin of their ancestors. The storyteller therefore mentions name and place, while pointing at their images. The *Kaavad* shrine supposedly comes from a sacred place, Kashi

² To occupy space is to move in space; this is one of the reasons why the patrons can be seen riding various modes of transport.

³ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*. (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London, 1984) p. 117.

(Varanasi), the centre of the earth in Hindu cosmology. The geography is thus physical and sacred. Varanasi as a place is located in northern India but symbolically it is referred to as the centre of the universe. However, the *Kaavad* which supposedly comes from Varanasi, does not represent any specific place nor is it a replica of a particular shrine. Were it so it would suffice for it to look like a miniaturized temple, and there would be no reason to have paintings of figures and a narration of stories. A simulated place, like a replica of a temple representing a particular place, could be brought and kept at home by the patron⁴ but it is not so in the case of *Kaavad*; it is a shrine in its own right, a veritable temple. Nonetheless, it is not a place and cannot be entered or occupied physically, except in thought and imagination. Further, this sacred shrine comes from ‘elsewhere’ and must return ‘there’ after the recitation. The *Kaavad* then is a nomadic/peripatetic agent (known as the *chalta phirta mandir* or portable temple), a space created in lieu of place, considered sacred as long as it is on the move; because it loses its potency if brought and kept in the house of the patron⁵.

Place has fixity and security whereas space spells freedom and openness (Tuan, 1977). The Gods are unchangeable and secure, therefore they have designated places in the *Kaavad*, whereas patrons need the flexibility to ‘move’,⁶ to change their status, therefore their positions are flexible. The *Kaavad* mediates place and space as it offers a free space for multiple patrons to occupy the same place simultaneously. In the patron panels of the *Kaavad*, a patron occupies a place but s/he is actually occupying space, because the same image is used to denote several patrons.

For the community of the *Kaavad* which resides outside of the classical *varna* system,⁷ the *Kaavad* is therefore a social space in which the individual and the community occupy a position. Besides the recitation of genealogies and declaration of generous donations made by the patrons, status elevation is perpetuated by origin myths and legends. The community may thus be defined as a liminal personae (or people at the threshold).

⁴ The ‘*biman* or *ratha*’ (plane or chariot) of Orissa is a wooden portable shrine (with figurines of Lord Jagannath, Subhadra and Balaram) that returning pilgrims may bring home.

⁵ Patrons Madan Sinh and Askaran Sinh in a personal communication stated that they would not like to keep the *Kaavad* in their homes even if it were possible because it is a sacred space and a household with its impurities would take away its power and sacredness.

⁶ Besides the flexible position on the panels the patrons also ride vehicles as a metaphor for social mobility.

⁷ They do not belong to the fourfold Hindu caste system and the Indian State calls them OBC (or Other Backward Classes).

To quote Victor Turner:

“Liminal entities are neither here nor there; they are betwixt and between the positions assigned and arrayed by law, custom, convention, and ceremonial. As such, their ambiguous and indeterminate attributes are expressed by a rich variety of symbols in the many societies that ritualize social and cultural transitions.”⁸

Social space is created by the generous patron who makes a donation. The narratives blend with real life events and efforts are made to build causality between myth and reality. This relation between the phenomenon and the lives of the carriers of the tradition is seamless.

7.1.2 Seamlessness of sacred and secular, myth and reality

The *Kaavad* invokes the sacred and the secular, seamlessly. By its very presence in a patron's home it sanctifies his place. The patron's house becomes a sacred space for that period of time and everyone removes their footwear as they enter the house. The moment the portals open they create/ offer an entry into a sacred space or journey. Victor Turner suggests:

“The passage from one social status to another is often accompanied by a parallel passage in space, a geographical movement from one place to another. This may take the form of a mere opening of doors or the literal crossing of a threshold which separates two distinct areas...or may involve a long exacting pilgrimage.”⁹

With the lighting of incense and chanting of verses, the turning of its panels that simulate navigation through a space, and the recitation of the genealogies, the sacred and the secular merge together. With the opening of its doors the patron's secular space is also transformed for the period of the recitation. As the recitation proceeds from the narration of stories to genealogies it brings together the sacred and the secular.

Seamlessness is observed between stories narrated in the *Kaavad* and the lives of its communities. Identification with characters from the *Kaavad* stories is so strong that we may ask if it is life imitating myth or myth imitating life.

⁸ Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti- Structure*.(1969) p. 95.

⁹ Victor Turner, *Process, Performance and Pilgrimage*. (New Delhi 1979) p. 17.

As Mircea Eliade states:

“... the supreme function of the myth is to “fix” the paradigmatic models for all rites and all significant human activities – eating, sexuality, work, education and so on. Acting as a fully responsible human being, man imitates the paradigmatic gestures of the gods, repeats their actions, whether in the case of a simple physiological function such as eating or of a social, economic, cultural, military or other activity.”¹⁰

For instance, during the festival of *Makarsankranti* that falls in the second week of January the community of *Kaavad* maker Suthars cooks a grainy gruel *Kheech* that was cooked by Karmabai Jatni from the *Kaavad* narrative to feed a stone God. They celebrate her triumph and share the *Kheech* with each other. The Suthars believe they came from Nagaur to Bassi but their community deity or *Sati mata* was left behind in Nagaur. They brought the soil from Nagaur and mixed it with the soil in Bassi to create her plaque so that she came to stay in their village and they finally feel settled in Bassi.

The storytellers claim to belong to the same community (*gotra*) as Shravan Kumar from the Ramayan and being his progeny, they are indirectly related to the house of Ram because Shravan was the nephew of Ram’s father King Dashrath. They believe that the *Kaavad* was gifted to them by Kundana Bai of Kashi who had been given a boon by Vishnu to be born every day; in other words she was immortal. Kundana Bai was born anew every morning; in the morning she was a baby, by the afternoon she was a young lady and by night she was an old lady, matured with time. Her perennial transformation is representative of story itself; story is forever born afresh, re-narrated and retold as if for the first time. Story does not die even as it matures over time, it is forever recreated; its survival depends on its ability to transform and change.

Kundana Bai was ordained never to be seen by males; her identity is as mysterious as the storyteller’s identity in his own village. Both are hidden; Kundana Bai is hidden behind a panel in the *Kaavad* and the storyteller hides behind the identity of a genealogist in his village. The storyteller claims multiple relations and aligns himself sometimes with Kundana Bai, with Shiva and Shravan and other times with Saraswati mata who resides on the ‘centre of his heart’¹¹ (*hridayakamal*). Kundana Bai gave him the means of his

¹⁰ Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: the nature of Religion*. (Florida, 1959, 1987) p. 98.

¹¹ As told by storyteller Kojaram Rav in a personal communication.

livelihood, Shiva his memory, Shravan his lineage and Saraswati mata his voice and ability to recite stories.

Strategic use of subversion within narratives reflects the aspirations for an egalitarian position, of being recognized and acknowledged. As Victor Turner (1969) points out:

“Liminality, marginality, and structural inferiority are conditions in which are frequently generated myths, symbols, rituals, philosophical systems and works of art. These cultural forms provide men with a set of templates or models which are at one level, periodical re-classifications of reality and man’s relationship to society, nature and culture. But they are more than classifications, since they incite men to action as well as thought.”¹²

For example, the Jat patrons believe they were born from the locks of Shiva’s hair (*Jatas*) which is why they are called Jats. When they asked Shiva how they could earn blessings, he created the storyteller Kaavadiya Bhat from his forehead and asked the Jats to be charitable to him. This is how the Jats came to be the patrons of some storytellers. Stories create bonds between these communities and endorse their identities. During a recitation when the storyteller points at a figure and identifies it as the image of the patron present, that patron has an experience akin to that of looking into a mirror, a mirror where s/he sees themselves at an elevated status.

7.1.3 Renunciation and Recognition

The design of the *Kaavad* affords the performance of three kinds of recitations performed for three kinds of patrons. One recitation is performed for a new patron, another for a confirmed patron and the third for a patron who wishes to remain anonymous. When we examine the different kinds of recitations from the *Kaavad*, we surmise there is a close relationship between the nature of the recitations and their larger goal.

¹² Victor Turner, *The Ritual Process*. (New York 1969) pp. 128-129.



Figure 7.1 The closed or *Bund paat*



Figure 7.2 The Open or *Khul paat*



Figure 7.3 The Hidden or *Gupat paat*

The three different kinds of recitations of the *Kaavad*; the closed or *Bund paat* (figure 7.1), the open or *Khul paat* (figure 7.2), and the hidden or *Gupat paat* (figure 7.3), chronologically prepare the potential patron for the role of being one and honoring that role. When an initiate becomes a patron the closed (or *Bund paat*) is recited to symbolically welcome him to a new membership, to the possibilities of other doors (doors of heaven or *Swarga*) opening up for him as well. Once he becomes a patron, the open (or *Khul paat*) is recited for him acquainting him with his responsibility of being a patron, of being humble and charitable, for which he can expect to be recognized and rewarded. Once he has transcended the self, the patron is finally ready to become anonymous, renouncing name, fame and fortune. This is when the hidden (or *Gupat paat*) is recited for him, fulfilling the ultimate goal perhaps of the patron's renunciation of all identity.

Like the patron, the storyteller seeks his identity in a place far away from his home. He is acknowledged as a *Kaavadiya Bhat* or *Rav Bhat* and receives respect and honour besides the obligatory gift from his patron. He too returns home to anonymity.

The *Kaavad* maker who works closely with the storyteller is not known to the patrons and remains anonymous for the market as well.

The narration begins with the unfolding of the *Kaavad* and the patron's attention is drawn to it by its turning, and the peacock feather used by the storyteller. But gradually the patron stops looking at the *Kaavad* as he engages with the space of the pilgrimage; the *Kaavad* then transforms from being an object to becoming a context.

As the *Kaavad* unfolds, it appears as if the goal of the patron, the storyteller, the maker and the *Kaavad* object itself is to be identified and recognized by each other and finally lose this individual identity to be absorbed by the larger identity of a community.

The *Kaavad* therefore is a continued source of validation and memory. It belongs to the oral tradition where the text is not static. Through the recitation, the local is linked to the divine and the individual to the community. Performed over the ages, it is central to the

lives of its community, not as a handicraft object, but as a bearer of memory; a collective consciousness.

7.2 Time, Memory and the Construction of Identity

The *Kaavad* is a microcosm that encompasses religion, myth, family and genealogy. It is designed for a collective memory; therefore it guarantees the perpetuation of a collective identity. It is not only an entry into sacred space but also sacred time, through which the patron claims his identity. The *Kaavad* represents multiple times; the mythic or eternal time as seen in the representation of gods, the historical time of the saints and local heroes, the present comprising of those in attendance and the future where the patrons are depicted with dreams and aspirations fulfilled. The patrons enter a sacred time (Eliade, 1963) by commissioning their images painted in the *Kaavad* along with gods, saints and ancestors. The connection with a charitable and powerful ancestor elevates the sense of self and the patron looks forward to hearing about such connections in the presence of others. A status change is made possible by the narratives when each profession is recognized by its patron saint and when blood relations are forged through a sharing of food and through gifts and marriage (Mauss, 1954, 1990, 2002; Lévi Strauss, 1968). A lame peacock from the jungle can marry a princess and become a prince¹³ and a lower status person can share a meal with gods. The *Kaavad* offers an identity to all the communities that are connected to it. The makers acquire their uniqueness as they are the only ones who make the *Kaavads*; depending on the storytellers to some degree to continue making them. The storytellers achieve their professional identity from the very name Kaavadiya Bhat and depend on their patrons to sustain the tradition. The patrons attain their identity by the recitation of the genealogies.

Identity may be defined as the way we locate ourselves in the social order and relate to each other and the world at large¹⁴. Identities may be multiple as each person has an individual and group identity and membership to various social groups, be it religious, secular, political or cultural. No doubt there are several other ways but for the purpose of this paper we will define identity from three perspectives; the given identity, the imposed identity and the claimed identity. Given identities are those that are inherited by birth and appear to be fixed, for example being born in a particular family in a particular region.

¹³ See K 23, *Kaavad* Tales from Kojaram Rav. Appendix I

¹⁴ Kathryn Woodward, *Identity and Difference* (Milton Keynes, 1997)

Imposed or legal identities are those where we are defined by others, as in the case of the government, categorizing people into OBCs etc.

Finally, identities are also claimed by groups and individuals as an act of self-definition. The process of claiming identity can also be a dialogic one (Bakhtin), as in the case of the *Kaavad* phenomenon. Let us examine the multiple identities of the *Kaavad* community.

The *Kaavad* makers: *Suthars*

The given identity of the makers is that of *Suthars* and being from Bassi they are called *Basayatis*. The government of India categorizes them as OBCs (Other Backward Classes). However, they claim to be the children of Lord Visvakarma. This claim is validated and perpetuated by an origin myth. This myth establishes the professional identity of carpenter for the *Suthars* although not limited to the makers of *Kaavad* but it does give them a status of a higher caste whose ancestry is connected to the Gods themselves.

The Storytellers or *Kaavadiya Bhats*

The name *Kaavadiya Bhat* is derived from the profession of the ones who carry/use the *Kaavad* to make a living. The term '*Bhat*' is derived from the caste of the teller. The *Kaavadiya Bhats* hide the teller identity at home because the storyteller status equates them to a '*maang khani jati*' (those who beg and survive). The government of India categorizes them as OBCs but they identify with the *Rav Bhat* title and have several narratives built around the origins of the *Kaavadiya Bhats*, where they claim to be the descendants of Shraavan Kumar of the *Ramayan*, and were also born from the brow of Lord Shiva.

The Patrons or *Jajmans*

The patrons of the storytellers belong to 36 *jatis* that include barbers, oil-pressers, tailors, potters, carpenters etc. They too are categorized as OBCs by the government of India. They claim their desired identities through the *Kaavad* recitation. The invocation of identity is achieved through the narration of stories, consolidated through the narration of genealogies of the patron's family. As the teller performs the ritual of reciting their genealogies and points out the images of their ancestors on the *Kaavad* he also regales them with origin myths of their community establishing their caste or professional identity. For the patron it establishes and reasserts his direct descent from the deities.

Acquiring the desired identities the members of the community build collective memories that are absorbed and assimilated in time. The *Kaavad* then is a trustee of memory. Every year, or every time the storyteller comes to his patron, this memory is invoked, revived and reinforced. The patrons 'recognize themselves' and their ancestors in the images that the

Kaavad mirrors. This ‘recognition’ is made possible with words since the images of the patron figures are not distinct from each other and cannot be easily separated.

7.2.1 Polysemy and Polyphony

As has been explained earlier the image of the patron is interchangeable with another. The storyteller names the characters or the patrons and thus endorses their identity. Here the word or text particularizes the image.



Figure 7.4 Panel with patrons and Lord Visvakarma in the centre.

The storyteller uses the same polysemic image to identify patrons from various villages (Figure 7.4). As we may observe all figures except Visvakarma (who is seen frontal and symbolically holding a square and plumb line) look the same. This makes the *Kaavad* highly inclusive because it allows several persons to be a part of a narrative or shrine and gives them a sense of identity.

Other aspects that contribute to its inclusivity are its travelling/coming to the devotee, its accessibility to all castes and communities and men and women are represented equally (even if their roles may appear conventional). They are all acknowledged. Hence, the *Kaavad* is a site for the representation of multiple identities.

At a pragmatic level, it serves the storyteller because he need carry only one *Kaavad* which is then particularized for each patron simply through narration and not images. In another way it also implies an ambiguous status experienced by personae in a liminal space. This ambiguity translates as looking the same like everyone else. When the storyteller points at a figure and identifies it as the image of the patron’s ancestor, the experience is that of being in the presence of those that are absent, of being in the presence of the dead who are now made eternal. Similarly, when the storyteller points at a figure and identifies it as the patron present, that patron, suspending disbelief, ‘enters’ the *Kaavad*’s liminal space,

where s/he can embrace the painted figure as their own and not look for likenesses. Validation by the storyteller suffices to acknowledge the representation and together they share a secret where each one's status is elevated.

If we were to approach the images of the patrons from a Bakhtinian perspective then the images may also be considered as polyphonous texts (Bakhtin, 1985) since they not only represent multiple voices but allow for various conflicting voices to be 'heard'. Based on the musical concept of polyphony, Bakhtin used this term to define many voices in the novel as multiple point of views of different characters by which they also shape each other.¹⁵ In the *Kaavad*, during the course of a recitation the patrons 'recognize' the storyteller while he 'identifies' them, and in that sense both interact with each other in a 'polyphonous dialogue'. Within its folds, the *Kaavad* affords spaces for the construction of multiple identities of the *Kaavad* community, thereby subverting and negotiating the given identities imposed by caste and state authorities.

7.3 *Kaavad* performance and mediation

The *Kaavad* lies at the intersections of several paradoxes that it mediates. It is a sacred object that is on the move, like the storyteller. It purifies the house of a patron but can never belong to his house. Its sacredness lies in it being a nomadic agent. The storyteller gets his identity from being nomadic and loses this persona once he stops moving and returns home.

The *Kaavad* is not a replica of a shrine or temple, but it is a temple that cannot be entered physically; entry made possible only through the agency of imagination and narration in the present tense by the storyteller. It denotes both, place and space. Its hinged panels imitate doors that are opened; however, the very doors create thresholds and spaces.

The narration conjures up different times; past, present, future and at the same time there is a sense of timelessness, when the patron finds himself in the presence of the ever-present gods. This is also reflected in the images of historical figures sharing space with mythic figures.

The movement of the panels creates a sense of travel and time, as do the images of patrons riding contemporary vehicles; but the narratives about Gods and their deeds create a sense

¹⁵ Michail Bakhtin described Fyodor Dostoevsky's style polyphonic; where the author allows each character in the novel to emerge by interacting with other characters rather than through a single narrator communicating with the reader. He defined this interaction of all the voices in the novel, as a "polyphonic dialogue".

of timelessness. The stories from the epics transcend the reality of space and time whereas the genealogies foreground the 'real and existing'. The recitation is thus, both sacred and secular. It is performed in a place which is both private and public; in the house of the patron, where neighbors and friends are invited to come and hear the storyteller praising the patron and his kin. Mediation through narratives and material culture is observed in Jan Brouwer's (1995) extensive study of the Visvakarmas of Karnataka. He explains how the community copes with discrepancies in their lives through their myths and 'ritualization' of crafts.¹⁶ The community's actual situation of being dependent, and given to worship with violent sacrifice, is at variance with its ideals and aspirations of being autonomous, complete and non-violent. This conflict is reconciled through the narratives and the sacralization of their craft and its tools. Like the Visvakarmas, the *Kaavad* community lies outside of the classical *varna*¹⁷ system. The makers, storytellers and the patrons locate their position in the social hierarchy through origin myths and the *Kaavad* recitation. The patron, for whom the storyteller and *Kaavad* maker collaborate to create the experience of a journey, seeks social equality which is fulfilled by a *Kaavad* recitation. This recitation is twofold; one part deals with stories and the other with genealogies. The significance of both being recited together lies in the paradox of seeking anonymity or renunciation on the one hand, and being distinct and recognized on the other hand.

Let us examine how the contradictions in the *Kaavad* are mediated by the recitation of the narratives and genealogies. The contradictions exist between time and timelessness and between place and space. Time on the one hand is present and may be defined as temporal; a time dimension of the community and the real time or present time experienced by the patron. As he listens to the storyteller, he allows himself to be transported to the timeless world of myth and magic; the voice of the storyteller being a constant companion on the journey making it all the more plausible. The turning of the panels invokes a physical transportation in time. Timelessness may be understood as the time of the gods who are beyond time, forever present; eternal. In other words, the contradiction between mortal and immortal state of being is reconciled by origin myths that genealogically connect the

¹⁶ Jan Brouwer, *Makers of the World: Caste, Craft and the Mind of South Indian Artisans*. (Delhi, 1995) pp. 453-467.

¹⁷ The classical *varna* system constitutes the four castes of Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra, roughly identified with priests, warriors, farmers, traders and workers respectively. The Indian state identifies *Kaavad* community as OBCs (other backward classes) and thus they fall outside the *varna* system.

patrons to the gods. By reciting the genealogies, that represent the time dimension of the community, the storyteller builds memory for the community.

Similarly, we present the conflicts between place and ‘liminal’ space. As discussed earlier, place is synonymous with position and fixity in which the patron finds himself in the real world. However, he seeks a space where he is liberated to change his status. With his imagination, he seeks a position that gives him dignity and a ‘place’ in society, a place that is not geographical, but a conceptual space of freedom to define his self-identity; not the one imposed on him either by communities around him, or by the government. Change becomes possible only if s/he is willing to undertake a journey. A change in social status is possible only in the realm of imagination. The journey mediates the fixed place in the real time of the patron and his desired timeless space where his status is elevated. To do that he exercises his imagination that allows him to perform a conceptual pilgrimage. Performing the pilgrimage leads to a renunciation of identity which is regained, restored and reinvented by the recitation of genealogies. This explains why the genealogies and stories are recited together in the *Kaavad*. Beyond that it also indicates that the community strives to locate itself in time through memory and in space through imagination. A summary diagram below (fig. 7.5) articulates the above discussion:

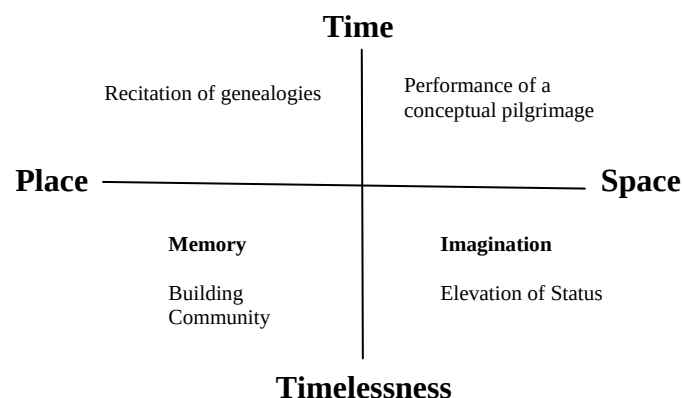


Figure 7.5 Summary Diagram

7.4 Memory, Imagination and Design

The storyteller belongs to the realm of memory. Like the Yugoslav bard (Lord, 1965, 1973) he learns to recite by observing and accompanying his elders, usually the father, grandfather or uncle. He evolves his own approach and as observed in the recitations each storyteller has his own set of phrases that he repeats throughout the performance, even as the themes remain the same. Unlike the Yugoslav bard he needs to memorize some details,

because he has specific patrons for whom he recites their genealogies. He therefore represents memory for his patrons whose history he archives and enacts. He rehearses the memory of the community with them, as they too carry the memory of the stories and their own genealogies. What he does is invoke this memory in his patrons. He does not have a musical accompaniment, but he uses chants, rhymes and images to aid memory. He invests meaning into the images, which come alive with his narration, much the same way as the sculpture of a deity when it is consecrated by the opening of its eyes. The storyteller is the agent of the oral tradition that survives on memory, imagination and a listener. The listener is not passive in this case, s/he also carries the collective memory, which is invoked by the recitation. The storyteller makes a calendrical appearance, bringing sacredness into the homes of his patrons, endorsing their identity. Being the agent of memory he mediates time.

The *Kaavad* is created or 'designed' by a maker who knows the aspirations of the patrons but does not come in contact with them, while the patron is oblivious of the maker's existence altogether. The object maker belongs to the realm of practice or Design; he creates the object and manifests the aspirations and the trigger for memory. He also interprets the requirements of the storyteller, never meeting the patron himself. Through his image-making and tools he mediates the past to the present, keeping abreast with changes in technology and materials. With his *Kaavad* object he mediates space.

The patron belongs to the realm of imagination; he suspends disbelief, he is the seeker and the listener with a memory, the one who sustains the tradition with his patronage, offering his geographical place for the storyteller. Through alms-giving he sustains the tradition because he needs recognition himself, and in that process he gives the storyteller his identity. The patron mediates time and space by 'performing' a journey.

The relationship between memory and imagination is therefore very close and manifested in an object. The role of memory is to remember and forget, that of imagination is to believe and suspend disbelief, and that of creation (Design) to invoke memory and imagination. This is not to say that each belongs distinctly to one realm or the other, rather all use their memory and imagination to animate the narratives and the genealogies.

7.4.1 Implications for Design

An anthropologist would argue that folk arts as artifacts are much more than objects because they hold symbolic value. All artifacts of material culture are in essence symbolic systems and the *Kaavad* is a good example. The *Kaavad* narratives clearly indicate the overarching importance of identity for the carriers of its tradition. Caste or community identity and individual identity find a significant place in the narratives and their images. Origin myths reinforce the connection between the community and their ancestors from the epics and elevate the status of its members. Elevation of status is also acquired by recounting of generous donations made by the patron and his extended family. Individual identity is thus acknowledged against the backdrop of a community identity, and seemingly considered important as far as it contributes to finding a ‘place’ in the community. A further investigation into the relationships between the individual and community may further explain whether this need for ‘recognition’ can be understood as part of discourse on caste or as belonging to other domains.

So far, we have looked at the *Kaavad* through the eyes of anthropology and design combining emic and etic perspectives. Now as a thought experiment we wish to create a role reversal and to ask what the *Kaavad* has to tell the designer. Let us sum up the fable of the *Kaavad* in an anthropological sense. We begin with the obviousness of the box. It is not a tool box, it is a concept box. The box is neither an act of mimicry as imitation nor is it a miniaturization from a larger scale. It simplifies and condenses the key elements of its stories. It is a syntactic arrangement of the parts of stories, a mnemonic as in the old arts of memory mentioned by Frances Yates in her classic book, *The Art of Memory*.¹⁸ In the European example, Yates shows how the space of a building, especially a theatre was classified into parts, each associated with a fragment of narrative. This, in an architectural sense, is a spatialization of memory. The *Kaavad* spatializes memory, only its mnemonic tool is a box rather than a building. In that sense, it is a technology, a narrative for society. The logic of the *Kaavad* enfolds at four levels, each as an intersection of space/time. There is the logic of the box and how it is arranged. Secondly, there is the act of myth and genealogy. One recites the time of community in an interactive space, where the *Kaavad* both renews and refreshes the memory of a community. The storyteller is a trustee of its genealogies, a custodian of ancestral memory; creating meaning as a memory. The *Kaavad* performs a semantic function of renewing meaning; it is a ‘bricolage’ of memory.

¹⁸ Francis Yates, *The Art of Memory*.(1966).

At the third level are the pilgrimage and the performance, both constructed as rites of passage. The *Kaavad* as a traveling fact is a semiotic performance. It unravels a myth, and constructs a community.

But there is a fourth level more etic, than emic. It is a variant of the Dumontian question “Who shaves the barber?” in the caste system. In a more poignant variant one asks as a designer, a listener and an anthropologist, who saves the story of a storyteller? Design in this context becomes located in an ethics of memory.¹⁹

The designer anthropologist recognizes the inevitable disappearance of the *Kaavad* in the face of technological progress and cultural homogenization. Can the story be saved without the storyteller, or the box without the performance? One without the other would be an abortion of the social. The designer sees four possible options.

First, s/he can conserve it or museumize it. The *Kaavad* box or object is then conserved for the future and displayed as an artifact. It is delinked from its performance and community; de-contextualized from its purpose. In an attempt to enrich the experience the object and its performance may be documented in several formats; as audio-recordings, as photographs, or in a film format so that the phenomenon survives eternally as memory, fossilized in a virtual space and time. This option admits the idea of the *Kaavad*’s ultimate obsolescence.

In a second option, s/he can construct it as a curiosity, and exoticize it for tourism or marginalize it. The *Kaavad* box may be made available in curio shops and state emporiums. The story and its performance may be enacted as an exotic experience for a wider audience that appreciates the unusual and the quaint. Whether they acquire it or watch it they too experience the *Kaavad* without its cultural context. All this marginalizes the *Kaavad* as a subsistence activity. The storyteller and the maker live in two variants of marginality- benign neglect or exoticization.

Thirdly, playing its ‘interventionist’ role, design could modify the *Kaavad* to serve other needs; converting it to a useful, usable object with or without the collaboration of the maker or the storyteller. This ‘appropriation’ not only leaves the traditional practitioners out of the frame but de-contextualizes the *Kaavad* completely, objectifying it by treating it as mere form. This impacts the close relationship between the story, the storyteller and the object, separating them from each other.

¹⁹ An Ethics of memory, a term coined by the historian Avishai Margalit can be extended beyond the author’s sense of witness and testimony. An Ethics of memory deals with forgetting, erasure, forgetfulness, triage and genocide.

As a fourth option, we may review the definition and role of design with regards to the *Kaavad*. Design is deemed to be concerned with creation and invention; inventing or innovating the ‘new’, and the *Kaavad* paradoxically represents memory; the past or the ‘old’. Yet, this ‘old’ is constantly reinvented through an oral narration and performance. We can argue along with Bruno Latour²⁰ that design is reinvention rather than invention; it therefore remembers and it creates. In this sense design is not merely repair. The *Kaavad* now enters a new rite of passage by adding to the old creation myth, new narratives of survival. The *Kaavad* as a concept teaches the designer a new ethics of memory, where design does not just recreate the material artifact but draws out a framework that may be used in a different context; hopefully to sustain communities.

²⁰ Bruno Latour, ‘A Cautious Prometheus? A Few Steps Toward a Philosophy of Design (with Special Attention to Peter Sloterdijk)’, *Networks of Design: Proceedings of the 2008 Annual International Conference on Design History (UK)* (Florida, 2009). pp.2-9.

APPENDIX I



Kaavad Tales

from
Kojaram Rav

Introduction

The *Kaavad* is a portable wooden shrine from Rajasthan carried by the storyteller (*Kaavadiya Bhat*) to his patrons (*jajmans*) each year to recite their genealogies and to narrate stories from the epics and local legends. Kojaram Rav a storyteller from Jodhpur tells us the *Kaavadiya Bhats* are the descendants of Shravan Kumar of the epic *Ramayana*. Shravan, the dutiful son, used the *Kaavad*, a bamboo pole with two baskets, to carry his blind parents to visit all the pilgrim spots as they were unable to travel on their own. Before they could complete the journey Shravan was accidentally killed by his uncle Dashrath who mistook him for a wild animal in the dark when he went to fetch water for his thirsty parents. Since Shravan was unable to fulfill his filial duty it came to rest on his descendants, the *Kaavadiya Bhats* to bring the pilgrim spots to those who could not travel. Today the *Kaavadiya Bhats* bring the *Kaavad* in the form of a portable shrine to their patrons who consider it as a sacred space that purifies their own living spaces. Guiding his listeners/patrons while opening the multiple doors and unfolding the narratives the storyteller transports his audience from the outside to the inner sanctum sanctorum where the deities reside. This travel through the shrine is considered equivalent to a pilgrimage by the patrons and the storyteller is the guide who takes them through this journey.

Before the narration begins the storyteller lights an incense stick and introduces himself. He mentions the name of the village he is visiting and the patron for whom he is going to recite the *Kaavad*. He extols the virtues of listening and how this recitation will bring blessings or ‘punya’ to the patron. The narration begins with a chant-like invocation followed by a brief recitation of known stories, as well as the genealogies of his patrons. As he recites he also opens and turns the multiple panels on which the stories are painted. He points at them with his peacock feather and narrates stories of lack, followed by stories of hardships test of faith to those of virtues of charity and lives of saints.

The stories within themselves and the order in which they are arranged and narrated evoke the experience of a Hindu pilgrimage. The notion of travel may be equated to the turning of the panels and entering new places. The spaces could be real or conceptual but they exist in the imaginary landscape of the patron and the storyteller. The various thresholds of a temple are simulated through the multiple doors that have images on both sides. The images covering both all panels create the experience of circumambulation. The storyteller acts as a guide as he ushers his listeners through the spaces introducing the characters, using the present tense, creating the feeling of ‘being there’ till the very end when the final destination is reached at the ‘*thakur mandir*’ or sanctum sanctorum.

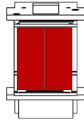


The Kaavad Tales

The fifty four stories in this collection were told by storyteller Kojaram Rav, and have been organized in the order in which they were recited. Every image in the *Kaavad* represents a story or several stories and they are told at the discretion of the storyteller. The *Kaavadiya Bhats* have an order in which they narrate the stories but each storyteller has his own way of telling them.

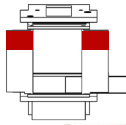
In these stories there are some that will seem familiar but the characters from the stories may have unfamiliar names. Shabri in *Kaavad* lore is called Shravat Bheelni, *Kaurvas* are *Kervas*, Yudhishtir is *Jetal*, Pandu is Raja Pind and the names of Vishnu and Krishna are used interchangeably. Storytellers who have access to television and books identify with mainstream Hindu myths but Kojaram Rav recites the stories just the way he had learned from his father Bansilal when he was a child and accompanied him to his patrons.

A graphic representation of the *Kaavad* may be found under each image to indicate its location.



