

Dya Thāyegu

A special Gunla activity in Tuladhar households is making small chaityas out of black clay, a practice called Dya Thāyegu. This is usually done by small guthis set up for this purpose. The goal is for the household to make a large number of clay chaityas and Buddhist deities, ideally numbering 100,000.

After a purificatory ritual for the family at the start of the month (which may involve the abstention from meat and alcohol), individuals sit together each morning to make as many images as they can using special molds. Women are usually the most active in dya thāyegu; this makes sense as they do not participate in the bājan. (Menstruating women, however, must abstain from this task.)

To make an individual image according to the highest standards (known only to Urāy, Sākyas, and Vajrācāryas) entails a twelve-step process marked at each turn by a mantra recitation.¹ Each image also gets a grain of rice that gives jīv ("life") to it.

¹The steps are given here with the accompanying mantras:

1. Om Basudhe Svaha , taking the clay;
2. Om Vajra Bhavay Svaha , shaping the clay;
3. Om Arje Viraje Svaha , putting oil in the mold;
4. Om Vajra Dhatu Garbhe Svaha , putting the clay in the mold;
5. Om Vajra Kirti Chedaya Hum Phat Svaha , removing the excess clay;
6. Om Dharma Dhatu Garbhe Svaha , putting in a paddy grain;
7. Om Vajra Mungaratko Hum Phat Svaha , covering up the paddy grain;
8. Om Vajra Dharma Rate Svaha , putting on extra clay to remove the image ;
9. Om Supratisthata Vajre Svaha , putting the image with others already made;
10. Om Mani Sata Dipte Svaha , after placing it.