K1. *Poliyas* or Jai and Vijai

Two nephews of Guru Gobind and sons of King Sultan of Udaipur were desirous of their thirteen year old step-mother; their father's youngest of 108 wives. Gods could read their minds. For a desire which was still in their minds they were banished and reduced to soldiers to guard the gates of the town. Now they are the guardians of the *Kaavade* shrine accompanied by two lions and no one may enter without their permission.



K2. Ahalya, the Sun and the Moon

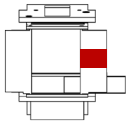
Ahalya was the beautiful wife of Gautam Rishi. The Sun and Moon were besotted by her beauty. Even though they had traversed the world every day they had not seen a more beautiful woman. She had been pious and devoted in her life (had done *Bhakti*) which is why her nails, hands and arms were all golden. The sun and moon were so desirous of Ahalya that they decided to seduce her. They began to observe the routine habits of her husband. They noted that Gautam Rishi woke up every morning when the cock crowed and went immediately to bathe in the river Ganga. So the Sun and Moon imitated the call of the bird in the night and as was his routine, the Rishi woke up, took his towel and left for the river. The Sun abused Ahalya and the Moon seduced Anjani (Rishi's and Ahalya's daughter). No one heard their cry for help.

When he reached, the river Ganga was not ready to meet him. She asked why he had arrived in the night when his usual time was later at 5am. He told her he always followed the call of the bird. She cautioned him, suspecting that someone was out to cheat him and suggested he return home quickly, but Gautam Rishi insisted he must take his bath. As she was not quite ready she said she would turn her back and he could soak his towel in the water and wipe himself in lieu of a bath. Gautam Rishi did this and then left for home.

When Gautam Rishi returned he saw that the Sun and Moon were indeed with his wife Ahalya and daughter Anjani. The sun escaped as soon as he saw the rishi but the moon was slow and Gautam Rishi managed to hit him with his wet towel, (causing the dark marks on the moon). He cursed his wife Ahalya telling her that she would turn to stone on the banks of the Ganga in Haridwar for 12 years. Only when Lord Vishnu visits the Kumbh mela will she turn back into a human. Till then she will be a stone on which people will come to bathe, wash clothes, walk over her and subject her to all humiliation which she will suffer in silence because she will be speechless.

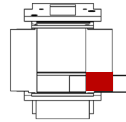
To his daughter he said she will be an unwed mother and will give birth to a boy. Ahalya was so angry with her husband for doubting her, that she did not offer any explanation and kept quiet. Anjani, buried half of her body in the earth and did not come out for months hoping that this way she could avoid giving birth to a child. But Gautam Rishi's word was sacred so a child was born from her ear.

This child came to be known as Pavan putra Hanuman. When Vishnu visited the Kumbha Mela after 12 years his foot accidentally hit a stone that was Ahalya and she came back into her human form. She was then returned to her husband.



K3. Baba Ram Dev and his devotee Harji Bhati

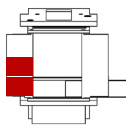
A Rajput, Harji Bhati was so keen to see God that he started to do penance/ *Tapasya* to Ram Devji. After twelve years of penance God appeared before him and asked what his wish was. Harji said 'God I don't want anything; I just wanted to see you'. Since he was undemanding, as well as a Bhati Rajput, he received gifts from God. He was given a horse to ride and a cow who would give him milk. And thus he was immortalized and gained recognition. A memorial/temple was made in his name and to date a fair (*mela*) takes place in his honour in Harji Bhati ki Dhani in the Osiyan district of Jodhpur.



K4. Shabri/ Shravat Bheelni

Shravat, a Bheelni was a devotee of Ram and Lakshman for many generations. She constantly swept the forest floors waiting for Lord Ram to come by. Finally Ram and Lakshman came to her house. They were hungry but she did not have any food for the Gods. Since she was not able to cook for them she decided to pluck the berries (*ber*) from the bush she had grown. Just to ensure they were not sour she tasted each one of them before giving it to them. They could not refuse to eat her half-eaten food because after all she was their staunch devotee. And so Shravat found deliverance because she fed Ram.

Ram ate the berries with love but Lakshman kept throwing them away quietly. Had he eaten them he would have been protected from Raavan's attack when he was injured in the war; though he nearly died he was saved by the special medicine *Sanjeevani Buti* brought to him by Hanuman.



K5. Sita's Abduction

King Ramchandra and wife Sita went to the forest to do penance for years. Sita was blessed by the gods to be very beautiful. Once when Ram and Lakshman went out hunting but before leaving Ram drew a line around the hut to protect Sita. This line was like a live electric wire so that anyone who tried to get in would be set on fire and anyone who tried to get out would also catch fire.

Now, Raavan had done a lot of penance and had a boon never to die of wood or metal. Lord Vishnu had pointed out to Raavan that since there could be no deliverance without death how he could hope to ever be free. For that reason Raavan committed the crime of abducting Sita.



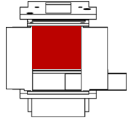
Vishnu created a situation for the Lanka *pati* (lord of Lanka) Raavan to visit Ramnagar. When he saw Sita Raavan realized that in his entire kingdom of Lanka he had not seen such a beautiful woman. He was consumed with the thought to take her somehow and make her his queen. Raavan came disguised in the form of a holy man (*Rishi Muni*) begging for alms. When Raavan asked Sita to be dutiful and give him alms, she explained that the line that was between them was Ram Chandra's pride and she could not cross it. Sita was unaware of his real identity and assumed he was just a holy man (*Rishi muni*) who had come around asking for alms (*dakshina*). To let the Rishi go without the *dakshina* was against her faith and this created a conflict in her mind. When Raavan repeatedly asked her to do her duty, Sita placed a wooden stool that crossed the line without touching it and stepped on it to give him the *dakshina*. As soon as she stood on the stool he abducted her and took her to Lanka. When the two brothers returned Sita was missing. A bird told them he saw Raavan take her away. Ramchandra made inquiries about Raavan.

Ram wanted to know where Raavan's life-breath lay. Lakshman went disguised as Raavan's wife Mandodari to Raavan. Feigning as a loving wife he expressed worries about Raavan fighting these battles and putting his life in danger. If something ever happened to him what was to become of his wife? Raavan assured Mandodari that she need not worry for his life because his life breath was not accessible to anyone in this world. It was far away inside the nostril of the horse Saukaran, the white stallion that pulled the chariot of the Sun across the skies. Inside the horse's nostril was a bee (*bhamra*) within which lay the life breath of Raavan. So satisfied, with this information Lakshman returned. He informed Ram that the only way to get Raavan was to shoot through the nostril of the Saukaran horse and offered to kill Raavan himself because the latter had nearly killed him once. Ram asked Lakshman to use strategy. He hinted:

'Lakshman, you cannot take aim with your arrow like you do

The water from a mountain only falls down'.

Taking his clue Lakshman waited for the sun to rise and meanwhile got a big pot of oil to boil. When the sun was at its zenith in the middle of the sky he aimed at the horse's nostril and the bee fell out and fell straight into the pot of hot boiling oil. No sooner did that happen that Raavan lay dead on the field. And finally Raavan got his deliverance (*moksha*) through death at the hands of god himself (in the avatar of Ram).



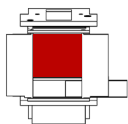
K6. Krishna and Ajmal Maharaj

King Ajmal Maharaj desired children so he did penance for twelve years. At the end of this Krishna appeared to him in a dream and asked him to visit Dwarkapuri where he would be blessed with a son. So Ajmal Maharaj left on foot and reached Dwarka after six months. After bathing he went to the temple and asked the priest to see Lord Dwarkapuri and the priest directed him to a statue. He demanded the priest to direct him to the real Lord who had come to him in his dream and promised him a son. The priest said he did not have the real God. Angry Ajmal Maharaj threw the sweet ladus his wife had given him at the stone image and threatened the priest. The priest got scared and decided to get rid of him.

He told Ajmal the real god was under the water so if he really wanted to see god he would have to jump into the ocean. Ajmal Maharaj leapt into the ocean and found Lord Dwarkapuri sleeping, lying on the serpent with a bandage on his head. A worried Ajmal asked god how he came to have a bandage on his head. God said 'when innocent devotees like you come along and do not recognize me in my other forms then this happens. They can harm me but how can I harm my dear devotees'. Ajmal explained the reason for his anger.

Then god said, 'since you have come all the way, tell me what can I do for you?' Ajmal said simply 'I don't have a child and I don't have a moustache. Because I don't have a child people call me barren and because I don't have a moustache people don't look at my face. Please could you give me both?'

God asked him to feel his face and he immediately found a big moustache on his face. Then he blessed him with two sons. One of them he promised would be god himself. Ajmal asked when that would happen. God said one child who would be born to his wife must be named Bhiram Dev and He (God) would come and lie down in the same cradle. And the day he would come, the water in the pot would turn to milk and red footprints would be found in his courtyard. When his son Bhiram Dev was born the next day Ajmal and his wife found two children in the place of one. Ajmal knew that god had arrived in his house. As told there was milk instead of water in the pot and there were red (kumkum) footprints in the courtyard. God had also told Ajmal that Bhiram Dev was to be fed by Ajmal's wife but all he needed was incense sticks for him and he would grow up on that. This child was named Ramdevji, the avatar of lord Krishna or Dwarkapuri.



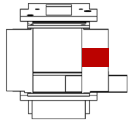
K7. Krishna, Ajmal Maharaj and Saira Meghwal

Ajmal Maharaj did not have any children and he did not have a moustache. He did penance for twelve years. At the end of this Krishna appeared to him and said he must visit Dwarkapuri and have a dip in the water there. Then he would be blessed with a son and also get a moustache. Ajmal Maharaj left for Dwarka. When Ajmal was leaving, Meghwal Saira from Sunderbans who also did not have any children but was too poor to travel to Dwarkapuri, requested him to also pray on his behalf and request God to bless his family with children. There was no bus then so Ajmal went walking. His wife gave him ladus to eat on the way. It took him six months to reach Dwarka. When he arrived there, he had his bath and went to the temple and asked the priest for Lord Dwarkapuri and he was immediately directed to a statue. He wanted the priest to tell him where the real Lord lived, the one who had come to him in his dream and promised him a son? The priest said he could not tell him where the real God was. Ajmal Maharaj was so angry that he threw the ladus at the statue and threatened the priest. The priest got scared and told him to go leap in the ocean because God was there.

The priest thought to himself that such a person who could insult the statue could be dangerous. So if he leapt into the water he would probably die and that would be the end of this nuisance. So he advised him to go under the sea. Ajmal Maharaj trustingly leapt into the ocean. And there he saw Lord Dwarkapuri sleeping. God was lying with a bandage on his head. When he asked God how he came to have a bandage on his head God said 'it happens when innocent devotees like you come along and do not recognize me. They can harm me but I cannot harm them'. Ajmal explained the reason for his anger. Then God said, 'since you have come all the way what can I do for you?' Ajmal said 'I don't have a child and I don't have a moustache. Because I don't have a child people call me barren and because I don't have a moustache people don't look at my face. Please could you give me both?'

God asked him to feel his face and he immediately found a big moustache on his face. God said go home and your wife will soon have a child. As Ajmal was leaving he remembered Saira Meghwal's request, so he asked God to bless him with children too. God said he would come in person and be born in Ajmal's house after which he could hand him over to Saira. And the day he would come the water in the pot would turn to milk and red footprints would be found in his courtyard. Besides he would not accept his mother's milk and would grow up on the smoke of incense sticks.

The day after his son Bhiram Dev was born he and his wife found two children in the place of one in the morning. Ajmal knew that god had arrived in his house. As he was told there was milk instead of water in the pot and there were red (*kumkum*) footprints in the courtyard. He quickly exchanged the children and handed over Bhiram Dev to the Meghwal family. He kept the god child and named him Ram Dev.

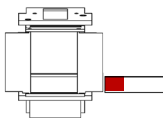


K8. Baba Ram dev and Dali Bai

Meghwal Saira from Sunderbans did not have any children. The *meghwals* were also Krishna followers. Saira was sad because Ajmal was blessed with two sons after his visit to Dwarka but Saira had none. And Saira could not afford to go to Dwarka. So they prayed to God to give them a girl at least? Given that they too were staunch devotees?

When Ramdevji was on his way riding his horse he found a small girl who was crying in a branch (*dali*) of a tree. He brought her down and took her to Meghwal Saira who brought her up as his daughter Dali bai. As the girl grew up she too became very devout. She chanted God's name 24 hrs. She was very hard working, kind, wise and knowledgeable. As she grew up she began to take the calves for grazing. To look after one calf she would get one roti in return. In this way she started to earn for the whole family.

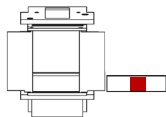
As time went by Baba Ram Devji decided he needed to leave the world of mortals (take *Samadhi*) so as to go back and tackle some demons (*rakashas*) who were troubling the gods in heaven. He began to get a pit dug in which he would take his Samadhi. Dalibai came to know about Ramdevji's intent to take Samadhi. She left the calves near a pond and came to where Ramdevji was and insisted that the pit was actually dug for her. He told her that her time would come but this pit was surely for him. He asked her how could she identify it as hers? She said that if they found a comb (*kansi*), and a string (*dora*) for the hair it would be hers and if they found a mirror, a green handkerchief and kansia then it would be Ram Dev's. As they dug further they found as per her description, the *dora* (thread for hair) and *Kansi* (comb). When Ramdevji asked her to point out his spot, she said it would be next to hers. Ramdevji let Dali bai take her Samadhi first, in the pit he ordered because he knew no one would have dug a pit for her afterwards (since she was a meghwal's daughter).



K9. Hanuman brings Sanjeevani Buti

When the war was going on, Raavan almost killed Lakshman. Vishvamitra was called and he asked Hanuman to go to the mountains and bring the medicine *Sanjeevani buti*. Hanuman left immediately. When he flew up to the mountains he had no idea what this *Sanjeevani buti* looked like. He could not recognize it. He had never seen it before. If it were a mango tree or a banana he would have known, but this he had never seen. So he kept looking all over the place and he soon realized he had very little time because Lakshman could die if he did not get the herb (*buti*) in good time.

He wanted to stop the day from ending so he swallowed the moon and the sun had to wait for the moon to come out. As Hanuman was quite strong he simply picked up the whole mountain and left. He brought it to *Shri Ramnagar* and told Vishvamitra to identify the *buti* because he did not know which one it was. Vishvamitra took the *buti* and made a balm and put it on Lakshman who was restored to life again. Hanuman let the moon out but his cheeks remained puffed up.



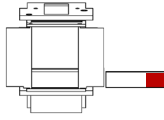
K10. Sani Maharaj

There was a man called Puran Singh whose sister Moru Bai was married and lived at a distance. One day his mother called him and asked him to go fetch his sister on the occasion of the Diwali festival. Puran Singh told his mother he had too much work so he would go another time. Moreover he had been warned by an astrologer of bad times during that period so he wanted to avoid leaving home. But his mother wanted to see her daughter and insisted he leave home to bring his sister. When he reached his sister's house (her in-laws) they all greeted him and made him feel comfortable. They offered him tea and then Puran and his sister went inside the house to have a chat.

The sister felt hot so she removed her very big necklace and put it on a stand that was made of a wooden peacock. She put the necklace around the neck of the peacock and soon went off to cook for her brother. While she was away the brother noticed something odd. The wooden peacock had turned around and was eating his sister's necklace. When she returned he told his sister about the peacock devouring her necklace. The sister was astonished. How could a wooden peacock eat a necklace?? She pleaded with her brother to return the necklace. When he clarified that he had not taken it she was angry and admonished him reminding him that she would earn a bad name and so would he for stealing her necklace. It was a very expensive necklace made of diamonds worth lakhs. The brother had his snack and then told her quite clearly that he had not stolen anything. He had actually witnessed the peacock eating the necklace. The sister would not believe him.

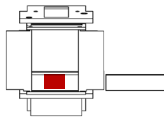
She stopped him from returning to their village as he could not steal from his own sister. She also refused to go with him and felt he had come to insult her in the presence of her in-laws. She was upset. So she told her husband about the loss of her necklace. He was furious and searched the brother. When the husband did not find anything on Puran Singh he locked him up. Since he was under the influence of Sani Maharaj no one would believe him. He had been advised not to leave home. But he had. He was locked up for seven days. After seven days they got him out and gave him a snack to eat. All the people from the village came to see the man who would stoop to steal from his own sister. He had come to take her home and he had stolen her necklace. So while all the people gathered to see him the wooden peacock moved and began to eat from his plate. And from his rear he threw out the necklace. Everyone watched with disbelief the wooden peacock eating and shedding the necklace from his rear.

Now everyone knew that Puran Singh was not a thief but his stars were bad, he was under Sani maharaj's influence and in such a situation a sister also can doubt her brother. Why? Because when Sani Maharaj descends on anyone, even our clothes begin to bite us.



K11. Garud Devji

Garud is the vehicle of Vishnu and Lakshmi. Garud goes to heaven and get news from there. He finds out how long someone will live, what joys and sorrows await the people. He visits Dharmraj ji Maharaj (god of death) and finds out all the details and then comes and tells people what awaits them. Once when a devout man asked him if he would be blessed with children Garud told him that fate did not intend him to have children. But the man was determined, underwent a lot of hardships by doing penance and performing austerities, so God had to change his mind and Garud the all-knowing was proved wrong.

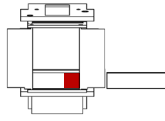


K12. Kundana Bai's gift to the Kaavadiyas

Kundana Bai was a brahmani priest in Kashi. She was a very devout woman. And because she was so devout she had been given a boon to be immortal. Each morning she would be a small child, in the day she would turn into a young woman and at night she would become an old lady. It was believed that she was never to be seen by any man. Only women could see her.

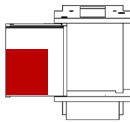
The storytellers *kaavadiyas* were looking for work. She gave the *Kaavads* to the *Kaavadiyas* so they could make a living. In return they were to give half their earnings to her towards the feeding of cows. When Kundana bai took *Samadhi* the storytellers began to look for artists in Rajasthan to make the *Kaavads* for them and thus continued with the tradition.

Kundana Bai was also considered to be the eternal bride. Married women in Rajasthan used to donate their own clothes like their blouses kanchli. This they did so that they too would be eternal brides. They prayed for the longevity of their husbands' lives. When people could not donate animals or money they would donate their clothes.



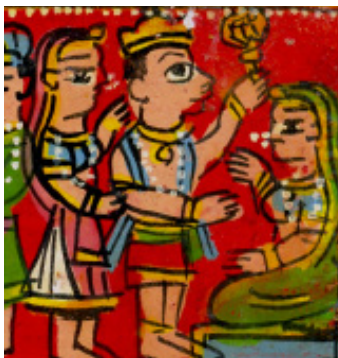
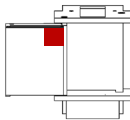
K13. Story of Kabir near the butcher

Kabirji Maharaj the weaver saint did not believe in possessions. He lived simply and did not even care if he had a proper house at all. He was content doing his meditation. He lived near a butcher's house. One day while he was meditating the butcher cut up a goat and the blood began to flow near Kabir. He became very sad although he did not say anything to the butcher. God appeared to him and asked him the reason for his sadness. When Kabir told him the reason, God said each person pays for their own deeds; you only reap what you sow. Then Kabir realized each person is responsible for their acts and he was not sad anymore.



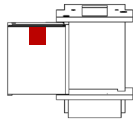
K14. Raavan and his pride

There was a huge ocean called Ratnagar Sagar near King Raavan's village. This body of water became so proud that it proclaimed there was no such ocean like it in the whole earth. When God saw how egoistic the ocean had become he made its water salty. Next to it was a beautiful *Chirni* tree. This tree too became very proud of its beauty. So God punished her by making her face black. Similarly, Raavan became very proud of his immunity so God came in the form of Ram and killed him. From Ratnagar Sagar come the demons who take away bad human beings, those who have done evil deeds. Others, who have done good and been kind and generous, are taken away in palanquins by God.



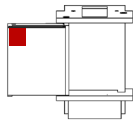
K15. Hanuman visits Sita in Lanka

Ram wanted to send Sita a message. He requested Hanuman to take his ring to Sita who was imprisoned by Raavan in Lanka. Hanuman flew to Lanka and then disguised himself as a squirrel (*tilodi*). When he presented the ring to Sita she recognized him as the messenger from Ram and was assured help was on the way. When Hanuman met Sita the goddess Lakshmi watched on.



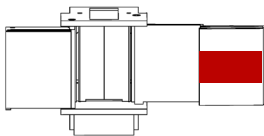
K16. A Sati being taken in a palki

When a married man dies. His wife becomes a sati and is taken away in a palanquin or *palki*. She was the daughter-in-law of Dhapu gujari who was a non-believer. But the daughter-in-law was a good devotee and became a sati, she went to heaven despite being the daughter-in-law of an atheist.



K17. Dhapu Gujari

Dhapu a Gujari, was an atheist and a liar (therefore painted green and she is also supposed to have black feet). She did not pray or worship. She never got salvation and took her husband Dhaniramji and three sons/ along with her to the darkness of hell. Her husband was released when Ganesha came in the form of an elephant and trampled upon him. And so he at least got his *moksha*.

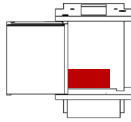


K18. Raja Dashrath and his queens

Shravan, a dutiful son, took his parents on a pilgrimage. Shravan left home carrying his parents in a Kaavad. His mother became thirsty so she asked him to stop and get her some water. When he left to fetch the water she warned him to make a noise before filling the water in the gourd. He forgot to make the noise and filled the water straight away. Raja Dashrath heard the sound and imagined it to be a wild animal. He killed Shravan with an arrow. When he realized he had killed a human being instead of an animal he went to Shravan asking for forgiveness. Shravan asked him to give his parents the water they wanted. When Shravan's mother realized that Dasrath had killed her son she cursed him to die of the same arrow. Dashrath filed the arrow down to a pin and left it there. The royal barber found this and decided to use it for cleaning the King's nails. When cleaning the King's nails one day he touched a broken skin on his nail with that pin. It created a huge amount of heat in Dashrath's body.

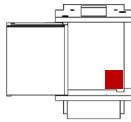
He felt his body was on fire. And the only way he could keep the fire down was to place this finger in his Queen Kekayi's mouth, as she was blessed with a very cool tongue.

As long his finger was in her mouth he would be fine but the moment he pulled it out he would be on fire. Kekayi asked for her son to become King for the return of such a service where she was not able to do anything or go anywhere. Raja Dashrath had to agree. But one day when she had to leave him to go for a bath it finally killed him and the curse came to pass.



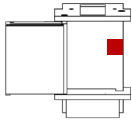
K19. Pandavas

There were five Pandavas; Arjun, Bheem, Sahdev, Jetal (Yudhishtir) and Nakula, sons of Kunta and King Pind. Their teacher was Durvasa ji Maharaj, and Arjun's wife was Dropda. King Pind died in strange circumstances for which the Pandavas were advised to do a prayer (*pooja*) on a moonless night (*amavasya*) that fell on a monday. For this day to come they did penance and performed austerities for twelve years but the moonless night did not come on a monday. Disappointed, they finally left for the Himalayas. And in their despair they cursed the elusive Amavasya night saying that in the dark epoch to come (*Kali-yug*) the *amavasya* night would come on many Mondays but no one would recognize it or give it any importance.



K20. Kunta and Dropda

Guru Durvasa would have meal only with the Pandavas because they were honest and pure. The Kervas (Kauravas) challenged the Pandavas to prove their worth. Mother Kunta took a burnt mango seed and planted it in the ground. Despite of this the seed took root and the tree sprouted and grew into a mango tree. Thus she proved their worth and Guru Durvasa had a meal with them.

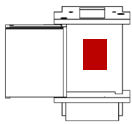


K21. Meerabai and Rana Kumbha

Meera Bai was born in Merta and Rana Kumbha was from Chittor. When Meera was a small girl she saw a wedding procession and asked her mother what the procession was all about. Her mother explained that it was a wedding and that every girl gets married some day. She then asked her mother who she would get married to. At that moment her mother did not know what to say so she picked up a statue of Krishna and said Meera would get married to Krishna.

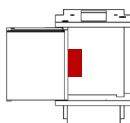
Meera took this very seriously. So when she grew up and was married off to Rana Kumbha she refused to acknowledge him as her husband. Instead she went about singing praises and songs of Krishna her true soulmate. She also took Raidas Chamar (a Bhakti saint who was a cobbler) as her Guru and spent a lot of time dancing in temples and spending time with the lower caste. This made the Rana very angry. So he decided to kill her.

He offered her a cup of poison which she took as elixir. And she was untouched. Next he gave a basket of snakes which turned to a heap of flowers. Finally Meera went to Dwarka and disappeared inside the temple. She went to heaven and her husband got left behind in the wilderness. Meera was the darling of the Gods and Rana was rigid like the dried up tree stump in a forest. Had the Rana been wise she would have taken him along to Baikunth (heaven).



K22. Krishna found in Kashi

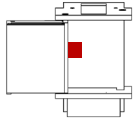
Once, people were very miserable because they had no food to eat. They had no choice but to hang themselves from a banyan tree. They would write their names and their wishes on a leaf of the tree and then hang themselves. Their messages were read and honored by Gods. Now the Gods became really worried. If everyone were to do this where would they accommodate so many people? Then Krishna came down to earth and made their hearts shrink so that people lost their courage to commit suicides. Krishna was born on a banyan tree. When he was hungry he would suck his toe and that was enough for him to survive on. He showed people how to survive.



K23.Story of Padmavati, Raja Bisal and Raja Mordhaj

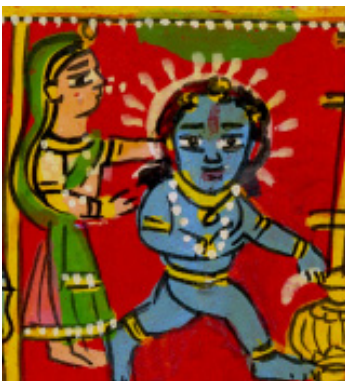
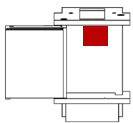
Raja Bisal had seven daughters. One day he asked them to tell him who provided for their well being. All but one (Padmavati) said our father the King is our sole provider. Padmavati however said it was not he but her own fate and god who provided for her. This made the king very angry. He called for the Brahmin and ordered him to go out of the gates of the village and find the first being to get Padmavati married. When the priest came out in search of the groom for the princess, he could not see anyone except a peacock with a broken leg. He felt sad for the princess as he has seen her grow; and fearing for his own *Karma* he returned and told the king that he did not find anyone. The king sent him again the next day and again he found the peacock with a broken leg there. He returned and said the same thing to the king as the previous day. The king was now in a rage and threatened the Brahmin that if he did not find anyone this time his head would be chopped off. Therefore when the Brahmin found the same broken-leg peacock for the third time he resigned to the idea that this is probably the fate of the princess. He offered a coconut to the peacock and told him to come to the palace on a particular date when he would be married to the princess Padmavati. Meanwhile the king also arranged the weddings of his other daughters. While all others received chariots full of gifts, Padmavati went to the jungle on a cheap cart with the broken-leg peacock. While they were in the jungle the peacock kept flying away from Padmavati and she kept calling out to him to have his meal as she was now a dutiful wife and could not think of eating without feeding her husband first. However, the peacock went and perched himself on a tall tree. A storm brewed in the night, breaking the branch with the peacock who fell to his death. Padmavati called out to the Gods wailing why she suffered such a destiny when she had been faithfully devoted to the gods. The gods Shiva and Parvati heard her plea and came down to ask her why she was in distress. After listening to her they decided to transform the peacock into a man. Padmavati asked them not to do that since her father may think she had run off with another man. Therefore they transformed the peacock into a prince with the crest of the peacock (Raja Mordhaj) and gave him a kingdom. They also transported them to a new kingdom where they lived happily.

When Padmavati's father heard of a new kingdom in his neighborhood, he decided to befriend his neighbors. There he recognized his daughter and she told him how her fate had provided for her always. He accepted her argument and was ashamed.



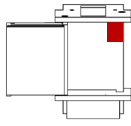
K24. Raja Mordhaj's devotion to Krishna

One day, Arjun went to Krishna and boasted that Krishna could never find a more devout follower than Arjun. Krishna assured him that he did have many devotees more devout than Arjun. To prove this point they decided to visit Raja Mordhaj. Raja Mordhaj was married to King Bisal's daughter Padmavati. Raja Mordhaj and Padmavati had a son Ratan Kamal. Raja Mordhaj was delighted to receive Krishna and Arjun and offered them a meal. Krishna agreed to eat in his house only if Raja Mordhaj would first feed his pet lion with a small boy. Raja Mordhaj was the only person with a small boy so he sought his wife's opinion as to what he should do since God had made such a condition. She said god had the right to take what he had given so she agreed to sacrifice their son to the lion. Raja Mordhaj and wife Padmavati offered their son to the lion. However, god said the lion would only eat their son Ratan Kamal if they would slice him up in half. Raja Mordhaj and his wife held a *neem* leaf over the head of their son and the boy got sliced miraculously. They asked Krishna and Arjun to have their meal now that the condition was fulfilled. However, Krishna said he could only eat his meal if a small boy ate along with him. Raja Mordhaj had no other sons. So he went into the village but no one wanted to let him take their child because they had all seen what had happened to his own child. Disappointed he returned home and apologized to Krishna saying he had failed to get him a child. And he would accept his fate if God did not dine with him. Krishna asked him to call out his son's name. Raja Mordhaj was surprised but he did what he was asked to do. As soon as he called out his son's name, Ratan Kamal came running down the steps and quickly sat down to eat with the gods. Arjun was humbled as he saw for himself the devotion of Raja Mordhaj and Padmavati and agreed with Krishna that he did indeed have a more devout devotee than Arjun himself.



K25. Chandra Gujodi/Gujari and Kaanji Maharaj

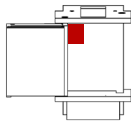
Kaanji Maharaj (Baby Krishna) loved butter. And when the Gujari Chandra would churn the butter he would go and steal it. She would complain to his mother. His mother got fed up and tied him up to a Kadamb tree. Such were the antics of god but he was punished by his mother.



K26. Holka(Holika) and Prahlad

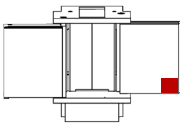
Hrinakush had a sister, Holka. She had received a boon from Vishnu that she could bathe in fire and was never to die of wood or fire. The only condition was she must never touch a man. Now Holka was very fond of baby Prahlad. So she picked up the little boy and put him on her lap. As soon as her skin touched his, she fell dead and Prahlad walked away.

The same image is used to tell the story of Krishna and Pootana by some tellers



K27.Indrapankh Bird attacking the elephant

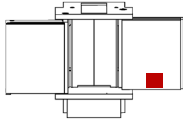
Once there was an elephant that trampled a tree on which the bird Indrapankh or Mahapankh had laid her eggs. The elephant was hungry in the forest and in his anger had broken the tree. The bird was very unhappy and attacked the elephant. And so angry was the bird that it kept attacking the elephant making his life miserable. He had to apologize to the bird profusely and the bird finally let go of him.



K28. Dhanna Bhagat and his Kheti

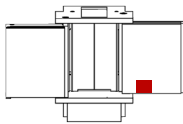
Dhanna Bhagat was a very devout farmer. He would bestow many gifts on *sadhus* and *rishis*. One day his wife asked him to go plant seeds in the field and warned him not to waste time or get distracted. As he was going, he met with a group of religious men and got so involved listening to them that out of gratitude he gave them all his seeds. He then picked up a few seeds of *Tumba*(*Citrullus Colocynthis*) and he planted those seeds in his field. Now every time his wife decided to accompany him to the field he dissuaded her from coming. One day out of curiosity she went to the fields to see how their crop was coming along.

She was shocked to see there was nothing like a crop. There were just a few tumbas on the ground. She was so furious that she picked one and dashed it to the ground. As soon as it hit the ground it cracked open. To their utter disbelief it was full of diamonds and gems. Therefore it is said that Dhanna Bhagat sowed the seeds of *tumba* and found pearls and diamonds. This is the fruit of faith and worship.



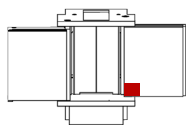
K29.Kubaram Kumbhar

Kubaramji was a very devout potter. He would make six pots of clay in a day of which he would sell three and donate three. So God made his pot turn to gold. Still he distributed the pots keeping only what he needed. He was not swayed by the gold and continued to share his wealth with the needy.



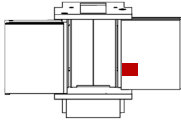
K30.Raidas Chamar

Raidas Chamar used to make *jutis*(shoes). Like Kuba Kumbhar (Kuba the potter) he too was a devout man and would make two pairs to sell and donate two pairs of shoes. His shoes also turned to gold. Because he was a *shudra* he was not allowed to take water from the well and he was not allowed to come near or touch anyone. Then Ganga came to his *kund* (water tank) where he would soak the leather. Therefore he did not have to go looking for water. When that water touched anyone s/he would get the knowledge of three worlds. Anyone who dared to drink that water with soaking leather shoes would be enlightened. Meera's in laws used to live in Chittor so she began going to Raidas' place where she drank the water from the *kund* and it gave her the knowledge of all the three worlds and she took him as her Guru.



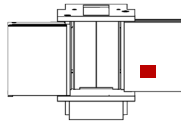
K31. Sant Kabir and his chela Kamaal

One day Kabirji was wandering around the steps along the river (*ghats*) when he saw a body floating by. As soon as it touched him it came alive. It was a young man whom he took home and called him *Kamaal* (miracle). A king from Rajasthan came to Varanasi for a cure from leprosy. He was advised to meet Kabirji Maharaj and as the king went looking he accidentally met Kamaal on the ghats. When he asked Kamaal about Kabirji's whereabouts the chela wanted to know the reason for his search. So the king explained the purpose of his visit. Kamaal told him that the task was so simple which even he, the pupil could cure him of; therefore he need not bother meeting the Guru. The king agreed to be cured by Kamaal; together they went to the river bank and Kamaal asked him to dip himself in the water while chanting the name of Shri Ram. When the king took a dip he was so cold that he barely called the name of Ram and jumped out. There was no visible difference on his skin. So Kamaal asked him to concentrate and chant the name of God with all honesty and sincerity. But again he was too cold to speak the name with any feeling. Now the pupil got so exasperated that he asked the king to allow him to help him. When the king went in for a dip Kamaal pushed and held the king's head under water as a result of which the king called out God's name in earnest, pleading to be saved. His skin cleared completely and he was cured of the dreadful disease. Quite pleased with himself the pupil went home to his guru Kabirji and told him about his success. After Kabir heard him he slapped the boy, scolding him for wasting God's name three times for one man. He asked the pupil to go visit Tulsidas to understand the value of God's name. Tulsidas told Kamaal to write Jai Shree Ram on a *tulsi* (holy basil) leaf and dip it in water and then sprinkle it on as many victims of leprosy. When he did that he cured about two thousand people. The overjoyed pupil returned to tell his Guru about his resounding success. Again Kabir slapped him and sent him to Surdas to fully understand the meaning of the name of God. Surdas who was blind asked Kamaal to write only half the name of Ram that is Ra to test its potency. Therefore with chanting just half of his name the pupil was able to cure thousands of people. Finally Kabirdas was pleased the pupil had understood the enormity of chanting God's name.



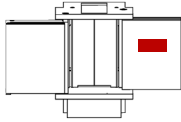
K32. Ginka bai

Ginka Bai was a prostitute. She was also a devotee of the Lord. Because of her profession she was not able to find a Guru nor would anyone accept any charity from her. She was upset with God because even a butcher had a chance of achieving salvation but not her? So she was advised to teach her parrot the name of God during the day then she too would find salvation. This parrot was none other than her own soul. She taught the parrot to chant God's name and thus became immortal herself.



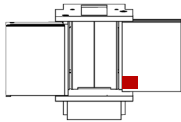
K33. Sen Bhagat who was saved by his faith in God

Sen bhagat was a very devout man and the royal barber whose duty was to shave the King every day. The king was quite fastidious and a staunch disciplinarian. He was not known to take kindly to anyone being late. The king had a terrible allergy on his face and the barber had to be extremely careful while shaving him. One day Sen Bhagat got busy praying and looking after some sadhus and rishis who were visiting the town. As a result he got late. While rushing to the palace he was quite sure that a punishment awaited him from the king. But as soon as he arrived he saw the king was already shaved and his allergy was gone. When the king saw Sen Bhagat he was surprised and asked him why was he back for the second time in the day? The king was pleased nonetheless and said he had not thanked him adequately earlier in the day but would like to thank him properly by showering him with gifts. And thus Sen bhagat realized it was God who had impersonated Sen bhagat so the king would not be furious with him for coming late and punish him severely on that account. When a person is so devout even the gods come to their rescue.



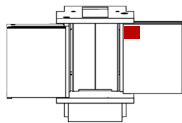
K34. Neni bai's *Mayero*

Narsinh Bhagat was a staunch devotee of god. He was always singing the praises of god and feeding holy men. His daughter Neni Bai's child was getting married. As was the custom the maternal uncle is supposed to bring gifts *mayero* for the wedding. Since Neni Bai did not have a maternal uncle it was left to Narsinh, her father to perform the ritual of *mayero*. Narsinh had no money as he had given off everything to the needy and to holy men and even the cart in which he traveled was broken. When his daughter saw him arrive with hardly anything she was distraught. She asked her father to leave quietly but he insisted on being around and began to sing praises of god. To his daughter's amazement the cart was transformed (by Krishna *Khati*) by the time the people arrived and it was filled with beautiful ornaments (made by Anada Sonar) and clothes worth fifty six crores of rupees. So God came to help him because Narsinh was such a devout *bhagat* of God. Such a gift has never been given by anyone so far.



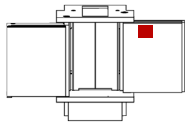
K35. Krishna *Khati* (carpenter)

There was a carpenter who would complain asking God why did he give him such a difficult profession. While others had lighter tools and could even work at home he was forced to travel all over the place with these heavy tools to repair broken wheels etc. And then God transformed himself into Krishna *Khati* (Krishna the carpenter) who repaired Narsinh's cart so that he reached his daughter's place on time. Then onwards the carpenter came to be highly respected.



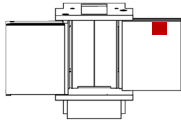
K36. Meerabai goes to heaven

Meera was the darling of God. He sent his angels to bring her to heaven but her husband Rana Kumbha insisted he should be taken too since he was her husband and she belonged to him. They said fine; tell us how much do you love God? He spread both his arms wide and said this much. So they asked him to hold on to a bamboo pole that the angels held between them and flew up to heaven. On the way they asked him again how much love he had for the gods. He let go of one hand and said this much. The angels said that is not what you showed us on land. Then he grabbed the pole with other hand and spread the free one and again they said it was not what he said on earth. Finally he let go of both hands to spread them out and fell down to earth. He was left behind while Meera was taken to heaven



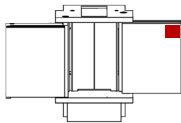
K37. Sireeyade who saved the kittens

Sireeyade was a very devout woman from the potter community. She lived in the time of Hirnakush. Hirnakush had a boon from god that made him invincible. He could not be killed by any weapon or poison, he would neither die in the day or night. As a result he became so proud that he wanted his entire kingdom to chant his name instead of lord Ram. Sireeyade was a Ram devotee. Once when the kiln was lit she realized that there were some kittens hiding in one of the pots that were being baked. She knew that if she chanted the name of Hirnakush there were no chances of the kittens coming out alive. So she and her husband Udan de began to chant Ram's name. Prahlad the son of Hirnakush was passing by and he wondered why someone was chanting Ram's name and not that of his father. He stopped by and asked Sireeyade why she was not chanting his father's name. She told him she had immense faith in Ram. She planted two saplings of Tulsi, one in the name of Hirnakush and one in the name of Ram. And the one with Hirnakush had withered away whereas the one with Ram's name had blossomed and grown. Prahlad asked her how many days were the kittens inside the oven. She told him it had already been three days. Finally when the oven cooled and the pots were baked the kittens jumped out of the pots as if nothing had ever happened. When Prahlad saw this he was so impressed that he too began to chant the name of Ram. When the king found that his own son was not chanting his name he ordered him to jump off a wall. He did that and was unhurt. Then he asked him to hug a hot iron pillar to see how Ram would save him. He was a little shaken but then he saw a little ant walking on the burning pole so he took this as a sign from God and hugged the pillar and was unscathed. The King was furious and then asked his son to sit on a pile of burning wood with his sister Hodka who had the boon of bathing with fire. She could not burn unless she touched a man. She came in contact with Prahlad and was burnt immediately. Prahlad was treated very poorly by his father. He pleaded with god calling on him to come save him. Then god took the form of a demon and killed Hirnakush in the evening hours with his nails. That was the end of Hirnakush and Sireeyade became immortal because she popularised the name of Ram.



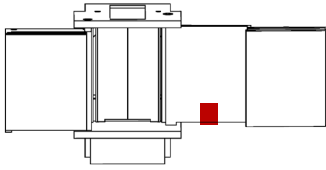
K38. Ganesh is worshipped first

When Sita came of age her father Janak invited several contestants from all over to break a stone of 25 quintals with a bow. Even Sita was able to lift it with her finger to sweep the floor beneath it. Whoever would lift the stone would marry Sita. Ram and Lakshman discussed how to achieve this. Ram asked Lakshman to break the stone and marry Sita. Lakshman said he would break it but would not marry Sita as he had decided to lead a life of celibacy. Therefore Ram became Sita's suitor. Ram and Sita were to be married and the invitation to the wedding was also sent to Lord Shiva. Shiva felt he was too old to travel so he asked his son Ganesh to go in his place. When the procession party realized that it was Ganesh instead of Shiva who was to accompany them they were disappointed. Some were adamant that they would not join the procession if this elephant headed Ganesh went along with them. They made several excuses to not take him along. They told him to stay back and be the first to receive the bride when she came. He began to sulk and sat quietly in a corner. Now the procession with Ram and family took off in a horse carriage. Ganesh took his mice army and got the road all dug up so that the chariot had a great difficulty in moving. They were anxious to reach in time but the road was miserable. The wise ones got together and tried to figure out the cause for this upheaval. Then one of them realized that Ganesh/Gajanand was not with them and it was possible it was he who caused the roads to be destroyed. Gajanand was listening on from behind a bush and as soon as he heard them mention his name he came out. They apologized to him and said henceforth his name would be taken first before any celebration or ritual. He got his mice army to clear the road and the procession went off smoothly.



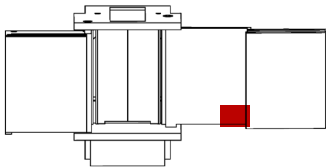
K39. Krishna takes care of rishi munis

Once there were some water nymphs (*parees*) that would bathe naked in the river. They would distract all the rishi munis who were meditating by the banks of the river. Shri Krishna came to their rescue by placing himself on a tree so that they would not come out of the water and the sadhus could meditate in peace.



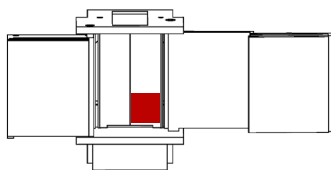
K40. Bhagirath got the Ganges to Earth

Bhagirath was a prince whose father did not have a peaceful death. He was told that unless he could put some holy water of the Ganges on his father's ashes there would be no peace for the dead man. He prayed to Ganga and she said he could take the water in a sieve because his father had been so evil this was the best she would suggest. Since he could not take the water that far he had to invoke divine intervention. Then he did penance (tapasya) for ten years standing on one leg till Lord Vishnu appeared and told him to take Shiva's help to placate Ganga because she was quite aggressive and could cause a deluge in the world. So he prayed for another ten years to Shiva who appeared and said he would help break the fall of Ganga if she agreed to come down. So he prayed another five years to Ganga and told her Shiva would help in avoiding the deluge if she came down through his hair. She agreed although it took a bit of time because Shiva also had a score to settle with Ganga and made her disappear in his hair for some time. Bhagirath was desperate. He prayed to Shiva to release Ganga so that he could perform the final rites for his father. Because of his devotion and perseverance the Ganges was released and came out of Gau Mukh.



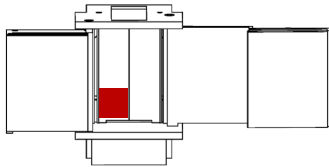
K41. Story of the stingy Laluprasad who swore not to donate

There was a very miserly person called Laluprasad who swore never to make a donation. A holy man who was asking for donation was also refused. However, he told the miserly man of his impending death and asked him to visit Badrinath. The miserly man goes to Badrinath but refuses to do charity. Even so, because he makes the pilgrimage he goes to heaven and is forgiven and achieves *mukti*.



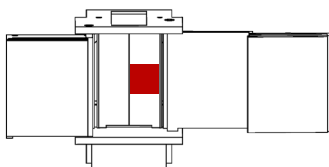
K42. Story of Raja Harishchand and Taramati Rani

Raja Harishchandra was a very honest king. He was known never to tell a lie. Once, God came to test his faith. He told Harishchandra to simply leave the palace. He walked off with just his wife and son. Now the God disguised as a priest asked him to give him a donation (*Dakshina*) of half a kilo of gold. The king had left everything behind so how could he produce this wealth? God would not hear of it. He said he could grant him time but he must give him the dakshina. So he promises to work and give the half kg of gold in a few months time. Harishchandra and family reach another kingdom and go looking for work. They beg of the King of that land to give them work. The King intervenes on their behalf and gets them jobs. Harishchandra got a job at a cremation ground. For every cremation he receives a gold coin. His wife Taramati got a job at a prostitute's house who is very jealous of her royal status, so she gives her difficult tasks to do every day. Their son Rohitdas (Roidas) is appointed by the King of that land to pluck flowers for the prayer every morning. The prostitute asks Taramati to get a huge pot of water from the pond and tells her if she breaks the pot she will lose her job. Taramati finds it very hard to lift the pot and asks her husband to help her. But he says he cannot because each one must do their own job. He gives her a solution though. He asks her to walk into the water until the water comes to her shoulders and then place the pot of water on her head. So she manages to retain her job. Their son gets bitten by a snake in the garden while he is plucking the flowers for the king. The king advises him to go to his mother. Taramati runs around trying to find a cure for the snakebite. No help is given. The son dies. She takes the son to the cremation ground. Her husband refuses to cremate the child without being paid the gold coin. Taramati asks Harishchandra to kill her because she has no use of her life. He asks her to kill him because he does not want to live either. While all this is going on and they are about to kill each other God appears and revives the son. Harishchandra says he still has to work for the King to pay the priest but God takes back his promise returns his kingdom and past glory to him.



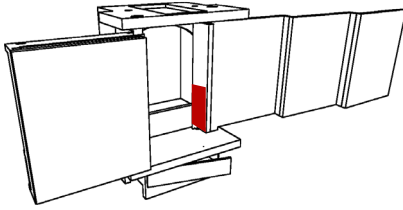
K43. Duti Bai

Duti Bai is childless and a bad gossip. She is so nasty that she kicks her mother-in-law and eats the food meant for young pregnant women. She is also very disrespectful of her father-in-law. For all this bad behavior she goes to hell *narak* and with her she takes along three of her neighbors.



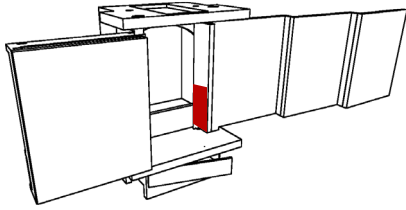
K44. Hanuman becomes the protector of Ram and Lakshman

Hanuman is carrying Ram and Lakshman to the battleground to fight Raavan. He has the power to fly and grow to any size he wants. He is able to fly because he was born from the union of Pavan the God of wind and Anjani, the daughter of Ahalya.



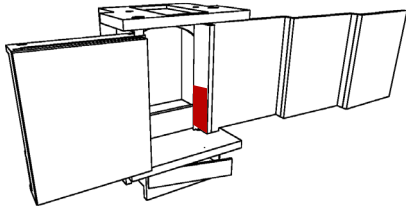
K45. Shravan's parents

Shravan's parents were not always blind. Shravan's father Dhanishta had renounced all pleasures. He went to Lord Vishnu seeking his advice for a quiet place to meditate. He was told to go where Ram lived. He entered a cave and as he kept going he began to feel lighter and better till he felt very calm in one place and he settled there. This was the place just below Shri Ram's house. Ram's house was above and Dhanishta sat below underground. As it happened to be a household Dashrath's sister Satviksha urinated on the ground above and it trickled down and touched the rishi who got defiled. As a result a vine of desire grew from his navel and emerged above the ground. The lady of the house saw the vine and began to water it. It grew. Someone else tied it to a branch and it climbed. And finally it came to the floor of Satviksha who was a young unmarried woman. A flower grew from the vine and gave off a heady perfume. She took the flower and rubbed it in her hands. With that action she became pregnant. When the household noticed her condition they sent Sita to inquire about the man in her life. The young woman said she has only seen her father, the sun and the moon. And yes, after rubbing the flower from the vine she had noticed changes in her body. Sita divined the rishi with her powers and told the family where he could be found. They followed the vine underground and discovered the meditating Dhanishta. The rishi was told either to marry the lady or die. He married the lady on a condition that he would never see her. So he took out his eyes and donated them. The young lady also did the same. She too did not wish to see him. And so Shravan's was born of an immaculate conception. And the *Kaavadiya Bhats* are the progeny of Shravan Kumar.



K46. Shravan's wife Revati

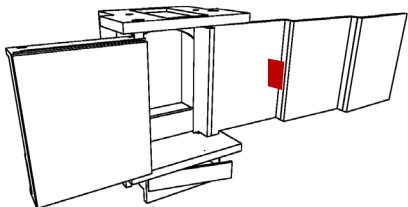
Shravan grew up looking after his parents. He cooked and cleaned for them. A king from a neighboring country wanted his daughter Revati to be married to Shravan. Revati liked Shravan but she did not like his parents, because they were blind and she feared she would be expected to do everything for them. She decided she would kill them by starving them. She got a pot made with a division inside which could not be seen from the outside. On one side she cooked *Rab* (maize water) and the other side *Rabdi* (sweetened milk). She fed the parents *Rab* and her husband *Rabdi*. Years went by. One day, Shravan was bathing so he gave his share of food to his father with the intention of having his lunch later. When the father ate the *Rabdi* he asked Shravan if there was a festival being celebrated because he had not eaten *Rabdi* in a long time. When Shravan asked his wife why his parents never got *Rabdi* to eat she showed him the pot from the outside to prove that they have been treated equally. When the parents denied ever having eaten it she called them senile. Shravan dreamt about the pot at night and in the morning went to examine it. He got furious and threw the pot down. It broke and her deceit was revealed. Shravan sent her away and to make amends took his parents on a pilgrimage.



K47. Shravan Kaavadiya

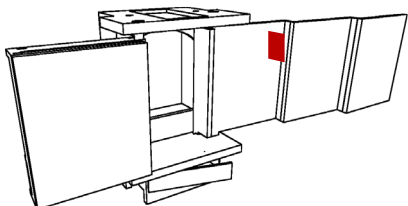
Shravan was the nephew of King Dashrath. When he discovered that his wife Revati was being unfair to his parents and ill-treating them he sent her away and begged for penance. As a part of his penance he was asked to take his parents on a pilgrimage to various spots and cleanse them with the holy waters. One day when they were near the kingdom of Raja Dashrath his mother asked Shravan to fetch them water to drink. She cautioned him to make some noise prior to dipping the gourd into the water. Shravan forgot to make the sound. On the other side King Dashrath heard the sound and thinking it was an animal shot him with his arrow that had fire in it (*Agnibaan*).

When Dashrath heard him crying out in pain he realized he had killed his nephew Shravan. He apologized and explained it was an accident so Shravan requested him to give the water to his thirsty parents and died without cursing him. When Shravan's mother heard of her son's death she cursed him to die with the same arrow that he used to kill their son. After cursing Dashrath both parents died.



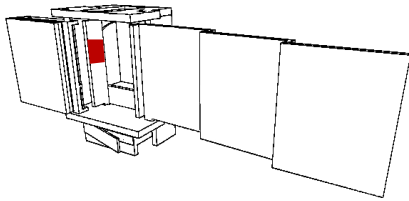
K48. Ma Jagdamba Durga Sheronwali on Lion

There was a place in Pakistan called Himlad where lived Avad Daan who had seven daughters and a son. The children lost both their parents and had to fend for themselves. It was a Muslim country and the King of that land wanted to marry the sisters. They decided to run away with their brother Bheru. They had to cross a big body of water so one of the daughters drank up all the water to create the way for the crossing. They wanted to cross into Rajasthan but there were Muslims in that place as well. Now the girls turned themselves into snakes (Naag Mesiyans) to avoid being harassed. When they came into Rajasthan it had many demons (*rakshasas*). The eldest daughter Durga was so strong that she could be compared to a lion. She destroyed all the demons and came to be known as Ma Durga Sheronwali and her nine forms (*Rupa*) are celebrated over nine nights during the *Nortas* in the month of March.



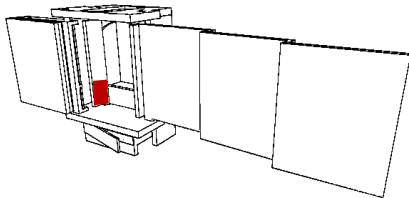
K49. Bemata

Raavan performed austerities (did *tapasya*) for Lord Vishnu. Pleased, Lord Vishnu granted him a wish. Raavan asked for some of the gods to serve him. He wanted Vayu or Pavan the wind god to sweep his floor, Indra to fill water in his house and Bemata of pressing the feet of Raavan. The Gods were really upset but Vishnu had to honour his word to Raavan. However, Vishnu sent Ram and Lakshman to kill Raavan. After Raavan's death the gods were free and each returned to their tasks. Vayu got busy with blowing the clouds and Indra was occupied with the rains and monsoon. Bemata wanted to do something substantial too. She was given the task of writing the future on the foreheads of all new born children. She also blesses women with children if they pray to her.



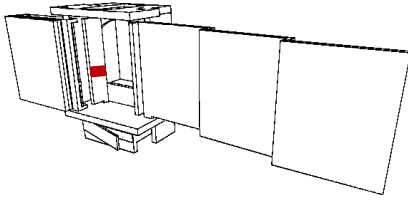
K50. Karma Jatni feeds a stone God

Karma Jatni was very keen to feed God. She made a special meal (*Kheech*) and offered it to a stone God. She appealed to him to eat. She pledged that till he ate she would neither take food nor drink water. She even covered her head with her dress to make a curtain in between in case God was shy to come. God got worried for her so he came and ate the meal. In this way she was blessed and gained recognition even though she was a *Jatni*. Every year this day is celebrated and *Kheech* is cooked in every household on Makarsankranti day.



K51. King Bali

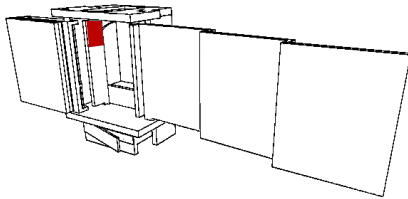
King Bali was a very generous man, he was so known that the gods feared he will go to heaven. They sent Vishvamitra to test him. The king received Vishvamitra with a lot of respect and great hospitality. Vishvamitra requested to be given two and half steps of earth. King Bali agreed. Vishvamitra then grew in size and covered the earth in two steps and for the half step there was no place so King Bali offered his own head. Vishvamitra put his foot on his head and thrust him down to the netherworld (*pataal*). Radhika was sitting there and was surprised to see Bali in such a place. He told her about the two and half steps and she was so moved by him that she tied a string around his wrist (*Dharmela*) making him her brother. This day has come to be called *Raksha Bandhan*. King Bali is known as the most generous one.



K52. Sudama meets Krishna

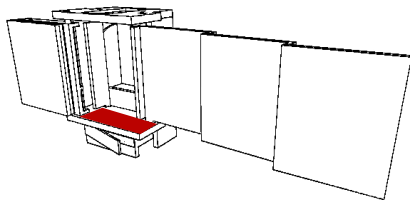
Sudama was so keen to meet God that he built himself a hut and began meditating, turning the beads. Even in his dreams he only thought of God. Vayu the wind god blew away his hut but Sudama was unperturbed. He continued praying. God was so pleased that he turned his small hut into a dazzling house of diamonds and pearls which Sudama had never ever dreamt of.

Version 2 Sudama the childhood friend of Krishna came to be very poor. Sudama's wife sent him to meet his friend Krishna to get some help. Krishna welcomed his long lost friend and embraced him. Sudama did not ask for anything and returned home only to find Krishna had asked Vishvakarma to build him a town called Sudamanagri. Sudama is celebrated as a true friend.



K53. Shankar Bhagwan on Kailash

Shankar Bhagwan went to Mount Kailash to meditate on the advice of Vishnu. Parvati was born from the conjunction of the rays of the sun and the moon. She went to heaven looking for a bridegroom. She was told no one got married in heaven so if she wanted to marry she would have to visit the land of mortals where such passions existed. She went looking and found Shiva on mount kailash. Those days there were very few people round. Shiva was pleased to see her and asked her to sit down but she would not till he promised to fulfill her wish. He agreed so she proposed to him. He was surprised because he had wanted to live a celibate life but here was a young woman wanting to marry him. He agreed on a condition that she went around the mountain 108 times and put such barriers that every time she came around, her head was cut off. But such was her resolve that a head grew back in its place. After a 108 times were over Shiva could do nothing but marry her. He wore all the 108 heads around his neck. All the blood that fell from those heads turned to henna (*mehndi*).



K54. Jagdev Punwar

Once two Kankali Ravs went to the kingdom of Chakve (very vast land belonging to the Parmars) and asked the king to make a generous donation. The king suggested they first visit his younger brother Jagdev Punwar and whatever donation he made they would receive it fourfold from the king. Jagdev Punwar was from the same family but he was poor and did not have much to offer. When he heard about the king's promise to the Ravs he beheaded himself and dared his brother to behead all four male members of his family. When the Kankali Ravs went to the king he was ashamed and admitted defeat as he could not keep his promise. Then Kali Ma appeared and threw some holy water (ambi ka piyodi) from the Ganges and restored Jagdev Punwar's life by attaching his head to the body.

APPENDIX II

Proppian functions of Individual Tales

K1 Poliyas

Story K1 Poliyas or Jai and Vijai	$\alpha \gamma \delta B \uparrow Q$	Functions
King Sultan has 108 wives		INITIAL SITUATION α
A son must not desire his step-mother		INTERDICTION γ
Both sons of the king desire their 13 year old step-mother		VIOLATION δ
God reads their minds		MEDIATION) B
They are moved from the palace to the gate in the company of lions		DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
They become the guardians of the shrine		RECOGNITION Q

K2 sun Moon and Ahalya

Story K2 Ahalya and the Sun and Moon	$\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \epsilon \zeta \eta \theta A B C \uparrow DEFGH \downarrow$	Functions
Ahalya is a beautiful woman married to Gautam Rishi		INITIAL SITUATION α
Her husband leaves every morning for his ritual bath to the Ganges		ABSENTATION β
A married woman cannot be desired by another man (implied interdiction)		INTERDICTION γ
The Sun and Moon are both desirous of her and daughter Anjani and plan to seduce them		VIOLATION δ
They study the daily routine of Ahalya's husband Gautam Rishi		RECONNAISSANCE ϵ
They observe he leaves every morning for his bath as soon as the rooster crows at 5 am		DELIVERY) ζ
They imitate the sound of the rooster at 3 am		TRICKERY) η
Gautam Rishi responds to the sound and leaves home		COMPLICITY) θ
The Sun forces himself onto Ahalya and the Moon seduces Anjani		VILLIANY) A
Ahalya calls out for help		LACK) a
No one responds		MEDIATION) B
The River Ganges asks Rishi to go back as she suspects deceit		BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Rishi returns home and learns the truth		DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
He curses wife Ahalya to be turned into a stone and daughter Anjani to be an unwed mother		FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Angry Ahalya keeps quiet and Anjani buries the lower part of her body.		HERO'S REACTION E
Only contact with Lord Vishnu will restore her real identity		PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F

Ahaya turned into a stone on the banks of the Ganges	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
She suffers many privations for twelve years	STRUGGLE H
Vishnu's feet touch the stone accidentally and Ahalya is restored to her human form	LACK LIQUIDATED K
She is returned to her husband	RETURN ↓

K3 Baba Ram Dev and Harji Bhati

Story 003 Baba Ram Dev and Harji Bhati $\alpha \beta a B D E F K Q$	Functions
Harji Bhati is a Rajput devotee of Bab Ram Dev	INITIAL SITUATION α
He leaves home to meditate	ABSENTATION β
Harji wishes to meet God	LACK) a
He meditates for twelve years	MEDIATION) B
God appears before him and asks him what he needs	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Harji replies he wants nothing	HERO'S REACTION E
God gives him a horse and a cow	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Harji's desire to meet god is fulfilled	LACK LIQUIDATED K
A fair is held in Osian every year in his honour	RECOGNITION Q

K4 Shravat bheelni

Story 04 Shravat Bheelni meets Ram and Lakshman $\alpha a D E F K Q$	Functions
Shravat (Shabri) is a Bheelni living in the jungle	INITIAL SITUATION α
Shravat (Shabri) aspires to meet God	LACK) a
Ram and Lakshman visit her	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
She does not have any food except a few berries which she offers them after tasting them for sweetness	HERO'S REACTION E
Ram eats her half-tasted fruit, Lakshman does not, he hides them and throws them away later	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Her wish to meet God is fulfilled	LACK LIQUIDATED K
The medicine from her berries saves Lakshman's life. She becomes immortal.	RECOGNITION) Q

K5 Sita's abduction

Story 005 Sita's abduction $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \varepsilon \zeta \eta \theta A a B C \uparrow D E F G K U$	Functions
Ram Sita and Lakshman are staying in the forest	INITIAL SITUATION α
Ram and Lakshman go out hunting	ABSENTATION β
It is wrong to desire another's wife	INTERDICTION γ
Raavan desires Sita	VIOLATION δ
Raavan finds out when Sita is alone	RECONNAISSANCE ε
Raavan disguises himself as a sadhu and comes begging for alms	TRICKERY) η
Sita crosses the line drawn by Ram to give Raavan food	COMPLICITY) θ
Raavan abducts Sita	VILLIANY) A
Ram is in search of Sita	LACK) a
Lakshman disguises himself as Mandodari and asks Raavan about his life breath	MEDIATION) B
Raavan tells him where his breath is secure, in the nostril of Saukaran the horse that draws the chariot of sun	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Ram and Lakshman leave for Lanka	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
Ram tells Lakshman about the direction of the arrow	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Lakshman waits for the sun to be straight up	HERO'S REACTION E
The arrow hits the bee in the horse's nostril and drops straight down into a pot of hot oil	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Raavan finally gets his death wish	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
Ram gets Sita back	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Raavan is punished for his crime	PUNISHMENT U

K6 Krishna and Ajmal Maharaj

Story K6 Krishna and Ajmal Maharaj $\alpha \beta a B C \uparrow D E F K \downarrow$	Functions
Ajmal Maharaj did not have any children	INITIAL SITUATION α
He left home to do penance for twelve years	ABSENTATION β
Ajmal Maharaj lacks a son and a moustache	LACK) a
He is advised in a dream to travel to Dwarka to meet god and get his wish granted	MEDIATION) B
He decides to visit Dwarka	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
He leaves for Dwarka and travels for many months	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
The priest asks him to enter the ocean to meet god	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
He goes into the sea	HERO'S REACTION E

He meets god who grants him a son and a moustache. He also promises to be born I his house	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Ajmal's wishes are granted	LACK LIQUIDATED K
He returns home	RETURN ↓

K7 Krishna Ajmal Maharaj and Meghwal

Story K7 Krishna, Ajmal Maharaj and Saira Meghwal $\alpha \beta a$ B C ↑D E F G H K Q	Functions
Ajmal Maharaj did not have any children	INITIAL SITUATION α
He left home to do penance for twelve years	ABSENTATION β
Ajmal Maharaj lacks a son and a moustache	LACK) a
He is advised in a dream to travel to Dwarka to meet god and get his wish granted	MEDIATION) B
He decides to visit Dwarka, Meghwal Saira requests him to plead on his behalf for a child	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
He travels for many months	DEPARTURE) ↑
The priest asks him to enter the ocean to meet god	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
He goes into the sea	HERO'S REACTION E
after he is granted a son He asks for Saira Meghwal God promises to be born himself	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
God is also born in Ajmal's house	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
He debates about giving him away to Saira Meghwal	STRUGGLE H
Saira gets Ajmal's son and Ajmal gets god in the form of Ram Dev	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Baba Ram Dev is Krishna's incarnation and Ram Devra in Rajasthan is considered a pilgrim place	RECOGNITION Q

K8 Ram Dev and Dali Bai

Story K8 Ram Dev and Dali bai αa B C ↑D E F G Q	Functions
Meghwal Saira has no children	INITIAL SITUATION α
Meghwal Saira lacks a child	LACK) a
Baba Ram Dev finds a young girl on a branch of a tree	MEDIATION) B
He brings her to Saira Meghwal	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Baba Ram dev decides to take Samadhi and Dali bai says that the pit has been dug for her samadhi	DEPARTURE) ↑
Ram Dev challenges Dali Bai to prove its her samadhi	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D

She says they will find her comb and string	HERO'S REACTION E
Dali bai is right and she gets her pit which may have been denied to her because she is a Meghwal	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Dali bai and Baba Ram Dev are buried side by side	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
Dali Bai is worshipped along with Baba Ram Dev and is therefore immortalized	RECOGNITION Q

K9 Hanuman brings Sanjeevani Buti

Story K9 Hanuman brings Sanjeevani Buti $\alpha aBC\uparrow DEGHJIKQ$	Functions
Lakshman is wounded in the battle	INITIAL SITUATION α
He needs treatment to survive	LACK) a
They approach Vishvamitra for help	MEDIATION) B
Vishvamitra suggests the herb Sanjeevani buti from the himalayas must be brought before sunset	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Hanuman is asked to go	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
He is gifte with ability to fly since birth	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
He flies to the Himalayas	HERO'S REACTION E
He reaches the Himalayas	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
He is unable to recognise the herb, the sun is about to set	STRUGGLE H
He swallows the moon so the sun cannot set, his cheeks swell up	BRANDING J
He brings the whole hill with him	VICTORY I
Lakshman's life is saved	LACK LIQUIDATED K
"Hanuman has swollen cheeks from swallowing the moon and it becomes his identity. The Sanjivani Buti is from Shravat Bheelni's berries that Lakshman did not eat"	RECOGNITION Q

K10 Puran Sinh Sani Maharaj

Story K10 Puran Sinh and Sani Maharaj $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta Aa B C DEFK$ $\downarrow$	Functions
Puran Sinh's sister Moru Bai is maariied and lives in another village	INITIAL SITUATION α
Puran Sinh's mother asks him to go fetch his sister	ABSENTATION β
Pruran has been advised not to leave home for a week becasuse a period of bad luck is aspected in his stars	INTERDICTION γ
He is forced to leave by his mother	VIOLATION δ
A wooden peacock eats Moru bai's necklace and Puran is framed	VILLIANY) A

Puran needs to prove his innocence	LACK) a
Puran appeals to his siter and brother-in-law	MEDIATION) B
He is locked up for a week	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
After a week he is given food to eat	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
He eats quietly	HERO'S REACTION E
The peacock eats from his plate and ejects out the necklace	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
His innocence is proved	LACK LIQUIDATED K
He returns home	RETURN ↓

K11 Garud Devji

Story K11 Garud Devji $\alpha\beta aBC\uparrow DEFK$	Functions
Garud is the vehicle of Lord Vishnu	INITIAL SITUATION α
He constantly travels between heaven and hell and knows what will happen	ABSENTATION β
A devotee does not have children	LACK) a
He requests Garud Dev to find out if he is destined to have children	MEDIATION) B
Garud Dev agrees to find out	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Garud flies up to heaven and gets the information	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
He tells the devotee he cannot have children	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Devotee appeals to god	HERO'S REACTION E
God blesses the devotee because he is so faithful	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Devotee is blessed with a male child	LACK LIQUIDATED K

K12 Kundana Bai

Story K12 Kundana Bai $\alpha\beta\gamma a\uparrow DEFKQ$	Functions
Kundana Bai is a Brahmin woman	INITIAL SITUATION α
She is born each day, morning she is a girl, afternoon a young woman and old in the evening	ABSENTATION β
She is never to be seen by any man	INTERDICTION γ
The Kaavadiyas need a means of livelihood they don't have their records / bahis	LACK) a

They go to Kashi	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
Kundana Bai gives them a Kaavad	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
They recite stories and collect donations for the cows which they share with her	HERO'S REACTION E
They get the identity of Kaavadiyas	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
The Kaavadiyas find their means of livelihood and a distinct identity	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Kundana Bai becomes immortal after taking Samadhi	RECOGNITION) Q

K13 Kabir living near the butcher

Story K13 Kabir and the butcher $\alpha \gamma$ DEFK	Functions
Kabir lives next to a butcher's shop	INITIAL SITUATION α
Killing of animals is sinful	INTERDICTION γ
Kabir is sad for the butcher because he is killing animals	LACK) a
God comes and asks Kabir why he is sad	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Kabir is sad the blood is flowing towards him	HERO'S REACTION E
God says everyone reaps what they sow	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Kabir understands each person is responsible for their actions	LACK LIQUIDATED K

K14 Raavan and his pride

Story K14 Raavan and his pride $\alpha \gamma \delta U$	Functions
Raavan lives near the ocean which has a Chirni tree	INITIAL SITUATION α
Pride and ego are harmful for the soul	INTERDICTION γ
The ocean is proud of its vastness, the tree of its beauty and Raavan for his strength	VIOLATION δ
The ocean turns salty, the tree turns black and Raavan loses his life	PUNISHMENT) U

K15 Hanuman visits Sita in Lanka

Story K15 Hanuman visits Sita in Lanka $\alpha a BC \uparrow DEF K$	Functions
Sita is a prisoner in Lanka	INITIAL SITUATION α
Ram needs to send her a message	LACK) a
Ram asks Hanuman for his help	MEDIATION) B

Hanuman agrees to go	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
He flies to Lanka	DEPARTURE) ↑
He shows Ram's ring to Sita	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
She recognises the ring	HERO'S REACTION E
Sita is assured help is on the way	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Ram's message reaches Sita	LACK LIQUIDATED K

K16 A sati taken in a Palki

Story K16 A sati being taken in a palanquin α $\beta a B \uparrow FGKQ$	Functions
There is a married couple	INITIAL SITUATION α
The man dies	ABSENTATION β
The woman loses her husband	LACK) a
She chooses to become Sati	MEDIATION) B
She is taken in a palanquin	DEPARTURE) ↑
A magical fire burns her on her husband's funeral pyre	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
She goes to another world	SPATIAL TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
Her faith unites her with her husband	LACK LIQUIDATED K
She becomes immortal	RECOGNITION) Q

K17 Dhapu Gujar

Story 017 Dhapu Gujar $\alpha \gamma \delta U$	Functions
Dhapu is a Gujar woman	INITIAL SITUATION α
A person must be religious and trust god	INTERDICTION γ
Dhapu does not believe in God or ritual, she also gossips and creates trouble	VIOLATION δ
She goes to hell along with those around her, she is painted green with black feet	PUNISHMENT U

K18 Dashrath kills Shravan

Story K18 King Dashrath and his queens $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta A a B C \uparrow D E F H U$	Functions
Shravan and Dashrath are related. He is Shravan's maternal uncle.	INITIAL SITUATION α
Shravan leaves home with his parents to take them on a pilgrimage	ABSENTATION β
Shravan's mother wants to drink water but she warns Shravan to make a noise before filling the water	INTERDICTION γ
Shravan forgets to make the noise before dipping the gourd in the pond to fill the water	VIOLATION δ
Dashrath shoots Shravan with an arrow	VILLIANY) A
Shravan's parents lose their son	LACK) a
Dashrath is cursed to die of the same arrow	MEDIATION) B
Dashrath files the arrow into a pin and leaves it there	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Shravan's parents die, Dashrath returns to his kingdom	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
The barber uses the same pin to clean Dashrath's nails	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
The pin creates a fire in his body, he requests Kekuva for help	HERO'S REACTION E
His wife Kekuva has a cool tongue and helps him. He finds relief when his finger is in her mouth	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Kekuva cannot do anything else all day. She has to be Dashrath to cool his finger. She bargains with Dashrath to make her son the King and send Ram to the forest for 14 years	STRUGGLE H
Dashrath dies of the same arrow (when Kekuva leaves him alone for some time) and the curse comes true	PUNISHMENT U

K19 Pandavas

Story K19 Paandavas $\alpha \beta a B C \uparrow D E G J$	Functions
There were five Paandavas whose father was Pind, mother Kunta and teacher Durvasa	INITIAL SITUATION α
King Pind died in strange circumstances	ABSENTATION β
King Pind's soul was not at peace	LACK) a
His sons the five Pandavas seek advise from holy men	MEDIATION) B
They are advised to offer a prayer on a moonless night that must fall on a Monday	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
The Pandavas do penance for 12 years for the Monday to fall on a moonless night	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$

The moonless night does not fall on a Monday for all the 12 years	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
The Pandavas give up	HERO'S REACTION E

K20 Kunta

Story K20 Kunta and Dropda $\alpha \gamma \delta a B D F K$	Functions
Guru Durvasa is invited for a meal. Kauravas challenge Pandavas to prove their faith	INITIAL SITUATION α
A burnt seed cannot be planted	INTERDICTION γ
The Pandavas challenge this saying faith can do everything	VIOLATION δ
Pandavas need to prove their faith in their Guru and God	LACK) a
Kunta plants the burnt seed	MEDIATION) B
The burnt mango seed takes root	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
It grows into a tree	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Guru Durvasa has a meal with the Pandavas	LACK LIQUIDATED K

K21Meera

Story 21 Meera and Rana Kumbha $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta A a B C D E F G K U$	Functions
Meera was told in her childhood that she would be Krishna's wife	INITIAL SITUATION α
She is married to Rana Kumbha and moves to Chittor	ABSENTATION β
A wife cannot deny consummation of marriage to husband	INTERDICTION γ
Meera refused to consummate her marriage to Rana as she was already a wife to Krishna	VIOLATION δ
Meera wants to be with Krishna	LACK) a
She looks for a guru	MEDIATION) B
Raidas chamar becomes her guru	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Angry husband offers Meera a cup of poison, later a basket of snakes	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Meera drinks the poison	HERO'S REACTION E
She is unharmed, the poison turns to elixir and the snakes become garlands	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
She goes to a Krishna temple in Dwarka and disappears inside	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G

Meera finds Krishna in heaven	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Rana gets left behind in the wilderness	PUNISHMENT U

K22 Krishna in Kashi

Story 22 Krishna in Kashi $\alpha \beta a B C \uparrow DEFHK$	Functions
People are starving, deprived of food and better life	INITIAL SITUATION α
They begin hanging themselves	ABSENTATION β
People need food and a better life, Gods are worried people are killing themselves	LACK) a
They leave messages for Gods on the tree on the kind of life they seek	MEDIATION) B
The Gods get worried, they cannot fulfill everyone's requests	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Krishna comes to Earth, he is born on Banyan tree	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
He makes people's hearts smaller	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
People are scared to die	HERO'S REACTION E
All the suicides stop	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
He survives sucking his toe	STRUGGLE H
Gods manage to make people scared of death and they stop killing themselves	LACK LIQUIDATED

K23 Padmavati and Raja bisal

Story K23 Raja Bisal and princess Padmavati $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \epsilon \zeta \eta \theta A a B C D E F G I K W$	Functions
Raja Bisal has seven daughters	INITIAL SITUATION α
They don't have a mother	ABSENTATION β
He asks them who provides for their well-being	INTERDICTION γ
All but one say its him but Padmavati says its God who provides for her	VIOLATION δ
Raja Bisal decides to test her faith	RECONNAISSANCE ϵ
He asks the priest to find anyone to get Padmavati married	DELIVERY) ζ
He gets her to marry a peacock	TRICKERY) η
She agrees to marry the peacock	COMPLICITY) θ
He sends her off to the jungle with the peacock	VILLIANY) A
The peacock dies in the jungle, Padmavati loses her husband	LACK) a
She cries out for help	MEDIATION) B

The Gods hear her	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
They come to her rescue and want to make the peacock into a prince	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
She pleads he should remain a peacock	HERO'S REACTION E
He is made into a prince with a peacock crest	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
They are provided with a new kingdom	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
Padmavati and Raja Mordhaj are happy in their new kingdom	VICTORY I
Her faith pays off, Padmavati finds her peacock prince	LACK LIQUIDATED K

K24 Raja Mordhaj, Arjun and Krishna

Story 24 Raja Mordhaj's devotion to Krishna $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta a B C D E F G I K$	Functions
Raja Mordhaj and Arjun are devoted to Krishna	INITIAL SITUATION α
Arjun goes to Krishna	ABSENTATION β
Krishna has many devotees (implying no one should think he is the only one)	INTERDICTION γ
Arjun boasts there is no one to equal him	VIOLATION δ
Krishna needs proof of Raja Mordhaj's devotion, Raja Mordhaj wants god to dine with him	LACK) a
He tells Raja Mordhaj that he can eat with him if he feeds his pet lion first with a small boy	MEDIATION) B
Devoted Raja Mordhaj and Padmavati together slice their own child	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Krishna wants a child to eat with him	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Raja mOrdhaj goes looking for a child in the village but returns empty handed	HERO'S REACTION E
Krishna asks him to call out his son's name	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Ratan Kamal returns back to life	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
Krishna is proved right	VICTORY I
Krishna and Arjun have the meal with Raja Mordhaj	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Raja Mordhaj's devotion is immortalized	RECOGNITION Q

K25 Chandra Gujodi

Story K25 Chandra Gujodi and Kaanji Maharaj $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \epsilon$ U	Functions
Baby Krishna, Kaanji Maharaj loves butter	INITIAL SITUATION α
He goes into the neighbourhood	ABSENTATION β
Kaanji is not supposed to steal	INTERDICTION γ
He steals butter from Chandra Gujori	VIOLATION δ
She complains to his mother	RECONNAISSANCE ϵ
Kaanji Maharaj is tied to a tree	PUNISHMENT U

K26 Holka and Prahlad

Story K26 Holka and Prahlad $\alpha \gamma \delta$ U	Functions
Holka has a boon she cannot die of fire	INITIAL SITUATION α
She is warned never to touch a man	INTERDICTION γ
She puts Prahlad on her lap	VIOLATION δ
She is consumed by fire	PUNISHMENT U

K27 Indrapankh and elephant

Story 27 Indrapankh and Elephant $\alpha\beta \gamma \delta \downarrow$ PrN	Functions
Indrapankh bird has babies in the nest	INITIAL SITUATION α
The bird goes off to get food	ABSENTATION β
No one is supposed to disturb the young babies	INTERDICTION γ
A hungry elephant knocks down the tree on which the bird has a nest	VIOLATION δ
The bird returns and finds his nest destroyed	RETURN $\downarrow$
The bird chases the elephant and troubles him	PURSUIT/CHASE Pr
The elephant apologises	SOLUTION N

K28 Dhanna Bhagat

Story K28 Dhanna Bhagat and his crop $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta$ a B F K Q	Functions
Dhanna Bhagat is a devout Jat	INITIAL SITUATION α
He leaves home to buy seeds	ABSENTATION β
His wife tells him to stay on track and not squander the money meant for seeds	INTERDICTION γ

He is so enchanted by some rishi that he gives them the seeds he has bought	VIOLATION δ
He has no seeds to sow	LACK) a
He prays and plants the seeds of Tumba to please his wife	MEDIATION) B
When his angry wife breaks the Tumba they find it is filled with diamonds and pearls	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Dhanna Bhagat is rewarded with a field of gems for his devotion	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Dhanna Bhagat's name becomes immortal	RECOGNITION Q

K29 Kuba Kumbhar

Story 29 Kuba Kumbhar α a B C D E F K Q	Functions
Kuba is a devout potter who is very generous	INITIAL SITUATION α
He realises there are many poor people who need help	LACK) a
He gives away half his pots as a donation everyday	MEDIATION) B
God is very pleased with his generosity	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
His pots turn to gold	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
He gives away half as usual	HERO'S REACTION E
Every day his pots turn to gold	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Everyone prospers	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Kubaram's name becomes immortal	RECOGNITION Q

K30 Raidas Chamar

Story K30 Raidas Chamar α γ a B C D E F K Q	Functions
Raidas Chamar is a shudra who makes shoes from leather	INITIAL SITUATION α
He cannot touch anyone and he cannot take water from the village well	INTERDICTION γ
He is not recognised and has no access to people or water	LACK) a
He does Bhakti. Raidas is very charitable and everyday donates half of what he earns	MEDIATION) B
Gods are pleased with him.	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Holy river Ganga flows in his water tank (kund)	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
He shares the water from the Ganga which makes a person knowledgeable of the three worlds	HERO'S REACTION E

Meera becomes his disciple	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
He gets water and is recognised as a Guru	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Raidas is recognized as the guru of Meera Bai	RECOGNITION Q

K31 Sant Kabir and Kamaal

Story K31 Sant Kabir and Kamaal $\alpha \beta a BC DEF GHK$	Functions
Kabir has a disciple Kamaal, A king in Rajasthan has leprosy	INITIAL SITUATION α
The King comes to Varanasi in search of Kabir	ABSENTATION β
King wants to be cured of his leprosy by Kabir	LACK) a
He goes looking for Kabir and requests Kabir's disciple Kamaal to take him to be cured.	MEDIATION) B
Kamaal offers to cure him instead.	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Kamaal asks him to dip in the water and chant Shree Ram with love	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
The King tries it three times till he gets it right	HERO'S REACTION E
The King is cured of his leprosy	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Kabir sends Kamaal to Tulsidas	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
Kamaal struggles to learn from Tulsidas and then Surdas	STRUGGLE H
King is cured and Kamaal learns the value of God's name	LACK LIQUIDATED K

K32 Ginka bai

Story K32 Ginka Bai $\alpha a BCH K Q$	Functions
Ginka Bai is a sex-worker	INITIAL SITUATION α
She lacks a Guru and no one accepts charity from her because of her job	LACK) a
She complains to God and seeks Bhakti	MEDIATION) B
She is advised to teach her parrot to chant God's name	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
She works hard to teach her parrot	STRUGGLE H
She gets redemption	LACK LIQUIDATED K
She gets redemption through her own efforts and is recognized.	RECOGNITION Q

K33 Sen Bhagat

Story K33 The Story of Sen Bhagat $\alpha \gamma \delta a BCDEFKQ$	Functions
Sen Bhagat is a devout man who serves as the royal barber of a fastidious King	INITIAL SITUATION α
Sen Bhagat goes to meet holy men	ABSENTATION β
A barber can not be late for the royal shave	INTERDICTION γ
Sen Bhagat is late for work	VIOLATION δ
God notices he is late	LACK) a
God knows Sen Bhagat will be punished so he decides to help him	MEDIATION) B
God goes in place of Sen disguised as Sen Bhagat	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
He shaves the King	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
King is thrilled to see his skin has cleared of the exema	HERO'S REACTION E
King is cured	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Sen Bhagat is rewarded	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Sen Bhagat becomes the patron saints of all barbers	RECOGNITION Q

K34 Narsinh Bhagat and Neni bai's mamero

Story 34 Narsinh Bhagat and Neni bai's mamero $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \epsilon a B C D E F K Q$	Functions
Narsinh is a devout man whose daughter Neni Bai's child is getting married	INITIAL SITUATION α
Neni Bai does not have a brother, so Narsinh comes for his grandchild's wedding ritual	ABSENTATION β
He is supposed to bring gifts for the ritual mayero	INTERDICTION γ
He does not bring any gifts and his cart is also broken	VIOLATION δ
He has nothing to give her for the ritual	LACK) a
He sings praises of god	MEDIATION) B
God decides to help him	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
The broken cart gets fixed	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Narsinh continues to sing praises of god	HERO'S REACTION E
The cart is filled with jewellery worth 56 crores	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Neni Bai has a grand mamero	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Narsinh gave the grandest mayero ever	RECOGNITION Q

K35 Krishna Khati

Story K35 Krishna Khati $\alpha \gamma \delta \epsilon a B D F K Q$	Functions
There is a devout carpenter suthar who does not like his profession	INITIAL SITUATION α
He is supposed to travel with his tools to fix Narsinh bhagat's broken cart (implied interdiction)	INTERDICTION γ
He does not want to travel with the heavy tools	VIOLATION δ
He wants a more comfortable job	LACK) a
He asks god why he must do such a difficult job	MEDIATION) B
God decides to help him	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
God disguises himself as the carpenter	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Carpenter is unaware	HERO'S REACTION E
The cart is fixed	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Everyone praises the carpenter and he begins to like his job	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Suthar carpenter is recognized as the one who fixed Narsinh's cart	RECOGNITION Q

K36 meera goes to heaven

Story K36 Meera goes to heaven $\alpha \gamma \delta a B D E F G U$	Functions
God's angels come to take Meera to heaven	INITIAL SITUATION α
Meera is leaving her earthly home	ABSENTATION β
Sinners cannot go to heaven	INTERDICTION γ
Rana is a sinner and he insists on going along because he is her husband	VIOLATION δ
Rana wants to go to heaven	LACK) a
The angels ask him how much he loves god	MEDIATION) B
He spreads his arms wide to show them how much	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
They ask him to hold on to a bamboo pole so he can fly with them	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
He holds on to the pole as they fly	HERO'S REACTION E
They ask him the same question and he replies by spreading his arms	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
He falls down to his death as they go up with Meera	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G

Rana is punished for all his sins especially giving poison to Meera	PUNISHMENT U
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K37 Shreeyade

Story K37 Shreeyade $\alpha \gamma \delta$ aBCDEFKMNQ U	Functions
Shreeyade is a devout potterwoman who worships Ram. Hrinakush is the King who wants his name to be chanted first, before gods	INITIAL SITUATION α
Shreeyade's kittens get left behind in the open oven	ABSENTATION β
No one in Hrinakush's kingdom can chant the name of Ram	INTERDICTION γ
She chants the name of Ram	VIOLATION δ
Hrinakush terrorizes anyone who does not chant his name	VILLIANY) A
She needs to save the kittens	LACK) a
She prays	MEDIATION) B
Prahlad, son of Hrinakush asks her why she is not chanting his father's name	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Shreeyade's Tusli plant survives by chanting the name of Ram	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
She chants Ram's name instead of king Hrinakush	HERO'S REACTION E
The kittens come out alive from the oven, Prahlad is converted	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
The kittens are saved	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Hrinakush asks her to hug a red hot pillar	DIFFICULT TASK M
She hugs the pillar in faith	SOLUTION N
Shreeyade is known as the person who brought Ram's name to everyone in place of Hrinakush	RECOGNITION Q
Hrinakush is killed by God	PUNISHMENT U

K38 Why Ganesha is worshipped first

Story K38 Ganesh is worshipped first $\alpha \beta$ a BC $\uparrow$ HIKQ	Functions
Ram and Sita are getting married and Shiva is invited	INITIAL SITUATION α
Shiva cannot go so he sends Ganesh	ABSENTATION β
The wedding procession does not want to take Ganesh, Ganesh wants to go with the procession	LACK) a
They ask Ganesh to stay at home	MEDIATION) B
Ganesh gathers his army of mice and they dig up the road	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
The procession leaves	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
The procession gets stuck and cannot move. They apologize to Ganesh	STRUGGLE H

Ganesh wins. His rats repair the road	VICTORY I
He is allowed to join the procession	LACK LIQUIDATED K
He is always worshipped first	RECOGNITION Q

K39 Krishna takes care of Rishi Munis

Story K39 Krishna takes care of Rishi Munis $\alpha \gamma$ δ ABC GK	Functions
Rishi Munis meditate along the banks of a river	INITIAL SITUATION α
They cannot be disturbed	INTERDICTION γ
Water nymphs distract them by bathing in the nude	VIOLATION δ
The Rishi Munis are distracted	VILLIANY) A
They ask God's help	MEDIATION) B
God sits on the tree near the river	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Water nymphs don't come out of the water	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
Rishis can now meditate peacefully	LACK LIQUIDATED K

K40 Baghirath got the Ganges to Earth

Story K40 Bhagirath got the Ganges to Earth $\alpha \beta$ aBC DEFGHIKQ	Functions
Bhagirath is a prince	INITIAL SITUATION α
Bhagirath's father has an unnatural death	ABSENTATION β
Bhagirath needs Ganges water to purify the soul of his father	LACK) a
Bhagirath pleads with Ganga who says he can only use a sieve to fetch the water	MEDIATION) B
Bhagirath does penance for ten years	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Vishnu appears and asks him to appeal to Shiva, Shiva asks him to appeal to Ganga	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Bhagirath does penance for Shiva for ten years, Prays to Ganga for five years	HERO'S REACTION E
Ganga agrees to descend through the hair of Shiva	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Ganga gets lost in Shiva's matted hair	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
Bhagirath again appeals to Shiva	STRUGGLE H
Ganga comes down to Earth	VICTORY I

Bhagirath is able to perform the ritual for his father	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Bhagirath becomes immortal because he brought the sacred Ganga to earth for everyone's benefit	RECOGNITION Q

K41 Stingy Laluprasad

Story K41 Stingy Laluprasad $\alpha \gamma \delta$ ADEFG	Functions
Laluprasad is stingy	INITIAL SITUATION α
One must not refuse giving alms to a holy man	INTERDICTION γ
Laluprasad refuses to give any alms to a holy man	VIOLATION δ
He deprives the holy man of his dues	VILLIANY) A
Holy man informs Laluprasad he will die shortly and advises him to go to Badrinath	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Laluprasad goes to Badrinath but does not make any donation	HERO'S REACTION E
He is blessed because he has made the pilgrimage	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
He dies and goes to heaven	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G

K42 Raja Harishchandra and Taramati Rani

Story K42 Raja Harishchandra and Taramati Rani $\alpha \beta$ aBC $\uparrow$ DEFGHIKQ	Functions
King Harishchandra is an honest and generous King who never refuses anyone so God wants to test his generosity	INITIAL SITUATION α
God asks him to leave the palace with his family	ABSENTATION β
Raja Harishchandra has no kingdom and no wealth left to donate to a priest	LACK) a
He pleads with the priest to allow him some time to gather one kg of gold	MEDIATION) B
The priest gives him time	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
King Harishchandra and his wife Taramati and son go to another kingdom to look for work	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
Raja Harishchandra is offered work in the cremation ground, his wife has to fill water at a prostitute's and his son as the king's gardener	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
They take up the jobs that are not easy and below their status	HERO'S REACTION E
A snake bites the son	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F

The son dies	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KING- DOMS G
Mother Taramati tries to cremate her son but cannot because she has no money to pay and her husband Harishchandra is too honest to let her cremate their son without the payment. Harishchandra and Taramati both want to die	STRUGGLE H
God intervenes just as they are about to kill each other and they are saved. They are given back their kingdom	VICTORY I
King gets his kingdom back and is able to give the promised gold to the priest	LACK LIQUIDATED K
King Harischandra's name becomes immortal. He is known as the honest one.	RECOGNITION Q

K43 Duti Bai

Story K43 Duti Bai $\alpha \gamma \delta AU$	Functions
Duti Bai is evil and childless	INITIAL SITUATION α
One must not gossip and tell lies	INTERDICTION γ
Duti Bai lies and gossips all the time	VIOLATION δ
She kicks her brother-in-law and eats the food meant for pregnant women. She also insults a cow feeding her calf	VILLIANY) A
She goes to hell along with her neighbours who approve of her	PUNISHMENT U

K44 Hanuman protects Ram and Lakshman

Story K 44 Hanuman protects Ram and Lakshman $\alpha \beta$ aBC↑K	Functions
Hanuman worships Ram and Lakshman	INITIAL SITUATION α
Ram and Lakshman want to leave for Lanka to rescue Sita from Raavan	LACK) a
They seek Hanuman's help	MEDIATION) B
Hanuman agrees	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
He carries them on his sgoulder and flies to Lanka	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
Ram and Lashman reach Lanka to kill Raavan	LACK LIQUIDATED K
She goes to hell along with her neighbours who listened to her	PUNISHMENT U

K45 Shravans blind parents

Story K45 How Shravan's parents turned blind $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta A$ a B C $\uparrow$ DEFHKW	Functions
Shravan's mother Satviksha is Raja Dashrath's sister and his father Danishta is a priest who wants to lead a celibate life	INITIAL SITUATION α
He goes in search of a quiet place to meditate	ABSENTATION β
A meditating priest cannot be disturbed	INTERDICTION γ
Satviksha urinates above which defiles Danishta below and disturbs him	VIOLATION δ
This defilement creates a desire which turns to a plant that grows from his navel and finds its way to Satviksha. It sprouts a flower, she smells it and becomes pregnant.	VILLIANY A
Satviksha is a pregnant woman without a husband	LACK a
She denies seeing a man, tells about the flower	MEDIATION B
Dashrath decides to find the villain	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION C
Dashrath follows the plant underground and finds the priest in the cave	DEPARTURE $\uparrow$
He offers his sister's hand in marriage	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR D
He agrees but does not want to see her, she too does not wish to see him	HERO'S REACTION E
Danishta is married to Dashrath's sister	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Both donate their eyes	STRUGGLE H
Satviksha has a husband and gives birth to Shravan	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Satviksha and Danishta are married	WEDDING W

K46 Shravans wife Revati

Story K46 Shravan's wife Revati $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta \varepsilon \zeta \eta \theta AaBC$ - DEFGKU	Functions
Shravan is a dutiful son	INITIAL SITUATION α
Revati is married to Shravan	ABSENTATION β
The in-laws must be treated well	INTERDICTION γ
Revati starves her parents-in-law because they are blind	VIOLATION δ
She feeds them Rab and her husband Rabdi	TRICKERY) η
They eat what they get and never complain	COMPLICITY) θ
She cheats her husband and his parents for many years	VILLIANY) A
Shravan does not know the truth about his wife's deceit	LACK) a
Fate intervenes	MEDIATION) B

Shravan gives his share of food to his father	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
Father tells Shravan he has never had rabdi before	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Shravan fights with Revati and breaks the pot	HERO'S REACTION E
Discovers her deceit	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Sends her away	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
Learns about her duplicity	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Revati is punished	PUNISHMENT U

K47 Shravan and Kaavad

Story 47 Shravan Kaavadiya $\alpha \beta \gamma \delta$ AaB $\uparrow$ QU	Functions
Shravan is a dutiful son	INITIAL SITUATION α
He takes his parents for a pilgrimage	ABSENTATION β
He is warned not to fill the water silently by his mother	INTERDICTION γ
He forgets to make a sound	VIOLATION δ
Dashrath shoots him with an arrow (mistaking him for an animal)	VILLIANY) A
Shravan's parents lose their support in their son	LACK) a
Shravan's mother curses Dashrath	MEDIATION) B
Both parents die	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
Shravan's son Jeshta continues carrying the Kaavad. The Kaavadiyas are his children and get their name from Shravan	RECOGNITION Q
Dashrath is punished. He dies of the same arrow	PUNISHMENT U

K48 Durga rides a lion

Story K48 Ma Durga sheronwali $\alpha \beta a B C \uparrow$ DEFKQ	Functions
In a place called Himlad in Pakistan lived a man Avad Daan who had seven daughters and a son	INITIAL SITUATION α
Both parents died leaving the children alone	ABSENTATION β
They have no place to stay because they do not want to marry the muslim kings	LACK a
They run away	MEDIATION B
They transform themselves into snakes (Naag Mesiyas)	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION C
They cross the land into Rajasthan	DEPARTURE $\uparrow$
Eldest daughter Durga is blessed by the Gods	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR D

She becomes strong as the lion	HERO'S REACTION E
She rides a lion and destroys all the Rakashas	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
The seven sisters find homes all over Rajasthan	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Everyone worships Durga and fasts for nine nights during Nortas (Nine nights)	RECOGNITION Q

K49 Mata Saraswati or Bemata

Story K49 Mata Saraswati or Bemata $\alpha aBC\uparrow DEFGKQ$	Functions
Raavan does severe penance or tapasya. He is granted the boon of having Bemata in his service along with other gods	INITIAL SITUATION α
Bemata is very unhappy and wants another job	LACK) a
She appeals to Lord Vishnu along with other gods who are unhappy doing menial tasks for Raavan	MEDIATION) B
Lord Vishnu agrees to destroy Raavan	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
He reincarnates as Ram	DEPARTURE) $\uparrow$
Ram marries Sita, and they are sent to the forest	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Raavan kidnaps Sita	HERO'S REACTION E
Ram kills Raavan	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
All the Gods are set free and they go back to their jobs	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
Bemata is happy to get a new job	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Bemata becomes the goddess who inscribes the fate of newborns on their foreheads.	RECOGNITION Q

K50 Karma Jatni

Story 50 Karma Jatni feeds a stone God $\alpha a BDEFK$	Functions
Karma Jatni lovingly makes a grainy gruel Kheech for God	INITIAL SITUATION α
Karma wants the stone god to eat the Kheech	LACK a
She promises not to touch water or food till he eats	MEDIATION B
There is no movement	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR D
She covers her head with her dress	HERO'S REACTION E
God eats the Kheech	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F

Karma Jatni is blessed because god ate the food made by her	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Every year on Makarsankranti Karma Jatni is celebrated and Kheech is made and shared in every household	RECOGNITION Q

K51 Lord Visnhu in Baaman avataar

Story K51 Raja Bali and Vishvamitra $\alpha\beta\eta\theta A\uparrow DEFQ$	Functions
Raja Bali is a very generous king from Hatnapur and is becoming very strong due to his generosity	INITIAL SITUATION α
Vishvamitra is sent by the gods to test his generosity	ABSENTATION β
Vishvamitra goes as a sadhu to test his generosity	TRICKERY η
King Bali showers him with gifts and when he asks for two and half step of earth he agrees.	COMPLICITY θ
Vishvamitra grows in size and takes over the whole earth in two steps and places the third on his head	VILLIANY A
Raja Bali is driven to the netherland	DEPARTURE $\uparrow$
Radhika sees him there and asks him how he landed there.	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR D
He apprises her of the situation	HERO'S REACTION E
She puts a thread on his wrist and calls him her brother.	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Raksha Bandhan is celebrated in their honour. Raja Bali is known as the generous one.	RECOGNITION Q

K52 Sudamaji meets Krishna

Story K52 Sudama friend of Krishna $\alpha \beta aB DEFGKQ$	Functions
Sudama is in need of financial assistance	INITIAL SITUATION α
His wife asks him to go and meet Krishna. He goes to Dwarkapuri	ABSENTATION β
Sudama is in desperate need for money	LACK) a
Sudama visits Krishna	MEDIATION) B
Krishna meets him lovingly	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Sudama offers Krishna food but does not ask for anything	HERO'S REACTION E
Krishna asks Vishvakarma to make a palace for Sudama	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Sudama is transported to Sudamanagari	TRANSFERENCE BETWEEN TWO KINGDOMS G
Sudama is not poor any longer	LACK LIQUIDATED K
Sudama's friendship with Krishna is celebrated	RECOGNITION Q

K53 Shankar Bhagwan in Kailash

Story K53 Shankar Bhagwan in Kailash αβaBCDEFKQW	Functions
Shiva is advised to go to the land of the mortals (mrutyulok) to meditate Parvati goes to Indra in search of a groom and she too is sent to the land of mortals	INITIAL SITUATION α
Parvati comes to Earth	ABSENTATION β
Parvati is in search of a husband	LACK) a
She goes to mount Kailash	MEDIATION) B
She proposes to Shiva	BEGINNING COUNTER-ACTION) C
He agrees on a condition, she must go around Mt Kailash 108 times	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
She agrees and goes around 108 times.	HERO'S REACTION E
She loses her head 108 times but each time the head comes back	PROVISION OR RECEIPT OF A MAGICAL AGENT F
Shiva marries Parvati	LACK LIQUIDATED K
He wears her 108 heads around his neck and her blood becomes Mehendi	RECOGNITION Q
Shiva and Parvati are married	WEDDING W

K54 Jagdev Punwar

Story K54 Jagdev Punwar α β ε ζ A D E H J I Q	Functions
Jagdev Punwar is a poor but generous rajput from the kingdom of Chakve Raaj. His brother is the king.	INITIAL SITUATION α
A Kankali brahmin goes to this kingdom	ABSENTATION β
The priest ask the King of Chakve Raj to give him a donation	RECONNAISSANCE ε
The king promises to give him four times the gift given by Jagdev Punwar so he must visit his poor brother first	DELIVERY) ζ
The King shows his brother Jagdev Punwar in a poor light	VILLIANY) A
Kankali priest comes and asks Jagdev Punwar to give a good donation so that the king will match it four times	FIRST FUNCTION OF DONOR) D
Jagdev Punwar offers his own head	HERO'S REACTION E
King cannot give up his sons heads to match the sacrifice of Jagdev	STRUGGLE H
King loses face	BRANDING J
Jagdev Punwar wins over his brother	VICTORY I
Jagdev Punwar becomes immortal. He is revered for the ultimate sacrifice of the head	RECOGNITION Q

APPENDIX III

***Kaavad* Performances and their Translations**

Introduction to *Kaavad* Performances

Several performances were recorded on location in the natural settings during the month of December 2008. During the course of the study we followed five storytellers to their patrons from different communities that included the potters (*kumbhars*), barbers (*nais*), Rajputs, meghwals, carpenters (*suthars*), gardeners (*malis*), *bheels*, *jats* etc. Of these performances three are fully transcribed and translated here. Of the five storytellers we chose three storytellers with varying capabilities of narrating and remembering the stories. One storyteller (A) did not remember the order and often mixed up the characters of one story with another. This resulted in some laughs amongst storytellers although the patrons did not pay much attention to the stories as long as he mentioned the known names of characters. They were keener to listen to their genealogies. One storyteller (B) was well-versed with the stories and the other (C) was an excellent narrator. The selection of the performances was random although each one has a patron from a different community. Each performance was recorded on audio and video tracks. Two storytellers were invited to Mumbai to help with the transcriptions and translations as the language and dialect spoken was too specific to the area they came from. They were also contacted on the phone several times to decipher some of the terms that were difficult to follow. On such occasions the storytellers also offered other significant information which may have not emerged if we did not seek the clarifications. For instance, the terms *Thakur* and *Kunwar* which are used for the patron have specific meanings. *Thakur* is used for a man whose father has died and *Kunwar* or *Banna* are for a man whose father is alive. Similarly, the donation (*daan*) made has different terms. If it is obligatory it is called *daan*, if it is given after all obligations are fulfilled it is called *seekh*, and if it is for the peace of a soul it is called *punya* or *dharma*. In some instances, the patron wanted to gift a horse but instead gave a goat and a parrot in lieu of a horse. So in the recitation it would be said that the patron paid for the upkeep of a horse by giving a goat and a parrot. In other instances, the patron would pay for an image of themselves on a camel and donate a goat and clothes etc. This kind of information could not be elicited without going through the process of translation and discussing the details with the storytellers afterwards.

The first performance is by storyteller Narsinh Rav from village Hari Sinh ki Bassini. He recited the *Kaavad* for his patron Bhomram from the potter community in village Balao near Dechu. Their patron saint is Seeriyadi, the potter woman who is represented in the *Kaavad*.

The patron had his neighbours attend the recitation and food was served at the end of the recitation. The patron is fairly well-to-do and although he belongs to a potter community he is a weaver and makes floor coverings that are exported. Narsinh also helps them in selling the floor coverings from village to village that he travels to and earns a small commission for the job.

The second performance is by storyteller Pappuram Rav from village Kumbhara and he recited for his patrons Hukmaram and Taggi Bai from the jat community in Paanylakala. The patron is a farmer and the recitation took place in a remote place where the couple lives when they are farming. They also herd goats. They live in a small hut and their neighbours live far away. Their patron saint is Dhanna Bhagat and they believe they came from the locks of hair (*jatas*) of lord Shiva.

The third performance is by storyteller Kojaram Rav from village Kumbhara and he recited at the house of his patron Askaran Sinh from the Rajput community in village Jinjaniyali. The house was in a farm land and the recitation took place in a special outhouse (*kothadi*) meant for visitors. The patron was well-to-do. He worked some months as a mason in nearby towns and did farming for some months and did not work for some months.

For a comparison we have selected three recitations recorded by us in the natural settings in December 2008, one recitation recorded by Mahendra Bhanawat at the Lok Kala Mandal, Udaipur, in 1972¹ and another recitation recorded by Komal Kothari in 1982 at the Rupayan Sansthan².

¹ Mahendra Bhanawat recorded the recitation on 14th July, 1972, transcribed and translated the performance in Hindi for his book *Kaavad*, published by the Lok Kala Mandal in December 1975, pp 13-29

² We are very grateful to Kuldeep Kothari of Rupayan Sansthan, Jodhpur, for bringing this recording to our attention. The Rupayan Sansthan has painstakingly digitized hundreds of recordings of folk music in Rajasthan and a rich resource of several discussions the late Komal Kothari had with artists and performers over decades.

A comparison of the recorded recitations is shown below.

Sr. no.	Recitation 1 By Narsinh Rav Recorded by Nina Sabnani	Recitation 2 By Pappuram Rav Recorded by Nina Sabnani	Recitation 3 By Kojaram Rav Recorded by Nina Sabnani	Recitation 4 By Shaitan Sinh Recorded by Mahendra Bhanawat	Recitation 5 By Govindram Rav Recorded by Komal Kothari
1	Ritual	Ritual and Invocation	Ritual and Invocation	Introduction by storyteller	Introduction by storyteller
2	K1	K1	K19	K19	K1
3	K19	K19	K20	K20	K14
4	K20	K20	K21	K21	K9
5	K21	K25	K22	K25	K11
6	K38	K21	K23	K24	K10
7	K43	K23	K24	K22	K18
8	K23	K24	K25	K28	K19
9	K24	K22	K28	K29	K20
10	K22	K28	K29	K30	K24
11	K25	K29	K30	K31	K22
12	K28	K30	K31	K32	K21
13	K29	K31	K32	K33	K25
14	K30	K32	K33	Namdev	Jesal
15	K31	K33	K34	Andoji Sonar	K28
16	K33	K34	K37	K37	K29
17	K34	K37	K38	K39	K30
18	K52	K38	K40	Krishna with snake	K31
19	K3	K36	patrons	K40	K32
20	K40	K40	K43	patrons	K33
21	patrons	patrons	K42	K1	Namdev
22	K43	K42	K47	K5	Anada Soni
23	K47	K43	K48	K4	K39
24	K36	K45	K49	K3	K37
25	K51	K47	K50	patrons	K38
26	K50	K48		K43	Krishna with snake
27	K53	K49		K38	K34
28		K50		K49	Badri Tempe
29		K4		K45	K42
30				K50	K49
31				K51	K47
32				K52	

All three performances began with a small ritual of lighting an incense stick and invoking the gods. Performance 1 had the shortest storytelling and the longest recitation of genealogies. Performance 2 had the longest storytelling and a shorter recitation of genealogies. Performance 3 had average number of stories and genealogies.

The syntagmatic order of performance 2 and 3 is more or less similar. Performance 1 differs from the other two in its syntagmatic order because the storyteller was not able to remember the order. Even so, the stories selected are the same as compared to the performance 2 and 3.

Besides the reference to stories all three performances have other comparable characteristics. Each performer repeats a particular phrase that makes it distinctive from each other. In performance 1 the storyteller constantly reiterates the idea of the *Kaavad* as a sacred object. In performance 2 the storyteller periodically reminds the patron how the recitation of the *Kaavad* is equal to bathing in the Ganges and in performance 3 the storyteller through repetition emphasizes the value and benefit of making donations.

If we examine the syntagmatic order of the performances then we may observe that the recitation begins with the opening of the *Pandava paat* which is the first panel of the *Khul* or open *paat*. On this panel are stories of hardship and tests of faith. Of the nine stories represented on the *Kaavad* the storytellers choose to tell six. The stories selected by all three storytellers are those of the Pandavas (K19) and their mother Kunta's test of faith (K20), Meera's test of faith (K21), Raja Mordhaj and Padmavati's test of faith and sacrifice (K23 and K24), Krishna's hardship in childhood (K22).

This is followed by the opening of the *Bhaktimala paat* which is about the patron saints of all communities. The saints are role models that show the way. Kabir is the most celebrated of the saints as is Meera Bai, her guru Ravidas, Narsinh Bhagat and other local saints like Sen Bhagat the patron saint of barbers, Sireeyadi the potter's saint, Peepa the patron of tailors etc. Each storyteller begins with Dhanna Bhagat, the patron saint of Jats. On this panel with fifteen images representing stories the storytellers select according to the patrons they are reciting for. However all recite the names and glory of Dhanna Bhagat (K28), Kubaram (K29), Ravidas (K30), Kabir Das (K31), Sen Bhagat (K33), Narsinh Bhagat (K34), Sireeyadi (K38) and to Bherji Bhati³ a legendary patron. Some refer to Ginka Bai (K32).

The *Badrinath paat* has only one narrative of Bhagirath (K40) after which all three turn to the patron's panels and recite their genealogies.

When reciting the patrons' genealogies each storyteller follows a similar pattern of reciting the name of the patron, the name of their village, what donation was made by the patron and to

³ There is no story associated with Bherji Bhati except that he was a very generous patron.

what end. In between the storytellers extol the virtues of charity and its benefits. This is usually repeated as a constant refrain. Each patron is ‘recognized’ and his contribution is also made known to the community, which raises his status amongst his peers. In performance 1 the storyteller also jeered at a patron from another village who did not make the requisite donation mentioned against his name. The storyteller showed the gathering a picture of a couple on a camel that was painted upside down which was meant to depict the erring patron. The gathering giggled nervously and someone in the gathering promised to make up on behalf of that patron so that he could be set right in the *Kaavad*.

Finally when the patrons’ panels are recited the storytellers return to stories on the inner shrine doors. The stories selected recap the notion of faith and emphasize what happens when faith is strong and when someone is faithless through a choice of opposing stories; the honest King Harishchandra and his family are tested by god and undergo severe hardships and do not lose their faith (K43) and Duti who is faithless and therefore goes to hell (K44). Finally the epitome of good faith and sacrifice is the ancestor of the storyteller Shravan Kumar who spends time with his parents and takes them to all the pilgrim places (K47). That faith pays is again repeated with the stories of Karma Jat (K51). The stories of Gods are not recited, the patrons are introduced to them and invited to have a vision of them (K49, K50) before the ultimate vision of the three deities inside the sanctum.

This performance is given by Narsinhji Rav

Father's Name – Bheru Ram

6th Dec 08 at Balao – near Dechu – Jilla Jodhpur

Patron – Jajman – Kumbhar Prajapat Bhomaram



Figure 1 Narsinhji Kaavadiya reciting the Kaavad at Balao

पोलीया पोल बिराजे सिंघनाथ की चौकी लागे है सत री कावड़ रा दर्शन, श्रवण भगत।

सतरा पांडू वीया है, पाँच सोमूती री अमावश रे कारणे, बारा बरस साल तपस्या तापी, सोमूती अमावश नहीं आई, गडता पांडू सराप दिनो जा पापणी, कलु कार में घणी आवेला पांडुआ री माता कुन्ता रा दर्शन है।

भुंजियो केरी, लगाई प्रीत राम सू पाली। मीरा जन्मी मेड़ते, मीरा ने राणु जी जहर रो प्यालो दियो, मीरा इमरत कर पीयो। सिरिया दे सत राखीयो, घणी लोग लुगाई राम जी रो नाम लियो है। मीनी रा बिचिया न्याव मुं ऊबारीया, प्रह्लाद भगत रो दर्शन है, हिरणा कुश रो नांव बन्द करायो, सिरिया दे कुम्हारी।

हरीशचंद्र राजा पदमा रानी पुत्तर है रतन सत री कावड़ रतन कंवर, हरीशचंद्र राजा रा दर्शन है। तारा दे राणी, पुत्तर है रोइदास भरियो भंगी घर पाणी, नी छोड़ी सत री बाणी।

आखे बड़ रा पान में भगवान बासो ले मोटा हुआ।

भेरजी भाटी ऊँठ रो दान पत्नी में दियो है।

सतरी कावड़ पातार दीयो है भेर भाटी,

कान्ह जी महाराज मोखन खावे, गुजरी दही बिलोवे, कान्हजी अचपला घणा, घर - घर रो ओलभा लावे।

ये को बालेसर रो भाणीयो, सात बेटा रो बाप, इक्कीस पोता रो दादो, मानके जमारिया, लोटो नी पायो, खावने खाटा खीरा, ओढण ने ढीरा मिल्या।

घन्नो भगत है, तुम्बारा बीज बाया नीपज्या मोती, बीज-बीज साधाने बाँटीया, बिन बाँया निपजे घन्ना भगत रो खेत। कूबोजी कुम्भार बर्तन घड़े है। कूबोजी रो दर्शन है। गाँव में देतो ने एक बर्तनो घर रो टीबारो चलावतो।

रविदास जी रे चिरे कुण्ड गंगा आई है।

सत री कावड़ रविदास भगत घेर कुंड में गंगा आई, कबीर जी काशी में रेजो बुने, कबीर जी का दर्शन।

कीड़ी, हचँ तीतर खाय, धन पापी रो पर ले जाय, मानक जमारथ धर्म नी बाँटीयो। सेन भगत रा सांसा मेटिया, राम बणियो नाई रतन जी देवासी रा दर्शन है, रतनो देवासि रामा पिवरे अगवाणी पीपो जी महाराज, दरजिया में भगत विया पीपोजि रा दर्शन। बीसकर्मों जी रा दर्शन है। नरसिंह जी महाराज नैनी बाई रो मायरो भरयो छप्पन किरोड़ रो भगवान ने आरदेश करी हैं। राम जी मायरो भरयो नैनी बाई रो नैनी बाई आ बदाऊ ने नरसी भगत रो। सदामाजी रे कुटिया रो मेहल बणायो भगवान सदामाजी रा दर्शन है।

किशन भगवान नाग नाचीयो सत री कावड़ हरजी भाटी पींड जी री ढाणी रा बंचे है।

भेरो मंडीयो हरजी भाटी रे, गजानन भगवान रा दर्शन है। शिव पार्वती है। देखो सत री कावड़ है।

कावड़ खोलाई।

बदरी नारायण रो मीन्दर है, गीया बदरी काया हुदरी, नी गीया जका रेगा दालदरी, कुं सत री कावड़ है।

धानी मत करजै, धन रो गारबो मत कर बेटा पोता रो अहंकार धनमाल धरती में रे जाई, मुंझी माथो फोड़ मरजाई।

सत री कावड़, भागीरथ लायो गंगा, बारह साल तपस्या तापीयो भागीरथे भाव गंगा आई गौरा मुडांऊ गंगा खलकी है। सत री कावड़ खोलाई दान दीया नाव असी। राम जी रा दर्शन है रे देखो कावड़ खोलाई मांगीलाल जी प्रजापत, गाँव मंडल है कावड़ खोलाई है। एक दिनो साफो, एन एक बेस बंचे है, एक चाँदी री बिटी, दो सौ इक्कवन रुपिया दान रा जोडे ऊगमा। बेटा जेठाराम जी कावड़ खोलाई पाँच सौ एक रुपिया एक दीना कामल बंचे है। एक दियोडो है साफो कावड़ में, एक दियोडो बेस, सत री कावड़ है।

रेवंत राम जी रो नाम बंचे है। मांगीलाल रे पुत्तर। रेवंत राम जी रे जोडात घापू दो सौ एक रुपिया, एक कांचली दान री दीनी, एक दियोडो बेस बंचे है, सत री कावड़ है।

भगवान री रतनराम राम जी गाँव मंडला दान भरियो है प्रजापत में रतन राम जी रे बेटा भेरे जी रो नांव बंचे है।

भाई हावता राम, भेरा राम कावड़ में गाय दान री दियोडी बंचे है। भेरा ब्यायोडी भाई सँवता राम जी रो नाव कावड़ में बंचे है

हांवता जी पाँच सौ इक्कावन रुपया, एक कलश रो लोटो दियो, एक दियोडी री चाँदीरी बीटी, पाँच पायली बाजरी अन रो दान।

लीछमोजी रो नाव बंचे है।

लीछमा राम जी घेले पायली मोठ दान रा दीयोडा बंचे है। गाँव मंडले में कावड़ खोलाई खेताराम। खेताराम जी मंडला रा बंचे है। रथ मंडीयो है, लीछमा जोडात खेताराम खोलाई दो सौ एक रुपिया ने एक कामल न एक दरी।

खेताजी रा बेटा फुआराम जी रो नाम बंचे है। फुओजी रो एक सौ एक रुपियो होते पायली बाजरी दान री दियोडी बंचे है। भाई नरसी नाव कावड़ में बंचे। हुकमाराम मोटा राम जी री जोडाईत फूली गाँव मंडला कावड़ खोलाई मोठजी बा बेटा बंचे है। मोवन, नरसी, नाथु ने गणेश, सातु ही बेटा रा दान कावड़ में

बंचे है। कावड़ में इग्यारासो रुपीया दियोडा बंचे है। सत री कावड़। मोरजीबार है, सवारी मंडी है ज्याज री दो पायली मोठ दान रा दिया कावड़ में, एक बंधायो साफो एक दियोडी कामल ने बींटी। केशुराम जी रे बेटा बचनो जी रो नाव बंचे है सत री कावड़ । पाबूजी रे बेटा उद जी कावड़ खोलाई, उदजी दान री रजई दीयोडी बंचे है । सत री कावड़ में माला फेरने बोरी दी । दो सो ने पची रीप्या दान रा दिया कावड़ में सत री कावड़ में एक दियोडो साफो बंचे है । भीरमराम कावड़, खोलाई मेघ जी रो नावं बंचे है । मेघ जी रे बेटा गिरधारी राम तीन सो एक रुपिया दान रो दीयो । भाई मंगले जी रो नाम बंचे है । मंगला राम कावड़ खोलाई एक सौ इक्कावन रुपीया , एक धोती , एक साफो दान रो दीयो । मंगले जी रे बेटे उदय जी रो नाव बंचे है, सत री कावड़ । किसानो राम, किशना राम जी रे बेटा कुशाल राम कावड़ खोलाई । पाँच सौ एक रुपीया दान रो दियो है । गाँव मंडले में कावड़ खोलाई । सत री कावड़ है। भगवान री, कान्हा राम जी टीमडी कावड़ खोलाई कान्हे जी रे बेटा बंचे है। रुघा राम, भाई हेमा जी रो नाम कावड़ में भरियो । कान्हा राम कावड़ खोलान एक सौ इक्कावन रुपिया, एक दियो पट्टु एक बेस दियोडो बंचे है एक दिनो साफो दान में । सत री कावड़ है । चुन्ने जी रे बेटा नीम्बा राम कावड़ खोलान इग्यारा सो रुपया दिना है सत री कावड़ ।

जेठाराम जी शेरगढ कावड़ खोलाई है । प्रजापत में जेठाराम कावड़ खोलान उक ब्याओडी बकरी दान री दीनी दुध पीवण ने। दो सौ इक्कावन रुपीया एक दियोडो साफोने धोती ने कमीज। पुत्तर बंचे है चिरमाराम नाव मंडायो, कोजाराम जी रो दान, घोडा रो दान भरयो है। गाँव शेरगढ। सत री कावड़।

गोकल राम जी बिडदाराम जी शेरगढ रा बंचे है। दान दीया कावड़ में, गाँव में शेरगड प्रजापता में। राजा दशरथ जी रा दर्शन है। केकंवा कोशल्या, समुत्रा, राम ने लिक्ष्मन ने चरत भरत रा दर्शन है। रावण लेन ग्यो सीता ने, छल करण। सत री कावड़ है लंका हडमान जी रो दर्शन दान भरिया है कावड़ में। सत रा दान दीया है जवारा राम की कावड़ खोलाई, गाँव बलऊ रो प्रजापत में। जवारा राम रे जोडाईत पवनी रो नाम बंचे है। सत री कावड़।

मग जी दान भरियो, मग जी रे बेटो दलजी रे बेटा, दलजी रे बेटा घुकल जी रो नांव बंचे है। चोकलराम साफो एक दीनी बकरी कावड़ में। होले पायली

(३२kg) बाजरी दीयोडी बंचे है। जवारा जी रे बेटा पाबुराम, हुकमाराम, सतुराम रो नाम बंचे है। भगवान राम जी री सत री कावड। आतु राम जी पाँच सौ एक रोपया दान रो कावड में दियो है। बेटा रो अन भाई रो। सतुजी रो धर्म कावड में बंचे है। ओम प्रकाश दान कावड में दियो। सत री कावड।

धर्मा राम जी रो नांव बंचे है। बलऊ में दान भरीयो है। गवा जी रो बेटो नाथु राम जी रे जोडात पेपा कावड खोलाई है। सत री कावड।

एक दियोडी कामल, एक दियोडी पंडू ओ दो सौ इक्कावन रीप्या दान रा कावड में। बेटा हेमारामजी अन बालाराम, डूँगर राम जी रो नांव कावड में बचे है। सत री कावड।

अचलाराम जी कावड खोलाई, बेटा खीमाराम जी रो नांव बंचे है। बालाराम दान भरीयो कावड में। बालाराम तीन सौ एक रीपया रो दान दियोडो बंचे है। सत री कावड। जगमाल राम जी रो नाम बंचे है। जगमाल राम जी कावड खोलाई, एक दियोडो साफो, एक दियोडी धोती, एक सो इक्कावन दान रा। गाँव बलऊ में संतु जी रो नाम बंचे है। हलू राम जी दान भरीयो कावड में जानाराम जी के जोडाइत किस्तूरी हँसा पालकी मंडाई। हँसारी पालकी रो दान इक्कीस बास दियोडो बंचे है। किस्तूरी रे नांव रा प्रताप जी रे नांव रा बंचे है, जोडाइत जीमना ने बेटा भोमाराम है। प्रताप जी रे हाथाऊ होले दान कावड में दियोडा बंचे। जीमना रे हाथाऊं कावड रे दान एक दियोडो बेस, एक दीन ओढना ने काँचली दियोडी है। सत री कावड।

एक दियोडो साफो प्रताप जी रे, पाँच सौ इक्कावन कावड में दियोडा बंचे है। सत री कावड।

भोमाराम, गजराम, भाई बंचे। फुओ जी दान कावड में दीयों, सीतारो दान दियो। आखाराम रे बैनी रो नांव बंचे है। चंदाराम रे केसीरो दान दियो बंचे है। सत री कावड। प्रहलाद राम जी रे जोडाइत रम्भा कावड खोलाई, चार दान प्रहलाद जी रे दियोडा बंचे।

बेटा पप्पू अने भाकर भाई होलो, नेमू ऊमां रो नाव बंचे है। घुमान बारे नाव रो कावड में ऊंठ रीया सवारी है। सत री कावड।

घुमानजी रे बेटा कावड खोलाई है, नैना राम है। मोतीजी रो नाम कावड में बंचे है। आ देखो सत री कावड। अतमी रो नाम बंचे है। किल्याणु, गणेश रो

लिछमण रो। नैना राम रे हाथाऊं पैरनी घोती कावड में दियोडी बोरी बंचे है। तीन सौ एक रीपया दान रो कावड में दीयो बंचे है। पाँच पायली बाजरी कावड में दी है। सत री कावड। दुतीयारो नाव बंचे है कावड में, खेताराम जी रे गोरखराम जी रो नाव बंचे है । खेतोजी कावड खोलाई , दो सौ इक्कावन रुपया, एक बेस कावड मे दियोड़ो कोट। सत री कावड है ।

बगता राम जी रो नाम बंचे है। सायर बेटो होमाराम रो दान कावड खोलान भरीयो है । खोला नाव अखी है गाँव बलऊ में गेणाजी रो नाव बंचे है । कावड खोलाई है जोदे जी रो नाम कावड मे बंचे है । सत री कावड । जोधा राम दान भरीयो कावड मे । तीन सौ एक रिप्या एक दियो कावड मे एक बेस , एक साफो । भग्गा रो नाव कावड में बंचे है। गोरखराम जी, रामू राम जी , दान भरीया गाँव फलसूंड मे। सत री कावड ।

भूरु जी आला राम जी कावड खोलाई है । बकरी दान री दियोडी । अंजीबा रो नाव री एक दियोडी साफो न एक दियोडो कमीज कावड मे बंचे है । कावड मे तीन सो एक रुपया लीला राम जी से नाव बंचे है ।

भीमा राम दान भरीयो, सादुला राम जी रे जोड़ा री मीर्गा, हादुला जी बा रे कावड मे नाव दान दियोड़ा दिसा बंचे है ।

किसना राम कावड खोलाई, हडमान ठाकर न परेम गाँव वीरा दर्शन है । सत री कावड खोलाई नाम अखी है, भगवान रा है प्रजापता में कावड में दान दियो एक बंचे है । कावड खोलाई है भीऊं जी रे । भीऊंजी रे बेटो भग्गो कावड खोलान भवँरी रो दान देता घरधणी यानी आड़ी फिरी, गाडे जुतियां, गधी रो मूडो

मंडयो, सत धारिया दान में कुम्हारा में चोरासी नाथ में । चोरासी न्याथ कुम्हारा में ऊंधा पडिया । झूले ए देखो भगवान री कावड एक ए बंचे है। जितोजी कुमहार बुड़खिया रा बेटा चिमो बंचे है। रुकमा जोडाईत चिमाजी दान घर धणीयानी फिरी आड़ी । आ गो दान में सत हारियो, काला मुंडो ने लीला पग किदा है बंचे है । गाँव बंचे है बुड़खीयो ।

चोरासी न्याथ में नांव ऊंधो करायो है । सत री कावड ।

दूती मंडी है ऊंधी, घर-घर री करी है दूती, छुंगती, गाया बताऊती, बैठी गौ रे ठोकर मारती पेट में लागी सुली, दुती मंडी है ऊंधी ।

जसवन्त जी महाराज रा दर्शन है जसवन्त घड पोडा विये, माल परायें हाथ
खायो सो खलियो, दियो संग साथ जसवन्त जी महाराज रा दर्शन है । सत री
कावड़ ।

श्रवण भगत मात-पिता ने कान्हे ले अड़सठ तीर्थ कराया है ।

श्रवण भगत रा दर्शन है ।

ऐक आ बंचे है, बेटी रे जापे से तीन चिमचीयां हिरो खायो है
ऊंखली मंडी है । भगवान री कावड़ राइ-राइ को लेखो लेवो है।

देरानी धर्म करियो, जेठाणी आड़ी फिरी

पेट में लागी हुली है, सत री कावड़ ।

राम जी रा दर्शन है देखो

दीया दान कावड़ में बंचे ।

एक आ हन्दीणा रा सात लाडू खाया जापे रा जाकि रा अँखली मंडी है ।

धर्मराज जी पोथी बांचे । हऊ - बऊ रो लेखो लेवे, आँगलीयाऊँ ऊबा बतावे।

सदामा जी री कूटीया रो मेल बणायो भगवान राम

मीराबाई रा दर्शन है । मिराबाई मेडता में भगत वीया , सत री कावड़ । राम

जी रा दर्शन है तुलसी इन संसार में घारां देखी दोई

धर्म पावे तो धर्म करो

नाम मुक्ती से होय।

सत री कावड़ ।

राजा बली, दो ढाई पाऊण्डा जमीन मांगी, ढाई पाऊण्डा पूरी होई नहीं , देखो

सत री कावड़ तेरवां पीयाँल में राजा बलि न गालयो ।

कर्मा जाटनी रा दर्शन है धाबलिया रो परदो बणान भगवान न खिया जिमाओ
भगवान ने ।

ये शिव पार्वती है देखो, सत री कावड़। शिव पार्वती रा दर्शन बोलीयो श्रवण
भगत रे माता पिता की जय ।

अपने माता - पिता की जय

अपने गुरुदेव की जय

बोलीये किशन भगवान की जय

बोलीये धरती माता की जय

कावड़ की कथा संपूर्ण हुई ।

Performance 1

This performance is given by Narsinhji Rav, son of Bheru Ram at Balao, near Dechu, Jilla Jodhpur, 6th Dec. 2008

Name of Patron or Jajman – Bhomram Prajapat

Jati: – Kumbhar Prajapat

Narsinh ji is invited to sit in the open courtyard (Aangan), inside the house which is meant for visitors. He opens the Kaavad tied up with a white cloth, removes two books that are placed above the Kaavad and picks up the peacock feather which he uses to brush the Kaavad. He opens the lowermost drawer meant for donations (Daan Peti) of the Kaavad and pulls out a Rudraksha mala a chain of beads and puts it around his neck. A bowl of water and incense sticks are brought and placed before the Kaavad.

Narsinhji begins by brushing the outer doors with the peacock feather and speaks in a low voice:

The Poliyas⁴ are present at the gate

The lions are keeping watch

This is a vision of the sacred Kaavad, and saint Shravan

Narsinhji does not open the outer door shrine. He turns the whole panel to reveal the panel called Pandava ka paat, uncovers the cloth covering it, and brushes it with the peacock feather.

The Pandavas left because of their faith

They did penance (*tapasya*) for twelve years, for five *Somuti amavas*⁵ to come but the *Somuti amavas*’ did not come,

Then the Pandavas went off to the Himalayas,

While going they cursed the *Somvati amavas*,

Saying, go sinner, in the *Kal yug*⁶ you will come again and again.

⁴ Poliyas are guards or guardians of the Kaavad shrine

⁵ Somuti or Somvati Amavas is a moonless night that falls on a Monday

⁶ Kalyug is defined as the fourth, most degenerate era in Hindu chronology; a ready explanation for the failings of men and gods.

Here, have a view of their mother Kunta

She roasted the mango, had faith and love for Ram.

Meera is born in Merta

Meera's Rana gave her a cup of poison; she drank it like it was elixir from god

Sireeyadi kept her faith. She insisted on chanting the name of Ram and encouraged others to do the same. She saved the kittens of a cat from a burning boat. Here is a vision of saint Prahlad. Sireeyadi the potter woman stopped Hirna kush's name from being chanted.

King Harishchandra and queen Padma and Ratan kunwar in the sacred *Kaavad*. Here is a vision of king Harishchandra, his wife Tara and son Rohidas. He filled water for an untouchable's house, yet did not leave the side of truth.

God incarnated on a leaf of a Banyan tree and grew up there

Bherji Bhati has donated a camel in village Pali

Bherji Bhati has donated in the sacred *Kaavad*

Lord Kaanji is eating butter; the *gujar* lady is churning the curds,

Kaanji is very mischievous; there are lots of complaints from homes all around.

Here is a nephew of Balesar, father of seven sons, grandfather of 21 grandsons, he did not feed any people, nor did he offer them water, he will get flames to eat and mud to cover himself.

Narsinhji turns the panel to reveal the Bhaktimala ka paat

Here is saint Dhanna, he sowed the seeds of Tumba⁷ a bitter fruit and harvested pearls. He was given the seeds by the sadhus (whom he gave all his money)

That's why without sowing Saint Dhanna harvested a farm full.

Kubaji the potter is making vessels. Here is a vision of Kubaji. One vessel he gifts to the village and the other he uses to run his household.

Here is Ravidas, the Ganges has come in the tank outside his house.

In the sacred *Kaavad* is saint Ravidas. The Ganges came to his house.

Kabir is weaving in his house, have a vision of Kabirji.

The partridge screams and ants eat and take away what they can

The wealth of a dead sinner is taken away by others,

the one who did not do good deeds in his life as a human being.

⁷ Tumba, botanical name Citrullus Colocynthis, is a bitter fruit the size of an orange and eaten by goats in Rajasthan. For more details see <http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/a/apple046.html>

God came to the rescue of Sen Bhagat in his bad times.

Ram disguised himself as a barber.

Here is the vision of Ratanji Devasi.

And Rattan Devasi with Pipaji always worshipped Ram Dev Peer.

Here is lord Pipaji, the saint of tailors, here is the vision of Pipaji.

Here is the vision of Visvakarmaji

Narsinhji paid 56 crores for Nenibai's *mayero*⁸

God helped him out with the amount. Ramji helped pay for Neni Bai's *mayero*. Neni bai is welcoming him. God made a palace out of Sudamaji's hut. Here is a vision of Sudamaji.

Lord Krishna dances on a snake. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Harji Bhati is being recited in Pind ji Dhani⁹. A festival is taking place here in the name of Harji Bhati.

Here is the vision of Lord Gajanand. Shiv and Parvati are also here. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

The *Kaavad* has been opened.

Narsinhji opens the Badrinath ka Paat

Badri is a temple of Narayan. One who goes to Badri, his health improves.

One who does not go to Badri is deprived of good health, remains ill.

Why, because this is a sacred *Kaavad*.

O wealthy, do not be smug

Do not be too proud of your means

All wealth will remain on earth

The stingy falls down and break his head and dies.

This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Bhagirath brought the Ganges, he did penance for twelve years. Because of his good intentions the Ganges came out of *Gaumukh*, the mouth of a cow.¹⁰

This is a sacred *Kaavad* and whoever gets it opened and recited will become immortal.

Have a vision of lord Ram.

See Mangilalji Prajapat got the *Kaavad* opened in village Mandal.

⁸ *Mayero* is the gift given by a woman's parents when her daughter gets married.

⁹ A *Dhani* is a place where a house or hut is made in the middle of fields and is usually at a distance from the village.

¹⁰ *Gaumukh* or the mouth of the cow is also the name of a place from where the Ganges flows.

He donated a turban, and a dress in the *Kaavad*. One silver ring, Rs 221 is donated by his wife Ugma. Son Jetharam got a *Kaavad* opened, his name is recited. He donated Rs 501 and a blanket. He has donated a turban in the *Kaavad* and a dress. This is a sacred *Kaavad*. Bhagwan Ratanramji's name is recited and he made a donation in village Mandala.

Amongst the Prajapats Ritan Ramji's son Bhareji Ram's name is recited in the *Kaavad*. Brother Haavta Ram and Bhera Ram have donated a cow which is recited in the *Kaavad*. Married brother Sanvata Ramji's name is recited in the *Kaavad*.

Haanvtaji donated Rs 551, a ceremonial metal pot *Kalash*, a silver ring and five *payali*¹¹ of *Bajri* grain.

Name of Lichmaji is recited. Lichmaji Ram made a donation of a *payali* of moth beans and his name is recited in the *Kaavad*. Khetaram got the *Kaavad* opened and recited in village Mandal. An image of a chariot has been commissioned. Lichma's wife got the *Kaavad* opened and donated Rs 201 and a blanket and a floor covering.

Name of Khetaram's son Phuvaram's name is recited in the *Kaavad*.

Phuoji made a donation of Rs 101 and a *payali* of *Bajri* (pearl millet).

Brother Narsi's name is recited in the *Kaavad*. Hukmaramji's wife Phuli from village Mandala got the *Kaavad* opened.

Mothji Ba's son's name is recited in the *Kaavad*. Mohan, Narsi, Nathu and Ganesh, all seven sons' donation is recited in the *Kaavad*. A donation of Rs 100 is donated in the *Kaavad*. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Here is Morjiba for whom a vehicle is painted. He has donated two *payalis* of moth beans, in the *Kaavad*, one turban, a blanket and a silver ring. Keshuramji's son Bachno's name is recited in the sacred *Kaavad*.

Pabuji's son Udji got the *Kaavad* opened, Udji's name is recited, he donated a blanket in the *Kaavad*. To recite the *Kaavad* and turn the beads he has given one quintal of sugar. Also donated Rs 225 and a turban in the sacred *Kaavad*.

Bhirmaramji got the *Kaavad* opened, Meghji's name is recited in the *Kaavad*. Meghji's son Girdhari donated Rs 301. Brother Mangala's name is recited in the *Kaavad*. Mangala ram got

¹¹ A *Payali* is a measure of 8kgs or 2kgs of grain in a tin box.

the *Kaavad* opened and donated Rs 151, one dhoti and a turban. Mangala's son Udayji's name is recited in the sacred *Kaavad*.

Kisano ram, Kishna Ram's son Kushal Ram got the *Kaavad* opened. Donated Rs 501. Got the *Kaavad* opened in village Mandala. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Kanharam ji timid got the *Kaavad* opened, his son's name is recited. Rugha Ram, brother Hema ji's name is added in the *Kaavad*. Kanharam ji donated Rs 151, one woolen blanket, a dress and a turban for the *Kaavad* recitation. This is a sacred *Kaavad*. Chunne ji's son Nimbaram donated Rs 100 to get the *Kaavad* recited. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Jetharam got the *Kaavad* opened in Shergad. From the *prajapat* community Jetharam donated a milk-giving goat for the *Kaavad* recitation. He also gave Rs 251, a turban, a *dhoti* and a shirt. Chirmaram added his son's name in the *Kaavad*, Kojaramji donated an amount for a horse in village Shergad. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

The names of Gokulram ji and Biddaram ji from Shergad are recited in the *Kaavad*. The donation is made in Shergad amongst the *prajapat* community.

Narsinhji opens Darshrath ka paat which is on the left of the viewer

Here is a vision of king Dashrath. Here is a vision of Kekwa, Kaushalya, Samutra, Ram, Lichman and Bharat. Ravan abducted Sita to abuse her. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Here is a vision of Lanka and Hadman ji¹². Those who have donated in the *Kaavad*, this is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Javara Ram has got the *Kaavad* opened in village Balao amongst the *Prajapat* community.

Javara Ram's wife Pavani's name is recited in the *Kaavad*. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Mug ji made a donation. Mug ji's son Dalji and his son Dhukal's name is recited in the *Kaavad*.

Chokalram donated a turban and a goat in the *Kaavad*. He donated 32kg of *Bajri* Saturam's names are recited in the *Kaavad*. This is god Ram's sacred *Kaavad*.

Aaturam ji donated Rs 501 in the *Kaavad* for his son and brother. Satuji's *punya* is recited in the *Kaavad*. Om Prakash donated in the *Kaavad*. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Dharma Ram ji's name is recited. Gave a donation in village Balao. Gava ji's son Nathu Ram and his wife Pepa have got the *Kaavad* opened. This is a sacred *Kaavad*. They have given a

¹² Hadman also means Hanuman

blanket, one woolen blanket, Rs 251 in the *Kaavad*. Their sons Hemaram ji, Balaram and Dungar Ram ji's names are recited in the *Kaavad*. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Achala Ram ji got the *Kaavad* opened. Son Kheema Ram's name is recited. Balaram made a donation in the *Kaavad*. Balaram gave Rs 351 and this is recorded. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Jagmal Ram ji's name is recited in the *Kaavad*. Jagmal ji got the *Kaavad* opened and donated a turban, a dhoti, and Rs 151.

In village Balao, Santu ji's name is recited. Haluram ji made a donation in the *Kaavad*. Janaram ji and wife Kisturi commissioned a chariot with swans. They have donated towards the Swan chariot for twenty years.

Kisturi's name and Pratap ji's name is recited. Wife is Jeemna and son Bhomaram. Pratap ji has donated with his own hands in the *Kaavad* and his name is being recited. Jeemna with her own hands donated a dress, a cover and a *kanchili*. This is a sacred *Kaavad*. Pratap ji gave a turban and Rs 551 in the *Kaavad*. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

The names of Bhomaram and Gajjram are recited in the *Kaavad*.

Phuvoji made a donation in the *Kaavad*, also donated for daughter Sita.

Aakhram 's sister's name is recited in the *Kaavad*.

Chandaram's Kesi's donation is recited in the *Kaavad*. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Prahlad Ram ji wife Rambha got the *Kaavad* opened, four donations are given by Prahlad ji and recited in the *Kaavad*. Son Pappu, brother Bhakar, Holo, Nemu and Uma's names are recited. In the name of grandfather Ghuman a camel is commissioned in the *Kaavad* with him on it. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Ghuman ji's son Naina Ram got the *Kaavad* opened. Moti ji's name is recited in the *Kaavad*.

Take a look at this sacred *Kaavad*. Name recited is Atmi, and that of Kalyan, Ganesh and Lichhman.

Naina Ram gave his *dhoti* and a quintal of sugar and is recited in the *Kaavad*. He gave Rs 301 in the *Kaavad*. He gave five *payalis* of *Bajri*. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Duti's name is recited in the *Kaavad*. Khetaram and Gorakhram's names are recited in the *Kaavad*. Khetaji got the *Kaavad* opened donated Rs 251, one dress and one coat in the *Kaavad*. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Bagta Ram ji's name is recited in the *Kaavad*. Sayar's son Homaram donated for the *Kaavad* to be opened. Khola's name is eternal, in village Balao Gen ji's name is recited.

Joda ji has donated for the *Kaavad* to be opened and his name is recited. This is a sacred *Kaavad*. Joda Ram ji has donated Rs 301, a dress and a turban in the *Kaavad*.

Bhagga's name is recited in the *Kaavad*. Gorakh Ram ji, Ramu Ram ji have donated in village Phalsoond. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Bhur ji Aala Ram got the *Kaavad* opened. Donated a goat.

Anji ba's name is recited, in his name is donated a turban and a shirt.

A donation of Rs 301 is made in the name of Leela Ram ji.

Bheema Ram has made a donation. Sadula Ram ji and wife Meerga and Hadula ji's name is recited in village Disa.

Kisna Ram got the *Kaavad* opened. Have a vision of Hadman Thakur and Parem in village Veera. He got the sacred *Kaavad* opened and his name became eternal. God's prajapats gave a donation and are being recited in the *Kaavad*.

The *Kaavad* has been opened for Bheeu ji. Bheeu ji's son Bhagga did not make the promised donation. His wife did not support him and did not allow him to make the donation. There are shoes for him. In the image he has the face of a donkey. The *kumbhar* (potter) community as such is a good community and has 84 clans. He is shown upside down in the 84 clans. See how he is hanging upside down.

Jitoji the potter from Budkhiya, his son Chima's name is recited. Chima ji's wife Rukma came in the way and did not allow him to make the donation. He had pledged a cow for donation but went back on his word. Her face is painted black and her feet are painted green and this is recited in village Budkhiya. They have earned a bad name for their 84 clans. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Narsinhji points at the inner shrine doors which are still closed

Duti is shown upside down, she gossips about each household, she steals the milk of a calf, kicks a seated cow, she has an arrow going through her stomach, Duti is painted upside down.

Here is a vision of Jaswant ji. Jaswant ji's dead body is lying here, his wealth has been taken away by strangers. Whatever is consumed or eaten gets over, whatever is donated goes along.

Here is a vision of king Jaswant ji. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Saint Shravan takes his parents on his shoulders to 68 pilgrimage places. Have a vision of saint Shravan.

Look at her, she ate three spoons of the sweet *Seera* meant for a pregnant daughter. A hour-glass barrel has been painted. In the sacred *Kaavad* of god every small detail is recorded.

The younger sister-in-law is pious, the older sister-in-law came in the way and did not allow for donation to be made, she has an arrow going through her stomach. This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

Look, have a vision of Ram ji's *Kaavad*.

Whatever is donated is recited in the *Kaavad*.

Now look at this one, she ate seven ladus meant for pregnant women and this hour glass barrel is meant for her.

Dharam Raj ji is keeping a record and reading from it. He keeps track of everyone. He counts on his fingers.

God Ram made a palace out of Sudama ji's hut.

Here is a vision of Meera bai. Meerabai became a saint in Merta. This is a sacred *Kaavad*. Have a vision of Ram ji.

Tulsi says there are two ways or options in this world to get release or *moksha*;

If you want wealth then it can be achieved by doing religious deeds and making donations,

And if you seek enlightenment then it will happen only by taking Ram's name.

This is a sacred *Kaavad*.

King Bali was asked for two and a half steps of land. But two and half steps could not be completed. Look in the sacred *Kaavad* he was pushed down in the earth towards the netherland.

Here is a vision of Karma the jat woman. She made a curtain of her clothes so that God could eat the Kheech she made.

Have a vision of Shiv and Parvati, in the sacred *Kaavad*. After the vision of Shiv Parvati let us praise saint Shravan and his parents.

Let us praise our parents

Let us praise our teacher

Let us praise lord Krishna

Let mother earth be praised.

The holy recitation of the *Kaavad* is over.

This performance is given by Papuram for Taggi Devi and Hukmaram Jat. 8th December 2009
R09-0004.

Jajman – Jat Hukmaram Chaudhry

Village – पाँयलाकला जिला - बाडमेर

Village of Papuram - Kumhara तहसील - भोपालगढ

Dist – जोधपूर



Figure 2 Pappuramji Kaavadiya reciting the Kaavad for Patron Taggi Devi and Hukmaram Jat At Paanylakala

कावड़ को तीर्थ समान मानते है।
अगरबत्ती और आखा देकर कावड़ खुलाते है।

दया धर्म का मुल है
पाप मुल अभिमान।
तुलसी दया नहीं छोड़िये
जब तक घट में साँस।
पीपा पाप मत किबजे
न्यारा रिजे आप।
करनी जाँसी आपरी

कुण बेटो कुण बाप।
 राम नाम री लूट है
 लूट सके तो लूट
 अन्त समय पिछताएगी
 प्राण जायेगी छूट

राजा सुल्तान का लड़का,
 गुण गोबिन्द का भाणजा
 मन्विया सरूपि पाप धरियों
 पोलिया पोल बिराजे, सिंह नाथ की चौकी लागे
 बिना हुकम दर्शन नहीं पावे,
 श्री राम चन्द्र भगवान री कावड़ रो दर्शन है।
 एक बन्द कावड़ खुलावे
 भगवान रे लेखे
 चौरासी पाठ में नाम सही हो जावे
 सत्रो दान ओर गंगा रो सीनान
 दीया सो दान आगोत्तर लिया
 जसवन्त धड़ पोड़ाविये
 माल पराये हाथ, खाय सो
 खोड़ गया, दिया सो संग साथ
 पाँच पाण्डु विया
 सत्तरह सोमोतीरे अमावशरे
 कारणे बारह बरस तपिया।
 सोमोती आमावश नहीं आई
 जणा पाण्डु हिमालय गलीया।
 माता कुन्ता, द्रोपदा राणी
 गुजियो आम, लगाई केरी
 ऊपनी आसा, गुरु आया दरवासा
 मिरा बाई जन्मी मेड़ते

राणो गढ़ चित्तौड़, विष का प्याला मोकले
 दिया मिरा रे हाथ, कर चरना मत राणा
 आप जाणो रुघनाथ,
 मिरा हरी रे लाडली, राणो जी बन रा ठूँठ
 समजाए समझै तो राणा, बाँस पकड़ ले जाते बैकुंठ
 कान जी महाराज माखन चोरी कर खायो
 पकड़ कान्ह जी री टाँगड़ी
 कदमरा डाल से लटकायो
 कान्ह जी महाराज अचपला
 घणा घरारों ओलम्भा लाया
 मीरा बाई भगत मेड़ते वीया
 श्री कृष्ण भगवान मिरा बाई ने वारी
 मोरध्वज राजा र पदमावती रानी
 पेट रा पुत्र ने चिरियो, भगवान रा सिंह ने निरियो
 तोई सत नही हारियो, ज्याँ रो कारज साँवरियो सारये
 मोरध्वज राजा वीया एक, राजा बिसल की लड़की पदमावति नाम की राणी,
 तो वा कन्या ही जिन्ह पूछियो, के माताजी, कह्यो के
 पदमा तु किन्हे कर्म रो खावे, जणा पदमा देखन बोली
 पिताजी मैं म्हारे ही ज कर्म रो खाऊँ, दुजों किन्ह ही
 कर्म रो नहीं खाऊँ,
 तो देखो आज मैं थारें घरे २० आदमी भेला विद्या तो
 आप आपरी किस्मत रो खाणो।
 तो राजा बिसल ने एकदम रीस आई है तो रीस रे म्हायने क्यों के लड़की मोटी
 है। बीस बर री हो गई इन्हे भेज दो, परणार्ई दो अपना घर से बाहर निकाल
 दो। तो यूँ करताँ बिन्ह खोड़ा मोरिया रे लारे दो पण्डित जी महाराज ने मैं मे
 लिया और कह्यो की कोई भी इन्सान ने नारियल दे आओ। उस टेमी इन्सान
 घट था। तो उसी वजह मोरीया ही मिल्यो खोड़ो, तो पण्डित जी सोचा के कन्या
 को मोरे के साथ में परणार्ई देगें तो सारी उम्बर भर राड़ देगी। तो वो खबर दी
 राजा को की मेहरे को कोई इन्सान नहीं मिल्यो तो कुण मिल्यो तो के दरबार

परमात्मा मेरे को तो खोड़ा मोर ही मिला। तो के आज खोड़े मोरिया ने ही ये नारल दे देना। दूसरा दिन पण्डित जी जल्दी चार बजे ऊठते हुए ही रवाना हुआ के देखे कोई इन्सान मिल जावे तो मोके पर कोई नहीं मिला। नहीं मिलने की वजह से उस मोरिये को चिट्ठी लिख गले में टाँग दी और नारीयल बता, दीया कि ये नारीयल है और इस बखत पर आप हमारे राजा बिसल के घर पहुँच जाणा। और बाई पदमा के साथ आपका रिश्ता है। और सतजुग था तो उस टाईम मोरिया भी मुन्डे बोलता था। तो मोरिया आ गया। मोरिया आया और सब बराती आते हैं तो आज गाणा बजाणा करे तो आज पक्षी के साथ कोण गाणा बजाणा करे।

अकेला ही आके कुत्ते के डर के कारण से बरगद के ऊपर आके बैठ गया मोरीया। तो सारे गाँव वाले को पता चल गया के मोर राजा आ गया । तो उनके साथ ये रिश्ता कर दिया और काला बैल और काला बिस्तर पैराकर के दिन रे बदाण उसको एण दिन बदियो उसी समय उसको रथ को बीर कर दियो। हली बालदी को कहयो क जिस जगह जंगल देखो जिस जगह पर इसको छोड़ीयो । जो इसका किस्मत देखिया जाएगी। कैसाक इसका किस्मत है कितनी बर ये जीती है। कितना राज करेगी। कौनसे सुख बैर के खाएगी। तो ऐसा जंगल मैं ले जाकर के छोड दिया जहाँ जानवर भी बहुत थे, शेर भी बहुत थे। हरेक रीढ़ जनावर का डर तो लगता ही है संसार को। तो इस वजह से वो कन्या जाके यहाँ रथ से उतर गई ओर मोर राजा के पास गई तो मोर राजा उड कर के बरगद के ऊपर जाके बैठ गई। और वो बैल गाडी लेके चल पडी, चल पडी जब बोला है भगवान आज अन्धेरी रात है आज इस पूरे जंगल मे अपना कौन मालिक है। कोई नहीं है, जण तो परमात्मा है रात हो चाहे दिन हो मालिक रो घर एक है। कोई देर नहीं। इन कारणो तो माता काई करयो के बिन सबेरे माइने पद्मावती बाई और मोर राजा वे जंगल में रेने वाले जनावर वो कहाँ गाँव मे शहर में रहने वाली राजा री लडकी दुःख देखियाँ कदी नहीं। वी समय रे मायने थाने बात कहूँ हुकमा बा काया कल्पणे लागी । काया कल्पणे लागी जणा देखियो भाई आज अबे परमात्या आपणो धणी कोई नही । तो दरभथ माथे रिया र भगवान के मिएड़ी बात कोई केदे पाछो जल्दी हेकणे रो भी राय लाखे तो मोर राजा ऊपर चढ़िया है तो दी डाली माथे बैठा तो दुखी पेट

रे माइने घुस गई, दुखी तो मोर राजा खतम होग्यो। पद्मा राणी नीचे, बरगद नीचे बैठी उपर देखी राजा, अब दिन बढ़ियो नीचे आओ। भई परण्या साही तो नीचे आओ तो कुण आवे देखी छाँटी ढीरोडडी अण पद्मावती रोवणे लागी, हे प्रभु म्हाँ कोई खोटी करी, भगवान रे धरु जन्मया पछे म्हाँ तो की खोटी नी करी, और आज आ म्हाये होवे, रामायण हो गई, तो भगवान है जो पयून देव भगवान विष्णू भेजियो जा पयून देव की बरगद रा माथे नीचो ले, मोर राजा ने निचो उतार, के पद्मावती चढ़ नहीं सके तो आँधी बनी है, तौफान, रा माहीने बरगद रो दालो उऽ, पड़ियो, उन टेम मे मोर राजा ने देखियो तो वो भी खतम होग्या, तो उन टेम किन के पास में माचिस आजरी टेम में बीडी पीवन वाला कन्हे लाद जावे उण टेम में कोई अग्नि नहीं और सत्यवादी राणी थी के भई आज अग्नि मिल जावे उनके लारे सती हो जाऊँ तो बिन कारणु काई है के खोला में लेन बैठ गई। अग्नि माँगे तो भगवान अग्नि देते नहीं। जब भगवान विष्णु को सिंहासन डोलियो है। भगवान सिंहासन डोलियो तो नीचे कोई मृत्यु लोक में भगवान का भगत कोई दुःखी है। दृष्टी दी तो भगवान नारद जी महाराज ने कहयो, नारद जी नीचे देखो क्या है तो नारद जी महाराज देखियो क नारद जी महाराज कहयों बावजी पद्मावती नाव है राजा बिसल की लड़की मोरिया हाथे रिशतो कयोर तीन दिन जीयो र मोरीयो भी खतम होगो ओर आज जंगल में बैठी है। तो भगवान कहयो दुःख दूर कुण कर सके। विष्णू भगवान कहयो भई इसको दुःख तो दे दियो पण अब सुख कुण कर सके तो शिव महादेव को भेजो। शिव पारवता जी जाए वो दुःख दूर कर सकता है ओर किन्हई बस को सोदो नहीं। तो भगवान शिव जी ने order आयो है। के जावो आप मरत्यु लोक में, सुखी करने आवो। राणी पद्मावती ने। शिवजी ने महाराज रे हाथे पारवता जी कहे मैं भी चलुंगा मरत्यु लोक में अरे तु मरत्यु लोक में जनमते मरते आये है थाना दुःख बरदाशत नहीं वेगो, तो के नहीं म्हे देख के ही आवुँगी। मैं करुगाँ दुःख बरदाशत। वो ऐसे करके शिव पारवता जी सिंहासन में आर टेढा उतरिया है। तो पद्मा ने बोलता देखिया तो जान्हे कोई मनुष्य बोले दोडन पास में गई हे प्रभु आज इन्सान हो में इतनी दुःखी हूँ मारो भी दुःख दूर करो। तो दुःख दूर करा शिवजी कैवहै इसी संसार में मरते आर, जणा पारवता जी कह्यो के बावजी इन्हो तो दुःख कर दो बात थारे म्हारे

सम्बन्ध नहीं बैठे। म्हें केऊँ की भई या बाई इस्ती दुखी है कन्या तो दुःख दुर करो । शिवजी महाराज के नाई ऐसे मरत्यु लोक में हजारों मरते हजारो जन्मेगा, ये मरत्यु लोक है जनमता आया मरता आया जणा पारवता जी माखी बण गई और शिवजी की जटा मैं जा कर के छुप गई । शिवजी इधर- उधर पाड़ो फेरन देखियो तो पारवता जी नजर नहीं आया । के आपा दो आया और पारवता कहाँ गई, हाय त्राय लागी, जटा बिखरगई । बड़ो बिकाल रुप हुयो, एकदम पारवता जी मुण्डे आइन हसियो, बोलो महाराज अब थन १० मिन्ट और नहीं देखितो म्हारो प्राण जातो रेवतो, इन्हे हिसाब पतिदेव इन्हो प्राण है इसको सजीव किया जाये। तो इन्हे सजीवमें भगवान ने सजीव कर देवे । इन्सान बनाई देवे । शिवजी महाराज एकदम इन्सान बनायों तो पद्मावती मन में विचार करियो हे प्रभु और भी म्हारे दुःख हेगो । क्युं के मन्हे तो म्हारा पिताजी मोरिया लारे म्हेली और आज ओ मर्द सन्नो तो जणा कहेगा के तु मोरिया ने छोड दिया ओर दुजा (मर्द) रे लार गई परी। जण के है प्रभु के इस्तो कत्याण म्हारो दी कर मर्द तो म्हारो कामेक नहीं है। जिते तक माथे में मोर री निशानी नी वे तो मोरियो कुण कहवो कुण राजा केई के ओ मोर राजा है। जणा भगवान महाराज उन्हे तुरो रखियो के जा हजारो आदमी में बेई तो भी मोर राजा ही रेही। सब पहचाण लेई के मोर राजा ओ है और आप री धारा माथे और आप रा सत माथे चलेनी उने आप भी परमात्मा सुखी करे। पर क्यूं की नेम धरम बहुत ही कठिन है। हां सा आदर देणो बहुत मुशिकल चीज हो।

भगवान अखे बड रा पान में भगवान अवतार लियो, भूख लागी डावा पग रो अंगुठो मुख में लियो भगवान री कावड़ रो दर्शन है।

सतरा दान ओर गंगा रा सीनान, धनाराम जी जाट धुवाँसिया भगत विया, बाया तुम्बा रा बीज नीपजिया मोती, वा रे धनादास थारी खेती। हरसे राखियो एक, बिना बाया निपजिया धन्ना रे हीरा पन्ना रो खेत।

कोबा राम जी कुम्बार जीतंडे भगत विया। रविदास जी पोरमण्डल में। कबीर जी महाराज कासी में भगत विया।

गिनका बाई उज्जैन में सूवो पढायों। सैन जी री भिड मे भगवान आया अरनाई कोडिया री कलंग झाड़ ओर हाता हजामत बनाई।

भाटी भैरजी पलीबंचे

किसविद तो समन्दर हटे

घोरख घटे नी ज्ञान

जै भाटी भैर जी नटे तो

उलट पड़े आसमान ।

त्रैनी बाई रो ५६ करोड़ रो माहरो भरे, नैनी ने कलश बन्दाये कृष्ण भगवान सागड़ी बैठा राधा रुक्मण जी हाथे जावे। देखो भगवान रे लेखे ५६ करोड़ रो मामेरो एक नरसी भगत भरे ।

सुण्डाला दुःख भंजना

सदा भवानी भेल

संरा पेली सिंवारिये

गँवरी पुत्र गणेश

रीधी ,सिध्दी रा धनी गणेश जी महाराज है।

सिरीया देजी कुम्हारी प्रल्हाद जी भगत अज्ञाकारी । सैया खाण्डे री धार भगती कीरे भगवान री जलती नाय मे मिनी रा बच्चा लिया उबार । बच्चा उबारिया । राम जी रो नाम सिरीया दे कुम्हारी लाई।

मीरा बाई मेड़ते भगत विया देखो। दान दिया कावड़ मे ज्यारां पुन बंचे । बट्टी विशाल रो मन्दिर, धर्मी तो नर पेड ठाय ने पग देवे। पापी नर अपराधी पड़िया झूले। बारह बेटा रो बाप चोईस पोता रो दादो तीतर हंचे किड़ी खावे पापी रो धर परले जावे

मुँझी वे जो माथो फोड़ मर जावे ।

धनमाल धरती रे जावे पण माया संगती नी वाले। हँसलु एकलो हि आयो र ऐकलो ही जावे। दिया दान आगोतर लिया, गौ रा मुख से गंगा खलकी बिन भागीरथ पिड़ियारे भाव घिन घिन रे भागीरथ पिड़ियार गर वर से गंगा लायो ज्यारा धर्म कावड़ मे बचे, राम जी जा खट, लिछमा बाई गाँव धाराहर बंचे है देखो, धाराहर दान दिया ज्यारा पुन कावड़ में बंचे है।

खुमाराम जी पावोड़, जिमा धनऊ बहे धनऊ मे दान दियो देखो

राम जी चोइल, सुगंधी बाई बेतीयो बंचे बेणिया में चोधरियाँ में दान दियो डो बंचे है कावड़ में। दिया सो दान आगोतर लिया भगवान रो कावड़ दर्शन है देखो ।

पुनमाराम जी डुड़ी बंचे, दान दिया कावड़े मे। गाँव नेतड़िया से बंचे है । दान सतराह है देखो दिया दान अगोतर लिया। दमाराम जी बंचे गाँव नेतड़िया में दान दिनो दिया सो दान जुगो जुग नाम बंचे भगवान री कावड़ रो दर्शन है । बेड़ा राम बिंहर गाँव बैणियो बंचे। बैणिया दान दिनो।

चोलाराम जी बिहर रो नाम बंचे कावड़ में । भगवान रे लेखे देदाराम जी बंचे। देखो भगवान री कावड़ रो दर्शन हे ही आज दान देख दान दिया कावड़ में । सतरा दान पिपराली रा बंचे है। भगवान री कावड़ रो दर्शन पूनमोजी झाकड़ बंचे गाँव पीपराली बंचे हाथी रो दान कावड़ में दिनो । ज्यारा पुन बंचे है कावड़ में।

नारणो जी बंचे है देखो बिणियाल भगवान री कावड़ रो दर्शन है गाँव तारापूर बंचे है कावड़ में।

दीपाराम जी बिणियाल देखो गाँव तारापूर बंचे। मोहनपूरो जी बा सो गांव तारापुर बंचे । तारापुर रो मण्डो में दान दियो। कावड़ में ज्यांरा पुण बंचे। कावड़ में देखलो। भगवान री कावड़ रो दर्शन है देखो।

देखो भगवान लेखे गुलाब सिंह जी बंचे रावल्लोद गाँव सिंग जी दान दिनो कावड़ में ज्यारा पुन बंचे है भगवान रे लेखे । सतर गाँव रे गंगा रो सीनान गाँव हड़ारा बंचे कावड़ में देखो ताजाराम जी बंचे। चोधरि जरुड़ भगवान री कावड़ रो दर्शन है ज्यारा पुन बंचे। देखो दिया दान आगोतर लिया, रत कावड़ में हुकमा राम से जी पुन बहे गाँव नेपाल किरो दान दियो हडद बंचे। हडद गाँव में जुगे जुग नाम बंचे कावड़ में देखो सा पुत्र गिरधारी रो नाव बंचे कावड़ में देखो भगवान रे लेखे दिया दान आगोतर लिया।

सतरा दान ओर गंगा रो स्नान हे भगवान री कावड़ रो दर्शन है। दिया दान आगोतर लिया देखो भगवान रे लेखे जुगोजुग नाव बंचे कावड़ में दुजा देखो लो भगवान री कावड़ रो दर्शन है देखो।

सतरो दान बंचे हँसला री पालकी रो दान दियाडो बंचे है देखो आकडो तजियो राम जी रे नाम री कावड़ डुगँरपूरी जी गाँव चौटन बंचे। तगीमाजी रे नावरी दान दियोडो बंचे। भगवान रे लेखे हुकमा जी रे हँसारी पालकी रो इक्कीस दान, दिया ही दान जुगा दी जुग नाव बंचे। कावड़ में देखलो, भगवान री कावड़ रो दर्शन है । दुजा ही देखो हरिश्चन्द राजा हुया अर तारावती राणी बिको पडीयो

जणा एक भरियो भंगी रे घर पाणी। नहीं छोडी एक सतरी बाणी देखो सत मत
 छोडे साहिबा, सत छोडोया पत जाय। सत रे बन्धिया लिहमी फेर मिलेला आई।
 मण - मण सोनो पेरती मोतीयाँ से मरती बार घडी एक झोलो बाजियो
 जण घर - घर री बण गी पिणियार।
 दुध तो है एक नपुती मुण्डे मीढो, पेट रो खोये चुन्गती गाय बतावे
 बेढी गाय रे ठोकर देवे।
 बेन बेटी री सुवावड खावे
 झुठी सोघन लेवे
 वो नर नारगी में जावे
 खावन ने खीरा मिले है आगोतर में
 ओढन ने ढीरा, जणा केवे पीपा तु
 पाप मत करजे, न्यारो रेजे आप
 करनी जावेला एक आपो आप री
 कुण है बेटो र कुण बाप
 श्रवण कावडीयो मात-पिताजी कावड लेण
 गंगा गियो। राजा दशरथ
 साधियो तीर, मार लियो भाणजो बीर
 फिट रे मामा भाणजे मारे काई जस लियो।
 सिंघे सवारी जगदम्बा, हसँ री सवारी
 बे माता, कर्मा बेटी खीच पकावे, भगवान ने रूच - रूच ने भोग लगावे।
 दिया सु दान सरगट भिलणी बोर झाडे भगवान ने खाटा गिणेन मिठार जिम
 जावे।
 दिया दान आगोतर लिया, रूपा नाम रूपिया एक धुप का नारेला। चढावे सू फल
 पावेला, बावे सो लुणेला खाया सा खोड जावेला, दियो सो ये दान संघ
 चालेला। जय कृष्ण भगवान रे नाव री जय है।
 सणै ही सांभले ज्यारें नाव री जय। र आप आपरे गुरू माराज, मात, पिता रे
 नाम री जय हो। सरवण माराज री जय हो।

Performance 2

This performance is given by storyteller Papuram from village Kumhara, Tehseel Bhopalgad, District Jodhpur on 8th December 2008

Patron (*Jajman*) – Jat Hukmaram Chaudhry and Taggi Devi

Profession of the patron:

Village – Paanylakala Jilla – Barmer

Pappuram opens the Kaavad which is tied up with a red cloth, removes two books that are placed above the Kaavad and picks up the peacock feather which he uses to brush the Kaavad. Incense sticks are brought and placed before the Kaavad.

Pappuram: This is considered to be a pilgrimage. It is recited by first lighting of incense stick and an offering of grain (*aakha*).

After the ritual where an incense stick is lit and stuck inside a glass full of grain, Pappuram commences his recitation. He recites the first few stanzas in a chant-like mode.

Recitation:

The root of religion is devotion

The root of sin is pride

Tulsi says don't give up devotion

Till there is breath in your body

Peepa (name of the tailor community's saint) do not sin

Always remain gracious

What you do will come back to you

Neither son nor father can then help each other

The name of Ram is available to all

Make the most you can

Lest you regret in the end

When your breath is about to leave the body

(recites without chanting but still in verse)

The two sons (Poliyas¹³) of King Sultan
 Nephews of Gun and Gobind
 Committed a sin in their thoughts
 The Poliyas are present at the gate
 The lions are keeping watch
 Without their permission no one may enter

This is the viewing of God Ram's *Kaavad*, have a look
 To get the *Kaavad* opened means getting it written
 In the records of God it will be in the 84 holy books
 An honest donation or charity
 Is equivalent to a bath of purification in the Ganges
 What is given goes a long way
 Jaswanth is dead and his body lies inert
 All his wealth is taken by others
 Whatever is eaten gets over
 But what is given in charity goes along with the dead
 (And takes care of them)

Pappuram turns the panel without opening the doors on the outermost shrine¹⁴. He moves the cloth covering the Pandava panel and recites:

The five Pandus¹⁵ left to do penance
 For a moonless night to fall on a Monday
 For twelve years they did penance but that night did not come
 Then the Pandavas left for the Himalayas
 Kunta is the mother and Dropda the queen
 They roasted the mango and planted a tree

¹³ *Poliyas* are guards or guardians of the *Kaavad* shrine

¹⁴ This is because Taggi Bai and her husband Hukmaram are established patrons and want their names to be recited whereas the outer or hidden shrine (Gupat Paat) is opened for those patrons who wish to remain anonymous.

¹⁵ Pandus are the five Pandavas from the Mahabharata, sons of King Pandu and wife Kunti

They are happy their guru Durvasa has come for a meal.

Meera was born in Merta and Rana (her husband) was born in Fort Chittor

Rana sent a bowl of poison to Meera

She considered it the elixir of gods (*Charnabrat*)

And left it to God (Raghunath) to do what he deemed fit

Meera is the darling of Gods and Rana is like a stump of a tree in the forest

Had he listened to her she would have taken him to heaven

Holding on to a bamboo stick/rod

Kaanji (Krishna) is stealing butter and eating it

His mother takes him by his foot and ties him up to a tree

Kaanji is very mischievous; there are complaints about him from various households

Meerabai is a saint from Merta and her protector is Krishna

King Mordhaj and his queen Padmavati

They sliced their own son and fed it to god's (Krishna's) tiger

Even then they did not lose their faith

This is why God took care of them

Pappuram now looks up from the Kaavad and addresses the patrons and all gathered

I will tell you about King Mordhaj

There was a King Bisal and his daughter princess Padmavati

One day the King asked his daughter who is your benefactor? Who takes care of all your needs? She replied it is God her provider and her fate that takes care of her needs. Just the way I am here (*Pappuram addresses this to Taggi Bai and she nods in agreement*) with twenty people at your place and we will all eat what we are destined to eat today. Now King Bisal became very angry and he decided she was old enough to be married and sent away from his house. He called his priests and said whoever you find, human or animal or bird, give them this coconut and finalize her marriage. Now in those days there were not many people around. So the priest only found a lame peacock. The priest debated if he arranged for her to marry a peacock she would fight with him all her life so he went back and told the king he could not find any human being. The King asked then who did you meet and the priest replied only a lame peacock your honour. King Bisal said never mind, this time if you cannot find anyone else, give the coconut to the peacock. The next morning the priest woke up at four in the

morning and went searching for an appropriate groom for Padmavati. But as it happens, when you most need something you don't get it, so again he only found the lame peacock. This time he tied a letter around his neck telling him when and where to come and left him the ritualistic coconut. He explained the marriage will take place at the palace and the peacock must reach there to marry Padmavati. It was in the time of *Satyug* (the epoch of truth) so even the peacock used to speak then, therefore he arrived. All other suitors come with a band and a lot of song and dance, but who would come for a peacock? So he came alone and because of the fear of the dog he sat on a branch at the top of a tree. The whole village knew then he was the suitor. They were married and then sent off that day itself with a cart pulled by a black bull and laden with a black bed. The driver was told to take them to the jungle and to be left there. The King said drop them off in the jungle and we will see how long she lives and how she is looked after. Let us test her fate. Let us see what wealth she will gather and enjoy. They were taken to the jungle and left in a place where there were many animals and many lions too. Who is not afraid of wild animals in this world? So the young woman when she got off the cart went towards the peacock but he flew off to sit on the branch of a tree. The cart left and the girl wondered about her security in the dark night. Whether it is day or night the house of god is the same. There is a solution. Otherwise just imagine mother (addressing the patron Taggi Bai) here is a princess married to an animal from the jungle, she who is from a city and who has never seen a day of difficulty is today without any protection, no one to look after her. Let me tell you Hukma Ba her body was trembling. She said as a wife I would like to with my husband he peacock but he refuses to come down from the branch. He has left me. Padmavati kept looking up at the peacock and appealed to him to come down now that the day was done. Her heart felt heavy as the peacock did not respond or move. Padmavati began to cry and called out to the gods. What have I done wrong? Since my birth I have been pious and good, not done anything wrong or harmed anyone. Then why this fate for me? Then God Vishnu sent the wind god to lower the branch of the banyan tree on which the peacock was perched because Padmavati could not climb the tree. A storm was brewing; it was the month of storm and rain. The branch broke and the peacock fell down dead. Padmavati was distraught. This was a time when there were no matches, as no one smoked bidis and she could not find a match to light a funeral pyre and she could not become sati so she sat with the peacock's head in her lap appealing to the gods to light her funeral pyre. At this point the throne of lord

Vishnu began to rock. This was a sign that a staunch devotee was in trouble. Vishnu asked Narad to find out what the trouble was. Narad informed Vishnu about princess Padmavati, the daughter of king Bisal who was married to a peacock and he has died so she is in anguish, sitting with him in the jungle. So Vishnu wondered who could alleviate her pain. She had been subjected to pain and the one who could help her was Shiv Mahadev so he should be sent to the land of the mortals to help her out. He could certainly help the sad princess; no one else could do this job. So an order was sent to Shiv to go and help princess Padmavati and make her happy. When Shiv gets ready to leave Parvati insists she will go with him. He tells her it is not the place for her as there is too much pain in the land of mortals and Parvati will be very disturbed and will not be able to tolerate the sadness. But she insisted and so he had to take her along. So they went straight to where Padmavati was in the jungle. As soon as Padmavati heard human voices she ran towards them and realizing who they were asked them to relieve her of her pain and sadness. Parvati asked Shiv to help her failing which she would have nothing to do with him. This woman is so unhappy and a solution must be found for her. Shiv said but this is the land of mortals and here thousands of people are born every day and thousands of people die every day, there is nothing new in this. At that point Parvati turned herself into a bee and hid herself in his tresses (*jatas*). Shivji looked all over the place for her, under the bull and around the cart and was perplexed how she disappeared all of a sudden. He became agitated and his hair flew open and he grew in size. At that instance Parvati appeared before him laughing at his agitation. She pointed out that she was away only ten minutes and he felt as if life was going out of him and here was a woman whose husband was dead, her husband who was her life, could he imagine what she was going through? Could he therefore make the husband come alive? And could he make him into a human? So Shivji immediately made him into a human and brought him to life.

Now Padmavati got worried. She said God now my problems will increase. And why would that be so? Because her husband was a peacock and now if she were to present this human as her husband her father would assume she left him for another man. So God, if you want to help me make him alive into a peacock. If there are no signs of him ever having been a peacock then he is no good for me. Then God gave him the crest of the peacock so that he could be recognized by her father and others. He told her here is his identity so you can have

your faith and walk in your truth. You see it is difficult to live without the respect and it is hard to earn respect and standing.

Everyone nods in agreement and Pappuram returns his attention to the image of Krishna on a leaf, brushing it with the peacock feather.

God (Krishna) took birth in the leaf of a banyan tree. That was his avatar.

When he was hungry he sucked his right toe and nurtured himself.

Here is the Darshan of God's *Kaavad*.

Chants

Charity made with honesty is equal to bathing in the holy Ganges

Pappuram turns the panel to Bahktimala ka paat and recites in rhyme

Dhanna Ram the Jat became a saint in village Dhuvansiya

He sowed the seeds of *Tumba*¹⁶ but he harvested pearls.

Hail Dhannadas and his harvest. He kept his faith in Hari (God)

And was rewarded without sowing a field full of diamonds and emeralds.

Kobaram became a *bhagat* (saint) in Jeetanda

Ravidasji in Pormandal

Kabir Dasji became a *bhagat* in Kashi

Ginkabai teaches her parrot (God's name) in Ujjain

God came to rescue Senji, took on the disguise of a barber

Cured the skin disease of a patient (king) suffering from leucoderma

By giving him a shave.

Bhati Bherji is from Pali

Its possible for the water in the ocean to deplete,

It is even possible for Gorakh (a knowledgeable man) to lose some of his knowledge

But if Bhati Behrji ever loses his generosity

The sky will surely turn upside down.

56 crores worth of *Mahero* (ritualistic wealth given at the time of a daughter's wedding)

¹⁶ Tumba, botanical name Citrullus Colocynthis, is a bitter fruit the size of an orange and eaten by goats in Rajasthan. For more details see <http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/a/apple046.html>

Is given by God for Nenibai. God Krishna welcomed her and seated her next to himself and Radha and Rukmini. With God's help Narsinh is able to fulfill the *mahero* of 56 crores.

Chants

The one with the trunk who wards off all evil and unhappiness and in the company of Durga, is the son of Gauri, Ganesh, and is worshipped before all gods. He is the husband of Ridhi and Siddhi.

In rhyme

Siriya Deviji is a potter and Prahlad Bhagat is god-abiding

Having faith and belief is like walking on the sharp edge of a sword's blade

She (Siriya Devi) saved the kittens of a cat from a burning boat

She brought out the kittens and also brought the name of Ram for everyone

Look, Meera Bai became a saint in Merta

All those who are charitable and have made donations, see, their merits are recited in the *Kaavad*

Pappuram turns the panel to reveal the Badrinath ka paat.

Badri is a huge (enormous) temple

The devout have the feet and find the stairs to climb up

The sinners hang upside down

The sinner is the father of twelve sons and grandfather of twenty four grandsons.

The partidge screams and the ants eat and take away the dead body of the sinner

The stingy man falls and breaks his head and dies.

All his wealth remains on earth, nothing goes along.

The swan¹⁷ comes alone and goes alone

The charity given travels with the person a long way

The holy Ganges came forth from *Gaumukh*, the mouth of a cow

This would not be possible without Bhagirath Panihar (son of Sagar),

Blessed is Bhagirath Panihar, who brought the Ganges from the mountains and his devotion is recognized in the *Kaavad*

Pappuram turns the panels to reveal the jajman ka paat or patron's panel

¹⁷ *Hansa* or swan is the term used for the life force or soul of a person

In the place where Ramji lives, Lichhma Bai's name from village Dharahar is being recited here, look.

In the village Dharahar the donation for *moksha*¹⁸ is made and look it is being recited here in the *Kaavad*.

Khumaramji Pavod, and wife from Dhanau gave donations and are being recited.

Ramji Choil and Sugandhi Bai Betiya are being recited, In Bendiya the donations made by Chaudharies is being recited in the *Kaavad*.

All charity made in this life will go along beyond death

Come and get the vision of God 's *Kaavad*.

Punma Ramji's from Duddi is being recited, he has made donations for the *Kaavad*,

Village Netadiya is being recited. This donation is made truthfully, look, this will go a long way, beyond death.

Damaram from village Netadiya is being recited, he made a donation and his name will last beyond generations and will be recited for a long long time. Here is the vision of the *Kaavad*.

Beda Ram Binhar from village Bendiya is being recited. The donation is made in village Bendiya. Cholaram Binhar's name is being recited in the *Kaavad*. In the record books of God Dedaramji is being recited. Look at this *Kaavad* of God, See donations are being made for the *Kaavad*. Honest donations are being recited in village Piprali. This is a vision of God's *Kaavad*.

Punmoji Jhakad from village Piprali has made a donation of an elephant for the *Kaavad* and is being recited here, look. His merit is being recognized here in the *Kaavad*. Naranoji is being recited see from Biniyal. This is the vision of God's *Kaavad*.

Village Tarapur is recognized in the *Kaavad*.

Diparamji Baniyal look is from village Tarapur where his name is being recited.

Mohan pura ji's grandfather's is being recited in the *Kaavad*, the donation from Tarapur is being made in Mando. The merit is being recited in the *Kaavad*, look. Look, this the is the vision of God's *Kaavad*.

Look, Gulab Sinh's being recognized from village Ravlod. His donation and his merit is being recited in the *Kaavad* and in God's records. This is equal to bathing in the Ganges. Tadjaram

¹⁸ Punya is the merit gathered from doing good deeds which includes doing charity and making donations. This merit is useful in the life after death.

from village Hadara is being recognized and recited in the *Kaavad*. Chaudhry Jarud's merit is being recited in God's *Kaavad*, take a look.

See, all charity goes a long way, beyond death

In the chariot of the *Kaavad*, Hukmaram's merit is being recited in Hadad. In the village Nepal where the donation is made, the name is recited in Hadad for generations, for epochs (yugs). See his son Girdhari's name is being recited in the *Kaavad*. See it is there in God's records, this charity will go a long way, beyond death.

An honest donation is equal to a bath in the Ganges, is like having a sight of the *Kaavad*. Whatever is given or donated goes a long way, beyond death. It is written and recorded with God and the name is recited for generations, beyond epochs. Look, at this vision of the *Kaavad*.

An honest donation made for a swan-driven chariot has been made(*says in an aside* I am forgetting his name). A *Kaavad* in the name of Ramji is recited for Dungarpuri in village Chautan. Taggi Ma's (the patron) name is being recited in the *Kaavad* for all the donations she has made. In God's records is the name of Hukmaram (patron) who is seen in the chariot driven by swans. This is their twenty first donation and they will be known for epochs to come. Look at this *Kaavad*, it is God's *Kaavad*.

Pappuramji now turns to the innermost shrine doors

Look here is the once King Harishchandra and his wife Taramati

He became a beggar and even filled water for the *Bhangi* (untouchable)

Against all odds he remained honest and truthful

Do not ever leave the side of truth

Because if you do then you will go to hell

On the side of truth is goddess Laxmi

And all lost wealth will also come back if you stay with truth

She used to wear a huge amount of pearls

Almost died with their weight

Then in bad times she was reduced to filling water from house to house.

Duti is childless, she is two-faced. Has a sweet demeanor on the surface

But she will steal the food from your stomach,

She steals the calf's milk, kicks a sitting cow

And eats the food meant for pregnant women
 She swears in vain
 And such a person will surely go to hell.
 She will be given flames to eat and will have mud and dust to cover herself.
 So it is said
 Peepa, don't you sin, always stay gracious
 Whatever you sow will come back
 And no father or son can protect each other.
 Shravan the *Kaavadiya* takes his parent in a *Kaavad* to the Ganges
 Raja Dashrath aimed with an arrow
 Killed his nephew
 Complaining his nephew asked him
 What wrong did I do that you killed me?
 On the tiger is Goddess Jagdamba,
 Bemata rides the swan
 Daughter Karma lovingly makes Kheech for God
 Bheelni Sarghat (Shabri) is picking berries for God
 She tastes every berry and offers God the sweet ones and discards the sour ones.
 Gifts given go a long way
 A silver coin and incense stick and a coconut when offered gives returns
 What you sow is what will grow and what you eat will diminish in amount
 What you gift or donate will go along with you beyond death
 Long live the name of Lord Krishna!
 All those gathered here and their names may live long!
 May you, your teacher, your mother and father, may your names live long.
 Long live the name of Shravan Maharaj.

Pappuram ends the recitation. Puts the peacock feather down. The patrons bow their heads and offer their donations. He then closes the Kaavad and notes down the mount in his book. After this he places the books and the peacock feather on the closed Kaavad and ties it up with the red cloth. The gathering is offered tea.

Performance 3

Performance by Kojaram at Jinjaniyali,
Jilla Jaisalmer, on 10th Dec. 2008

Name of Jajman – Askaran Sinh, Son of Derawar Sinh

Jat: – Dahiya Rana Rajput



Figure 3 Left to right: Patron Askaran Sinh, Storytellers Kojaram Rav and Pappuram Rav

ये गाँव झीजनीयाली है और ये दहिया सिरदार हैं । ये घर है देरावर सिंह के लडके आसकरण सिंह का। इनके घर हम कावड बाँचने के लिये आए हैं, हमारे जजमान है, डिसट्रिक्ट जैसलमेर । अब आपको कावड सुना देता हूँ।

Gesture : Opens the front Panels

राम नाम की लूट है
लूट सके तो लूट
अंत समय पिछताइगी
प्राण जायेगी छूट
सदा भवानी दायमी
सुन मुख रेत गणेश
पाँचो देव रक्षा करे
ब्रह्मा विष्णू महेश
तुलसी इन संसार में धारा देखी दोई

धन भावे तो धरम करो मुक्ति नाम से होई

(Turns the panel)

राम नाम की लूट है

लूट सके तो लूट

अंत समय पिछताङ्गी

प्राण जायेगी छूट

दिया दिया मत कहो दिया है मोटी चीज

दियारी देवल चडे कोई मत करो रीस

नागर चाल रा ठकरा थामे सांगो गोड शिरे।

सतरा तो पाँडू विया, सोमूती अमावस ने कारणे

बारा बरस तपीया, सोमूती आमावस नहीं आई

जणा पाँडू हिमालय गडीया

गडता रे पाँडू शराप दीनो,

जा सोमूती पापने कलुकार में

बौथेरी आवेला और मानको दे

धारण नहीं करेला, आवेला ज्यू धक्का खाती जावेला

अर्जुन, भीम, सेहनदेव, जेटल, नुकडो जी महाराज नो दर्शन है।

माता कुन्ता है द्रोपदा राणी

भूँजीयो आम, लगाई केरी

उपनी आशा, गुरू आया दरवासा

मीरा जन्मी मेडते ने राणा घड चित्तोड

जहर को प्यालो पावे, मीरा इमरत कर पी जावे

मीरा तो हरिरे लाडली और राणोजी बन का ठूँठ

समझायो, समझे तो बांसने पकड ले जाति बैकुंठ

मीरा बाई तो बैकुंठ गई

और राणाजी रह गया है बन रा ठूँठ

पीराग बढ रे पान में भगवान महाराज अवतार लीयो

भूख लागी जीवणा पग रो अंगूठो

घाये ने परमेश्वर मोटा वीया
 मोर धज राजा और पद्मावती राणी
 रतन कंवर ने चीर सींग ने नीरे
 सत नहीं हारे ज्यांरो कारज भगवान महाराज सारे
 चंद्रावत गुजरी दही बिलोवे
 और कांजी महाराज माखन चोरने खावे
 पकड कांजी री टांगडी कदम से लटकावे
 कांजी अछपला घणा, घर तना ओलंबा लावे

Turns the panel

दास घन्नाजी री खेती
 बाया तुंबाना बीज, निपजीया मोती
 बीज बीज साधा ने दीनु
 हर से राखीयो हेत
 बिन बाया निपजिया घन्नारे हीरा पन्ना नो खेत
 कूबाजी कुंभार नो दर्शन है
 कूबाजी कुंभार जीतडां में भगतीया
 रेवीदास जी महाराज पूर मंडल में
 कबीर जी महाराज काशी में
 कबीर कमाई आपरी कदे न निरफल जाये
 सौ कोसा पीछो घरे
 तो मिले अगऊ आए
 गिनका बाई उजीन में सुवो पडावे
 सेन जी नाई नगर में हिजामत करे
 सेन जी री भीड में भगवान बन्या हर नाई
 कोढीये नो कलंग झाड हाथा हिजामत बनाइ।
 भाटी भेर सिंह जी ना पूली बंचे
 किसबर समुन्दर घटे गोरख घटे ज्ञान
 जे भाटी भेरजी नटे

तो उलट पडे आसमान।
 भाटी भेरजी रो दर्शन है।
 नैनी बाई नो मायरो भगवान महाराज भरे
 नैनी बाई तो कलशले बंदावे
 किशन जी महाराज सागडी बैठा राधा रुक्मण जी संग मे जावे
 छप्पन करोड री माया, नरसिंह भगत लुटाई ज्यारी लियाज सांवरीया ने।
 सुंडाला दुःख भंजना सदा भवानी बेल
 सारा पहली सिवरीयै, गौरी पुत्र गणेश।
 रिधी सिधी रा धणी गणेश जी महाराज।
 सिरीयादे कुंभारी प्रल्हाद भगत,
 इग्याकारी सिरीयादे सत राखीयो
 बही खांडेरी धार, भक्ती करी भगवान री
 मन की रा बच्चा लिया उबार।
 राम जी रो नाम एक सिरीयादे कुंभारी लाई
 बदरी एक नारायण

Gesture : Turn the panel to Badri paat

नो मंदिर है । गया तो बदरी
 काया सुधरी, नी गया बदरी तो रह गया दालदरी, चिडी ने भरी
 चाँच, नदि ने घटीया नीर
 धर्म कीया, धन नही घटीया
 कह गया दास कबीर।
 सतरा तो देखो भगवान री कावड़ रो
 दर्शन है और देखो बदरी नारायण नुं मंदिर रो दर्शन है।
 धरमी तो ठाय ने पग पेढी मात धरे, ने पापी नर ऊँधा पडीया झूले।
 कान तो दीया, कथा नही सुणी
 नैन दीया तो तीरथ नही कीया
 मुख दीया राम रो नाम नही लीयो
 बे नर नारगी गीया।

एक नर पापी माया रे माथे पडीया,
 पण माया संगाथे नी चाले।
 भगीरथ जी महाराज रो दर्शन है
 गौ मुखा रस गंगा खड़की
 भागीरथ रे भाव
 दिन दिन रे भागीरथ परिहार
 भागीरथ महाराज जी रो दर्शन है।
 बाया सातो लूणे खाया खूट जावे
 दिया दान अमर हो जावे।
 कावड़ खोलाए, दान दीना ज्याना पुनः कावड़ मे बोले
 जुग जावे पर नाम की निशानी नी जावे।
 श्याम सींग सोडी जी गाँव कोटडो बंचे
 नाम कावड़ मे बंचे गाँव कोटडा बोले
 भाटी भंवर सींग जी बंचे, घोडा रो भरनो दीनो
 पाँच सौ एकावन रुपीया गाँव रजदा बंचे
 कुवर भगवान सींग जी रो नाम कावड़ मे बंचे
 भाटीया मे दान दीनो गाँव रणदा बंचे
 थाकर देखो दूजा दान कावड़ मे दीया।
 दीया दान आगोतर लीया
 जुग जावे नामरी निशानी नही जावे
 सत्यारा दान है गंगारा स्नान है।
 साबदान सींग जी खोखर बंचे
 कावड़ मे दान दीनो गाँव कोरो बंचे
 देखो पुत्तर बंचे कावड़ मे दान दीया।
 दीया दान आगोतर लिया।
 घेमर सींग जी जोडात खालतानी जी हुकुम कावड़
 मे बंचे, भाई अगर सींग जी जोडात सोडी बंचे अगर

देखो कावड़ मे दान दीनो ज्यांरा पुत्तर बंचे राणोजी ने शेरसींग जी नाम कावड़ मे पड़ायो, ऊंठ मंडाई, ऊंठरा भरणा मे सुआ, छाली दी ओडेवाणी कावड़ मे अगर सोडी रो बेस कावड़ मे दीनो।

भाई घेमर सींग जी बंचे कावड़ मे देखो।

घेमर सीहं जी भाई बंचे देखो कावड़ खोलाई न दान दीया, दीया दान आगोतर लीया।

देखो भगवान भाई सुजान सींग जी कावड़ मे बंचे जोडात भोपीजी बन्ना कामलसींग जी नाम कावड़ मे चड़ायो ।

कमलसिंग जी रे नाम री घोडा रा भरना मे सुवा, छाली कावड़ मे दीनो गाँव कोरा में दान दीया। दिया दान आगोतर लीया

जुग जावे नाम री निशानी नही जावे।

ठाकर घेमर सींग जी रे पिता हाथीसींग कावड़ मे बोले हाथी सींग जीके भाई खीम सींग जी बंचे।

रेवंत सींग जी रो नाम कावड़ मे चड़ायो।

सत्यारा दान है गंगारा स्नान है।

गुमान सींग जी हाकम गाँव झींजनीयाली बंचे।

कावड़मे ठाकर खंगार सींग जी झींजनीयाली मे दान हाथीरी अंबा वाडी का दान १०५१ रुपया नो

दान दीयोडा कावड़ मे बंचे, जुग जावे नाव री निशानी नही जावे।

ठाकर गोविंद दास सींग जी रो पुन कावड़ में बंचे, कंवर सवाई सींग जी, गोविंदास सींग जी कावड़ में ऊँठ मंडाई ने ५०० रुपया एक कामल कावड़ में दीनी।

दीया दान आगोतर लिया, जुग जावे नांव री निशानी नी जावे।

ठाकर तनेराज सींग जी बंचे कावड़ में, एक कोट एक लूंकार ५०० रुपया नो दान कावड़ में दीयो।

कुंवर साब हुकुम सींग जी बंचे, जोडात बाड़मेरी जी, भाई दान सीज जी सोडी जी रो पुन कावड़ मे बंचे, बन्ना देर सींग, जनक सींग, हटे सींग जी नु नाम कावड़ में चढाई।

घोड़ी छाली कावड़ मे दीनी, ठाकर साब दानजी सेंधरुप घोड़ी कावड़ में दीनी ज्यारे कुंवर साब चेन सींग सोडी जी बंचे स्वरुप सींग जी रो नाम चढाई सांड कावड़ में दीनी।

दया में हराणीया री धाणी में हरोजीबा हुवाड़ी गाय कावड़ मे दीनी देखो। जुग जावे, नाव री निशानी नहीं जावे, सत्यारा दान है गंगा रा स्नान है।

ज्यारें पुत्तर बंचे कावड़ में देखो देरावर सींग हुकुम जी रो पुन कावड़ मे बंचे। देरावर सींग जी रे नाम री ऊंठ, छडी, साका है। ऊंठ रो दान कावड़ में दीनो।

ज्यारे कंवर साब बंचे कावड़ में देखो

सादुल सींग जो रो पुन कावड़ में बोले।

सादुल सींग नाम री घोड़ी मंडाई

कावड़ मे देखो, घोड़ी रा भरना में ५०० रुपीया,

एक कोट, एक बेस कावड़ में दीनो

सादुल सींग जी रो दान कावड़ में चुगत बंचे।

जोडात समद कंवर रे नांव रो एक बेस कावड़

में दीनी, कुंवर साब राम सींग जी रो नाव

कावड़ में चढायो। भाई खेत सींग जी रो दान

देखो चुगत बंचे। भाई बसत सींग जी रे नाम

री जीप कावड़ में मंडाई। बसत सींग जी

जोडात समदा बंचे, बन्ना देखो गुलाब सींग

तेज सींग नु दान देखो कावड़ में बाकी रथ बंचे।

देवेला ५८० कावड़ मे नाम सही हो जावेला।

गुलेजी रो दान १५१ रुपीया दीयोडा बंचे तेज सींग बाकी।

आसकरण सींग जी जोडात उगम कंवर हुकुम

ज्यारे नाव री कावड़ में भगवान री कावड़ रो दर्शन है।

हेंदरुप कावड़ में देखो भगवान को लेकर

गौ दान कावड़ में चुगत बंचे।

एक बेस, एक ओड़ावजी, एक बाजोट
 एक हटडी कावड़ में दीनी।
 बन्ना रे नाम री एक रिठ दीयोडी बंचे।
 साम सींग जी रे नाव री घोड़ी बंचे कावड़ में।
 भाई साम सींग जी, साम सींग जी छोटा देखो
 बंचे कावड़ में श्रवण सींग प्रकाश सींग जी नु
 नाव कावड़ में चढायो। तेजमाल सींग जी क्रित
 सींग देखो प्रकाश सींग
 शांति देखो भगवान रि कावड़ नो दर्शन है।
 दान चुगुत बचे दीवडा दान देखो।
 दिया दान आगोतर लीया
 जुग जावे नांव री निशानी नही जावे।
 जगजी ने जोडाइत तगी ऊँठ छडी साका,
 ऊँठ रो दान कावड में दीनो, पताजी रो पुत बोले
 रि□ कावड में दी ऊँठ मंडाई।
 भगवान री कावड नो दर्शन है देखो।
 ज्यारे नाव रीया पताजीरो उदरक बोले
 देवेला ५८० कावड में नाम सही हो जावेला।
 जामता जी रो पुन कावड में बंचे, जामता जी बा
 एक रि□ कावड में दीनी,
 बेटा मान सींग रो नाम चडायो
 सत्यारा दान है गंगा रा स्नान है
 जुग जावे नांव री निशानी नहीं जावे।
 भगजी बचे अब्बा ज्यारे नाव री सौ रुपीया
 एक तलवार एक कोट, सीख में दीया
 घोडा री भरनी रो दान दीयो
 राणीयारी धाणी बंचे कावड में
 मेंसो जी बंचे कावड में, नथा जी बचे कावड में।
 पुत्तर कालू सींग, भंवर सींग, केवल सींग नु

नाम चढायो, बाबू सींग जी बंचे
 बेटा नरसिंह रो दान बाकी बोले।
 सुजान सींग जी बंचे, पुत्तर चनन सींग कावड में बंचे,
 लूण जी रे दानरा २५१ रूपीया, एक बलडी,
 कावड में दीनो। मूडोजी बंचे, बेटो गोरकाराम
 जोडाइत बबरी रो पुण कावड में बोले।
 गौ मंडाई ने बकरी कावड में दीनी।
 एक छाली हुवाडी कावड में दीनी।
 दुजा मूडाजी री जोडाइत गंवरी छाली दीनी, पुत्तर पवन रो नाम चड़ायो, नथो
 जी बंचे जोडात केसर, बेटा रामेसर रो नाम कावड में बचें मायडा तो लूणे है
 खाया दान खूट जावे, दिया दान अंबर हो जावे ।
 दूती है पापणी , हगा जेठ रो मूचियां पाडी सासू ने लातां मारी बेन सुंवानी री
 छाने सुवावड खाती, पापनी आप धर्म नहीं करती, और दूजा ने करन देती नहीं।
 आप डुबी, तीन घर पेलार ले डुबी खाने को खीरा ओडने के लिये डिरा आ
 सगा जेठ ने मुचियां पाडी सासू ने लाता मारी, इन करनी आ नारगी गई

(Turn to inner shine onter door points at the right door) (right of viewer)

राजा एक हरिशचंद्र, रोहित दास कुंवर
 है भीखो पडियो जणा भरियो भंगी घर पाणी
 तो नहीं छोडी सत री बाणी।
 सत मत छोडी साईबा
 सत छोडया पत जाए
 सतरे बांधी लिक्ष्मी तो मिले अगऊ आए।
 कावड में श्रवण मात पितारी कावड लेन
 गंगा जी जावे, राजा दशरथ जी सांध लेने तीर
 फिट मामा भांजे मार कई जस लियो

Open inner door

शींग नी सवारी, जग थम्बा, हंसरी असवारी बेमाता,
करमा जाटणी खीच पकावे, भगवान रुचे ने भोग लगावे।
बाया तो लुणे, खाया दान खूट जावे
दीवडों दान आगोतर अकी अंबर हो जावे।
जय बोलिये चारभुजा जगदीश भगवान री जय,
और सुन सामले ऊनकी जय
घृती माता और माता पिता की जय हो।

Performance 3

This performance is given by Kojaram at Jinjaniyali, Jilla Jaisalmer, 10th Dec. 2008

Name of Patron or Jajman – Askaran Sinh, Son of Derawar Sinh

Jati: – Dahiya Rana Rajput

Kojaram is invited to sit inside a special room (Kothadi) which is meant for visitors. He opens the Kaavad tied up with a red cloth, removes two books that are placed above the Kaavad and picks up the peacock feather which he uses to brush the Kaavad. Incense sticks are brought and placed before the Kaavad.

Kojaram begins with a chant-like invocation:

The name of Ram is available to all

Make the most you can

Lest you regret in the end

When your breath is about to leave the body

May Goddess Bhawani be always on our right,

And Lord Ganesha in front,

May all five Gods protect us,

Including Brahma, Vishnu, Mahesh.

Tulsi says there are two ways or options in this world to get release or *moksha*;

If you want wealth then it can be achieved by doing religious deeds and making donations,

And if you seek enlightenment then it will happen only by taking Ram's name.

Do not keep repeating and announcing to the world what you donate, for charity is a noble act.

Only a few get a chance to donate, hence don't be angry.

A poorer man like Sango Gore makes a larger donation than a rich guy (a *thakur* of the *Nagarchal* city), and his (the poor man) head is held high.

The Pandavas became weak because of *Somvati amavas*¹⁹

They did penance (*tapasya*) for twelve years, but the *Somvati amavas* did not come,

Then the Pandavas went off to the Himalayas,

While going they cursed the *Somvati amavas*,

Saying that in the *Kalyug*²⁰,

It will come again and again but no one will respect it,

Nobody will accept it; and it will go unattended as it came.

Now have a vision of Lord Arjun, Bheem, Sahandev, Jetal, Nakula.

Kunta is the mother, and Draupada the queen,

They have roasted the mango and planted the mango tree,

Guru Durvasa has come home and hope has grown (everyone is happy).

Meera was born in Merta and Rana was born in Chittorgarh,

Rana gives Meera poison to drink. Meera accepts it as nectar of life and drinks it.

Meera is dear to God and Rana is like a dead stump of wood in a forest.

Meera tried a lot to explain but Rana did not understand, else she would have taken him to heaven,

Meera went to heaven,

And Rana remained like a dead stump of wood in the forest.

God incarnated on a banyan leaf,

whenever he felt hungry he sucked his right toe

and that is how he grew up.

King Mordhaj and Queen Padmavati

They split prince Ratan (their son) in half to feed the lion.

They did not leave the side of truth and so God took care of them

Chandravat the Gujar is churning curd,

And Krishna steals her butter to eat,

She catches Krishna and ties his leg to a *Kadamb*²¹ tree,

Krishna is very mischievous; there are lots of complaints from homes all around.

¹⁹ *Somvati Amavas* is a moonless night that falls on a Monday.

²⁰ *Kalyug* is the last epoch to come when all will be dark and sinful.

²¹ Botanical name for *Kadamb* tree is *Anthocephalus cadamba*.

(Kojaram turns the panel to the *Bhaktimala ka paat*)

Here is Saint Dhanna's farm,
 He sowed seeds of *Tumba*²² a bitter fruit creeper, and from them harvested pearls,
 He gave away his seeds to saints,
 And always had love towards God.
 That's why without sowing *Sant* Dhanna had farm full of diamond & emerald.
 Kubaji potter became a saint in Jitanda
Sant Raidas in Pormandal
Sant Kabir in Kashi
 Kabir says, your earnings never go to waste,
 Earnings from good deeds done in the past,
 Will always be there in the future.
 Ginka Bai is teaching her parrot in Ujjain.
 Senji the barber is cutting hair in the city,
 In Senji barber's troubled times, God came as a savior disguised as a barber.
 With the touch of his hand, God cured skin disease of the king.
 Bherji Bhati's name is recited in Puli.
 It is possible for the water from the sea to deplete,
 It is even possible for saint Gorakhnath's knowledge to reduce,
 But if Bherji Bhati's charity diminishes,
 The sky will surely turn upside down.
 Here is the vision of Bherji Bhati.
 God is giving gifts in Neni Bai's *mayero*²³
 Neni Bai is busy getting the sacred thread (*kalshale*) tied on her wrist,
 Lord Krishna is sitting with her and Radha and Rukmani are also going with her.
 Narsinh devotee spent an extravagant 56 crores for her, as God came to his help
 The one with a trunk and who wipes out sadness, who is a friend of goddess Bhawani,
 Everyone worships him in the beginning; he is Gauri's son Ganesha.

²² Tumba, botanical name *Citrullus Colocynthis*, is a bitter fruit the size of an orange and eaten by goats in Rajasthan. For more details see <http://www.botanical.com/botanical/mgmh/a/apple046.html>

²³ *Mayero* is the gift given by a woman's parents when her daughter gets married.

Ridhhi-Sidhhi's husband, Lord Ganesha.

Siryaadi potter and saint Prahlad,

Obedient Siryaadi had faith in her truth,

Holding on to devotion and faith is like the walking on the edge of a sword,
she believed in God,

And saved the kittens of a cat.

Siryaadi the potter woman brought the name of Ram and popularized it.

Kojaram turns the panel to Badrinath ka paat

Badri is Narayan's temple. One who goes to Badri, his health improves.

One who does not go to Badri is deprived of good health, remains ill.

The water in river does not deplete if the sparrow fills some in its beak,

Similarly money does not reduce if put in religious deeds like charity,

This is said by saint Kabir.

Look at the sacred *Kaavad* of God.

Have a vision of Badri Narayan's temple,

A religious person will enter the temple with confidence and will have feet to climb the stairs
to heaven; the sinner will not be able to, he will hang upside down,

You gave your ears, but you never listened to the stories,

You looked but never made the pilgrimage,

You spoke but never took God's name,

Such men go to hell.

One man was chasing sinful money.

But money is an illusion; it never goes with you at the end.

Here is a vision of Lord Bhagirath,

Ganga came from Gomukh (mouth of the cow),

Because of Bhagirath's penance, Praise be Bhagirath, the *Parihar*,

he has become immortal

Whatever is sown grows, whatever is eaten or consumed, finishes.

But whatever is donated goes a long way, becomes eternal

Those who get a *Kaavad* opened and make donations, their merits are remembered again and
again,

Eons may pass but their name will never be obliterated, they will be immortal.

Shyam Sinh Sodi ji from village Kotada is recited in the *Kaavad*. He donated a cow for the *Kaavad* reading, his son Derawar Sinh's name is also recited in the *Kaavad*, in village Kotada. Name is recited of Bhati Bhanwar Singh ji, he donated for the upkeep of a horse and rupees 501 from village Rajda.

Name of Kunwar²⁴ Bhagwaan Singh is recited in the *Kaavad*,
He is from the Bhatia community, from village Ranada.

Now look, another donation from a Thakar given in the *Kaavad*,
Whatever is donated in this world comes back in the next life.

Eons may pass but their name will never be obliterated, it will be immortal.

It is true, making a donation is as sacred as taking a bath in holy Ganges.

Name recited is Saabdaan Singh Khokhar,

He donated in the *Kaavad*, from village Khokhar

Another donation in the *Kaavad* from village Koro

Look the son's name is being recited in the *Kaavad*.

Whatever is donated in this world comes back in the next life.

Name recited is Ghemar Singh, and wife Khaaltaani ji Hukum,
name recited brother Agar Singh and wife Agara Sodi²⁵

Kojaramji turns the panel

Look they donated in the *Kaavad*, their son Ranoji's name is recited in the *Kaavad*,

Name recited is Sher Singh's in the *Kaavad*, he has donated for an image of himself on a camel, he has donated fodder for the camel, and has donated a parrot, a goat, a shawl and Agra Sodhi's dress in the *Kaavad*.

Look brother Ghemar Singh's name is recited in the *Kaavad*,

Ghemar Singh got the *Kaavad* opened, and made a donation in the *Kaavad*,

Whatever is donated in this world comes back in the next life.

Name recited is Bhagwan Bhai Sujan Sinh ji in the *Kaavad*,

Name recited is that of his wife Bhopiji,

Banna²⁶ Kamal Sinhji's name is being recited and added in the *Kaavad*.

²⁴ Kunwar is a term used for a man whose father is alive.

²⁵ Sodi is the name of the community or *gotra*

In the name of Kamal Singh donation is made for the upkeep of a horse²⁷, this includes a parrot and a goat. This is from village Kora.

Whatever is donated in this world comes back in the next life.

Eons may pass but their name will never be obliterated, it will be immortal.

Name recited is that of Ghemar Singh's father Hathi Sinh in the *Kaavad*,

Name recited is Hathi Singh's brother Kheem Sinh.

Rewant Singh got his name added in the *Kaavad*.

Its true, making a donation is as sacred as taking a bath in holy Ganges.

Name recited is Guman Singh Haakam's from village Jhinhaniyali.

Thakur²⁸ Khangar Singh donated rupees 1051 to place an elephant with a seat in the *Kaavad*.

Eons may pass but his name will never be obliterated, it will be immortal.

Thakur Govind Das Sinh's *punya* is recited in the *Kaavad* and Kunwar Sawai Singh. Govind Das Sinh donated Rs 500 for an image of himself on a camel and a blanket in the *Kaavad*.

Whatever is donated in this world comes back in the next life.

Eons may pass but their name will never be obliterated, it will be immortal.

Name recited is Thakur Taneraj Sinh donated one coat, one double blanket and rupees 500 in the *Kaavad*.

Names recited are Kunwar Hukum Singh ji, wife Barmeri and brother Dan Singh Sodi in the *Kaavad*. Banna Der Singh, Janak Singh, Hate Singh's name is added in the *Kaavad*.

Thakur Dan ji donated in the place of a horse, a goat in the *Kaavad*, his son Kunwar Chen Singh Sodhi's name is recited, Swaroop Singh's name was added for donating a female camel in the *Kaavad*.

Kind-hearted Harojiba from Haraniya ri dhani donated a milk-giving cow in the *Kaavad*.

Eons may pass but their name will never be obliterated, it will be immortal.

Its true, making a donation is like taking a bath in holy Ganges.

Donated by the sons see Derawar Singh Hukum's *punya* is recited in the *Kaavad*. Derawar Singh's image is riding on a camel.. He donated a camel in the *Kaavad*.

Name of Kunwar Saab is recited in the *Kaavad*.

²⁶ Banna and Kunwar is a term used for a male whose father is alive.

²⁷ When a patron cannot afford to give an animal like a horse or camel they pay for its upkeep by offering a goat/lamb/parrot /grain or money.

²⁸ Thakur is a term used for a male whose father has died.

Sadul Singh 's *punya* is recited in the *Kaavad*.

In Sadul Singh's name a female horse has been added in the *Kaavad*. They donated rupees 500 for the upkeep of the horse, one coat and one dress in the *Kaavad*.

Sadul Singh's donation is noted in the *Kaavad*, he has finished paying his dues.

Wife Samad Kunwar donated one dress in the *Kaavad*,

And got Kunwar Saab Ram Sinh's name added in the *Kaavad*.

Brother Khet Singh's donation is noted in the *Kaavad*, he has paid his dues. Brother Basant Sinh's name is added in the *Kaavad*. He donated for an image of a jeep in the *Kaavad* in name of brother Basant Sinh.

Basant Sinh's wife Samda's name is recited in the *Kaavad*. Banna Gulab Sinh's and Tej Sinh's donation of chariot is due. When they will donate their names will be corrected in all the 580 *Kaavads* (spread in all of Rajasthan).

Guleji donated Rs151 in *Kaavad*, Tej Sinh's donation is due.

Askaran Singh and wife Ugam Kunwar Hukum in

whose name the *Kaavad* is recited, have a vision of God in the *Kaavad*.

He has paid for the upkeep of a cow in the *Kaavad* and his dues are done.

One dress, one shawl, one low-stool (*baajot*) and one

Spice-box has been donated in the *Kaavad*.

In the name of Banna a sheep has been donated.

In the name of Saam Singh a horse has been donated in the *Kaavad*.

Brother Saam Singh, Saam Singh's younger

Shravan Singh, Prakash Singh's name is added in the *Kaavad*.

Tejmal Singh, Krit Singh and look Prakash Singh,

Have a vision of God's *Kaavad*.

Donation given ends all dues, look at the donation given.

Whatever is donated in this world comes back in the next life.

Eons may pass but their name will never be obliterated, they will be immortal.

Jagji and wife Taggi have donated for an image of them riding a camel in the

Kaavad. His father's *punya* is recited in the *Kaavad*. He donated a sheep for the upkeep of a camel.

Have a vision of God's *Kaavad*.

And those whose donations are due, their names are left,
 When they make the donations their names will be corrected in 580 *Kaavads*
 Jaamtaji's *punya* is being recited in the *Kaavad*,
 Jaamtaji Ba donated a sheep in the *Kaavad*, got
 his son Maan Sinh's name added in the *Kaavad*.
 Its true, making a donation is as sacred as taking a bath in holy Ganges.
 Eons may pass but their name will never be obliterated, they will be immortal.
 A donation of Rs100 is made in the name of Bhagji Abba,
 One sword and one coat is given, as a token (*seekh*²⁹),
 Donation for the upkeep of a horse is given, from Raniyari Dhani.
 Names of Mensoji, Nathaji are recited in the *Kaavad*.
 Sons Kalu Sinh, Bhanwar Sinh and Kewal Sinh's names
 are added in the *Kaavad*. Name of Babu Sinh is recited and son Nar Sinh's donation is due.
 Name recited is Sujan Singh and of Chanan Singh in the *Kaavad*.
 Lunji donated Rs251 and one shawl in the *Kaavad*.
 Name recited is Mudoji and his son Gorka Ram
 And his wife Babri are recited in the *Kaavad*.
 They commissioned an image of a cow and donated a goat in the *Kaavad*.
 One milk-giving goat, was donated in the *Kaavad*.
 Then Mudoji's wife Ganvari donated a goat, got her son Pawan's name added in the *Kaavad*.
 Name recited is Natho with wife Kesar, their son Ramesar's name is recited in the *Kaavad*.
 Whatever is sown grows, whatever is consumed or eaten finishes.
 But whatever is donated goes a long way, becomes eternal.
Kojaram turns to the inner shrine doors and brushes the left door with the peacock feather
 Duti is a sinner, she hit her brother-in-law with her shoes, kicked her mother-in-law and slyly
 ate the food meant for pregnant women in the house. This sinner, she is not pious or charitable
 and will not others be charitable either. She drowned in her sins and took along three
 neighbors who were influenced by her. She will get flames to eat for food and to cover her she

²⁹ *Seekh* is a token gift made by the patron to the storyteller simply for coming and doing a reading. Once a patron has finished paying their dues which is written on the *Kaavad* they are not obliged to pay him, but if he comes to their house they can offer anything as a token or *Seekh*.

will be given mud. She who hit her brother-in-law with shoes and kicked her mother-in-law will go to hell.

Kojaram turns to the inner shrine doors and brushes the right door with the peacock feather

There is a King Harishchandra and his son is Rohit Das Kunwar

The king became a beggar, filled water for the untouchable's house

Yet, he never left the side of truth or his true faith.

Never leave the side of truth dear ones,

If you leave its side you can go to hell

Goddess of wealth Laxmi, is always on the side of truth

If you stay on the side of truth all lost will be returned to you.

In the *Kaavad* Shravan is taking his parents in a *Kaavad* to the holy Ganges

King Dashrath aims with his arrow and kills his nephew

The nephew cried out 'what joy did you get from killing me uncle?'

Kojaram opens the innermost shrine doors and brushes both sides of the inner doors

The one who rides the tiger is Jagdamba

The one who rides the swans is Bemata

Karma the *Jat* woman is cooking Kheech for the Gods and is feeding the god lovingly

Whatever is sown grows, whatever is consumed or eaten finishes.

But whatever is donated goes a long way, becomes eternal.

Lets praise the god Char Bhuja, Lord Jagdish be praised

And all those who are here to listen let us praise them

Let the earth be praised and let mother and father be praised.

APPENDIX IV

Glossary of terms

<i>Aida</i>	The instructions given by the storyteller to the <i>Kaavad</i> maker regarding placement of images of patrons on specific panels.
<i>Alvars</i>	Tamil Vaishnava mystic poet.
<i>Amal</i>	Opium.
<i>Amavasya</i>	A moonless night.
<i>Avataar</i>	Descended incarnation; most frequently refers to God Vishnu's births in various bodies for various purposes.
<i>Bahi Bhat</i>	A genealogist who has a record book.
<i>Bahi Khata</i>	The record book of genealogies.
<i>Bajra</i>	Pearl millet.
<i>Balaram</i>	Lord Krishna's brother.
<i>Baniya</i>	A merchant.
<i>Baori</i>	A well.
<i>Baraat</i>	A wedding procession.
<i>Barots</i>	Keeper of records and genealogical charts.
<i>Basayati</i>	A clan of carpenters from village Bassi.
<i>Basola</i>	A wood chipping tool.
<i>Beldar</i>	A caste employed in digging earth and quarrying stones.
<i>Bhagat</i>	A Holy person who leads a life of spirituality and dedication to God.
<i>Bhagwan</i>	God, the Lord in an unspecified sense; may also be term of address or reference for a particular male divinity.
<i>Bhaironji</i>	A form of Lord Shiva worshipped on Sundays.

<i>Bhakti</i>	Devotion; devotional love; a way of approaching God defined in opposition to ritual, to knowledge, to asceticism.
<i>Bhakti sant</i>	Key figures of <i>Bhakti</i> movement.
<i>Bhanw aana</i>	An experience of being possessed by a deity.
<i>Bhanwar Bhat</i>	One who goes about singing the praises of the lord.
<i>Bhanwara</i>	A bee.
<i>Bhat</i>	A genealogist caste.
<i>Bhati</i>	One of the largest groups amongst Rajputs.
<i>Bheda ki Guwadi</i>	The ancestral home of the carpenter community in Bassi, Chittor.
<i>Bheel</i>	A tribe known to have first inhabited Mewar.
<i>Bhiga</i>	One bhiga is equal to 0.4 hectares.
<i>Bhopa</i>	Shrine-priest; non-Brahman priest.
<i>Biman</i>	Vehicle.
<i>Bishnoi</i>	A nomadic tribe, known for their reverence for the environment.
<i>Brahman</i>	Member of the priestly caste in the Hindu varna/caste system.
<i>Brim Bhat</i>	Subset of the Bhats.
<i>Bund Paat</i>	Closed panels that are recited for a new patron by the storyteller.
<i>Buss jaana</i>	To settle.
<i>Byah</i>	Wedding.
<i>Chalta phirta mandir</i>	Portable temple.
<i>Chandisa Bhat</i>	Subset of the Bhats.
<i>Chandravanshi</i>	Of the Lunar dynasty
<i>Chang</i>	A musical instrument.

<i>Char Bhuj</i>	Four-Armed Vishnu.
<i>Chamasa</i>	Monsoon season.
<i>Chitra</i>	Paintings or drawings.
<i>Chitrakathis</i>	A nomadic community of storytellers. They carry <i>pothis</i> of rectangular paintings and narrate myths and legends from the epics, folklore and local legends preserved in their oral tradition.
<i>Chitrasutra</i>	Axioms on paintings.
<i>Dangri</i>	A feast given by the returning pilgrim.
<i>Darshan</i>	Auspicious sight of a powerful icon or living being; <i>darshan</i> is not "done" but "taken" and conveys a sense of power and blessings flowing in through the eyes (as well as prayers and devotion flowing out).
<i>Deewali</i>	Hindu festival celebrated in the autumn; numerous <i>diyas</i> , or lamps, are lit to invite Lakshmi, goddess of wealth and prosperity, into the household.
<i>Dera</i>	Temporary dwelling in the open.
<i>Jal Jhulani Agyaras</i>	Festival held four days before the full moon night in the month of September.
<i>Devasthan</i>	Abode of the Gods.
<i>Devi- Devatas</i>	Goddesses-and-gods; collective term often used for lesser, local deities in opposition to, for example, Shiva or Vishnu or Durga.
<i>Devnarayan</i>	A Rajasthani folk-god worshipped like Pabuji, by means of ritual epic performance in front of a painted scroll, <i>phad</i> . He figures briefly in the epic of Pabuji, where the two hero-deities have a trial of supernatural strength, won by Pabuji.
<i>Devnarayan ki Phad</i>	The cloth painted scroll representing the life of Devnarayan, a Rajasthani folk deity.

<i>Devra</i>	A shrine which is not serviced by a priest.
<i>Dhani</i>	The smallest conglomeration of huts.
<i>Dharam</i>	Biomoral duty; righteousness; coherence; one of the four human aims.
<i>Dhok dena</i>	Respect paid to a Hindu deity at a shrine or a temple.
<i>Dhola Maru</i>	<i>Phad</i> painting of the famous love legend of local hero Dhola and his lover Maru.
<i>Dholi</i>	The caste of drum beaters.
<i>Dohas</i>	A form of self-contained rhyming couplet in Hindi and Urdu poetry.
<i>Dramatis Personae</i>	The characters in a play or story.
<i>Etoki</i>	Audiovisual religious education in Japan, a verbal act of explaining the contents of a painting.
<i>Gangaur</i>	The spring festival of Gangaur, symbolic of the ripened harvest is held in honour of Gauri, the goddess of abundance.
<i>Gangoj</i>	Ritualistic feast for the community on the twelfth day after death
<i>Garasia</i>	A camel and cattle herding tribe.
<i>Garbha griha</i>	Sanctum sanctorum of a temple.
<i>Garoda</i>	Scroll painting storytellers from Gujarat.
<i>Geeta</i>	Also called Shreemad Bhagwat Geeta, one of the holy texts of the Hindus which contains the divine discourse given to Arjun, by Lord Krishna in the battle of Mahabharat.
<i>Ghadna</i>	The act of assembling the wooden pieces to make a <i>Kaavad</i> .
<i>Ghoonghat</i>	A type of veil or headscarf worn by women to cover their head when males or elders are around.
<i>Goliya</i>	Illegitimate offspring of Rajput.

<i>Gomchen</i>	A priest.
<i>Gujar</i>	Member of a caste traditionally occupied as agriculturalists and herdsmen.
<i>Gung Bhat</i>	A subset of Bhanwar Bhat.
<i>Gupat Paat</i>	Left cluster of panels of the <i>Kaavad</i> . Outer shrine has Vishnu/Krishna and Kundana Bai hidden behind the panel.
<i>Hansari Palki</i>	Chariot driven by swans.
<i>Hara</i>	Green colour.
<i>Harijan</i>	Discriminated people as the caste-less or untouchables.
<i>Hariyali Amavas</i>	The no moon day in the Shravan month (July/August) in North India. Great importance is given to green color during this moonless day.
<i>Hinglu</i>	Red colour.
<i>Holi</i>	A festival of colors. A Hindu celebration of spring and fertility, noted for its playful throwing of liquid dye and colours at each other.
<i>Isar Gaur</i>	Shiva-Parvati.
<i>Jagannath Rath Yatra</i>	A huge Hindu festival associated with Lord Jagannath (Krishna) held at Puri in the state of Orissa, India in June. The festival commemorates Lord Jagannath's annual visit to his aunt's home. On the day of the Rath(chariot) festival, three richly decorated chariots, resembling temple structures, are pulled through the streets of Puri so that everyone can have the fortune of seeing them.
<i>Jai ho</i>	Praise the God.
<i>Jajman</i>	Hereditary patron.
<i>Jajmani</i>	A hereditary personal relationship that expresses division of labour.
<i>Jangid Brahmins</i>	Sons of Lord Vishwakarma.

<i>Jassa Bhati</i>	A Rajput clan.
<i>Jat</i>	Member of a caste traditionally occupied as agriculturalists and herdsmen.
<i>Jati</i>	Caste, group, community.
<i>Jatra</i>	Pilgrimage, any journey (in Rajasthani).
<i>Jhulna</i>	To swing.
<i>Joshi Chhipa</i>	Community of block printers or artists.
<i>Kaavadiya</i>	People who carry holy water in baskets balanced on bamboo poles from the Ganges in Haridwar to Shiva's temples in Rajasthan.
<i>Kaavadiya Bhats</i>	Storytellers who carries the <i>Kaavad</i> portable shrine to his patrons for recitation.
<i>Kahani</i>	Story.
<i>Kal yug</i>	The fourth, most degenerate era in Hindu chronology; a ready explanation for the failings of men and gods.
<i>Kapaat/ Kavaat</i>	Sanskrit term for <i>Kaavad</i> .
<i>Kath</i>	Wood
<i>Katha</i>	Recitation of Hindu religious texts, such as the Puranas, Ramayana or Srimad Bhagavat.
<i>Kathputli</i>	A wooden puppet.
<i>Kathputli ka khel</i>	Puppet show with wooden string puppets.
<i>Khatik</i>	A community of tanners and dyers of goat skin.
<i>Kheech</i>	Grainy gruel.
<i>Khul Paat</i>	Right cluster of panels of the <i>Kaavad</i> leading to the inner shrine with Ram Sita and Lakshman.

<i>Kivad</i>	Door.
<i>Kshatriya</i>	The warrior class or caste in the Hindu <i>varna</i> system.
<i>Kumbhar</i>	A community of potters.
<i>Lull Bhats</i>	Subset of the Bhanwar Bhats.
<i>Maandna</i>	The act of painting.
<i>Mahabhashya</i>	A commentary by Patanjali on selected rules of Sanskrit grammar.
<i>Mahajans</i>	Trader community.
<i>Mahayana</i>	‘Great vehicle’, one of the two main branches of Buddhism..
<i>Maira or Mayero</i>	The obligatory wedding gift given by the maternal uncle.
<i>Makar Sankranti</i>	The day of transition of the Sun into <i>Makara rashi</i> (Capricorn) on its celestial path.
<i>Mali</i>	Class of market gardeners.
<i>Mandap</i>	A pillared outdoor hall or pavilion for public rituals in a temple.
<i>Mandi</i>	A market centre found in an urban area for trading of agricultural products.
<i>Mandir</i>	Hindu Temple.
<i>Manip</i>	Wandering bard in Bhutan.
<i>Ma-ni-pa</i>	The performer of the Tibetan picture scrolls.
<i>Matras</i>	A vowel sign.
<i>Mauryas</i>	A geographically extensive and powerful empire in ancient India, ruled by the Mauryan dynasty from 321 to 185 BC.
<i>Mayero bharna</i>	The act of an obligatory gift giving by the maternal uncle at a wedding
<i>Meghwal</i>	A schedule caste with leather related occupation and weaving.

<i>Mewari</i>	Dialect of Rajasthani language of Indo-Aryan languages family.
<i>Modhi Padhai</i>	A script which has thirty six letters but no vowel signs or <i>matras</i> .
<i>Mohra</i>	A face.
<i>Moksha</i>	Release- from any bonds, but specifically from the bondage of cycles of birth and death, that is from <i>samsara</i> .
<i>Muhrik</i>	A wooden tablet.
<i>Murba</i>	Agricultural land close to a canal.
<i>Muslim Teli</i>	Oil pressers.
<i>Nai</i>	Barber caste.
<i>Nathdwara</i>	The holy town famous for its temple of Krishna which houses the Shrinathji, a 12th century "infant" incarnation idol of Krishna.
<i>Natiya</i>	See <i>Nats</i> .
<i>Nats</i>	Street acrobats, a community in Rajasthan.
<i>Nayanars</i>	Shaivite devotional poets of Tamil Nadu
<i>Neara</i>	Division of property including the distribution of patrons.
<i>Neel</i>	The colour blue.
<i>Paat</i>	Panel or cluster of panels.
<i>Pabuji Phad</i>	Long cloth painting depicting the epic of Rajasthani folk-deity Pabuji.
<i>Padayatra</i>	Sacred journey undertaken by foot.
<i>Pathwari Ma</i>	Path mother, goddess people worship before and after they go on a pilgrimage.
<i>Pattiya/ patti</i>	Wooden strip or panel.
<i>Patua</i>	A scroll painter and performer in West Bengal.
<i>Peepal</i>	The tree: Holy Fig, worshipped by the Hindus.

<i>Phad</i>	A long cloth-painting on which are depicted the events of the epic narratives, and in front of which epic performances take place. Ritually, the <i>phad</i> functions as the temple of the deity.
<i>Phad Baanchana</i>	Phad recitation.
<i>Phool</i>	Ashes of the dead.
<i>Pien-wen</i>	Chinese picture recitation scroll.
<i>Pingal Bhats</i>	Subset of Bhanwar Bhats.
<i>Piyawadi</i>	Colour Yellow.
<i>Poliyas</i>	Guardians of the <i>Kaavad</i> shrine.
<i>Pothi</i>	A book.
<i>Punya</i>	Merit that accrues from selfless act or acts in accordance with <i>dharma</i> .
<i>Purans</i>	Collection of myths and rituals.
<i>Putli</i>	Wooden figurine.
<i>Raksha Bandhan</i>	A Hindu festival, which celebrates the relationship between brothers and sisters.
<i>Ram Rewari</i>	A palanquin used to transport the deity to a water body on the occasion of <i>Jal Jhulni Egyaras</i> , a festival between August and September, four days before the full moon when the deity is gently swung in the water and then returned to its place.
<i>Rav</i>	Honorable title given to the storyteller Bhat.
<i>Ravda</i>	Palatial house which is a bit smaller than a palace which will be referred to as 'Mahal'.
<i>Rebaris</i>	Member of a caste of shepherds and camel-herds. <i>Rebaris</i> are prominent among the devotees of Pabuji.
<i>Regar</i>	A scheduled caste in Rajasthan dealing with leather.

<i>Rishi/Brahmin</i>	The sages who composed the <i>Vedas</i> .
<i>Rudraksha</i>	A large evergreen broad-leaved tree whose seed is traditionally used for prayer beads in Hinduism.
<i>Sada-suhaagan</i>	A woman whose husband is alive for eternity.
<i>Sagai</i>	Engagement.
<i>Samadhi</i>	Advanced state of meditation where there is no awareness of surroundings; meditation until death; total unity, the logical end of individual identity and also death of the body.
<i>Sant</i>	Holy man.
<i>Sati</i>	The act of self-immolation by a loyal wife on her husband's funeral pyre.
<i>Sati Mata</i>	Goddess deriving from the spirit of a woman who by committing <i>Sati</i> ends her life, virtuously but abruptly.
<i>Satyagraha</i>	Form of nonviolent resistance initiated in India by Mahatma Gandhi in order to oppose British rule and to hasten political reforms.
<i>Saviyas</i>	Rhymes recited by <i>Kaavadiya Bhat</i> storytellers during a performance.
<i>Shaadi</i>	A wedding.
<i>Shaivites</i>	Devotees of the deity Shiva.
<i>Shikhar</i>	The rising tower in Hindu temple architecture of North India.
<i>Shravan-Bhadon</i>	Monsoon months.
<i>Sonis</i>	A caste of Goldsmiths.
<i>Sthapana</i>	A sacred installation.
<i>Stupa</i>	A dome-shaped shrine.
<i>Suffade</i>	White colour.

<i>Surat khwan</i>	Iranian picture scroll.
<i>Suryavanshis</i>	Descendents of the Solar Dynasty.
<i>Suthar</i>	The carpenter community.
<i>Sutradhar</i>	Narrator.
<i>Syahi</i>	Black ink.
<i>Tashigomang</i>	Portable shrine from Bhutan.
<i>Teej</i>	A fasting festival for Hindu women, dedicated to the Goddess Parvati, commemorating her union with Lord Shiva.
<i>Telis</i>	A caste of oil pressers.
<i>Thakar</i>	An Indian feudal title usually adopted by Kshatriya Rajputs.
<i>Thakur mandir</i>	Sanctum Sanctorum of the <i>Kaavad</i> shrine.
<i>Thankas</i>	Long painted scrolls from Tibet.
<i>Thokna</i>	See <i>Ghadna</i> .
<i>Tirth yatra</i>	Journey to a pilgrimage site.
<i>Tirtha</i>	Ford, crossing place, pilgrimage center.
<i>Toran</i>	An arched gateway. An embroidered doorway hanging.
<i>Treta Yug</i>	The second of four <i>Yugas</i> , or ages of mankind, in Hinduism.
<i>Vaahan</i>	Vehicle.
<i>Vaderas</i>	Elders/Ancestors.
<i>Vaishnavism</i>	A tradition of Hinduism, distinguished from other schools by its worship of Vishnu or his associated avatars, principally as Rama and Krishna, as the original and supreme God.
<i>Vaishnavites</i>	Devotees of the deity Vishnu.
<i>Varna</i>	The main division of Hindu society into four social classes.

<i>Verandah</i>	A roofed opened porch along the outside of a building.
<i>Vishvakarma</i>	Hindu god of Architecture.
<i>Wayang beber dalang</i>	Narrator speaker of picture story telling in Indonesia.
<i>Yajamana</i>	Patron.
<i>Yama</i>	God of death.
<i>Yamapatika</i>	Picture scroll used by a storyteller about heaven and hell.
<i>Yatra</i>	A Hindu pilgrimage to holy places.

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