

Tribhuvan University

Cultural Dissidence in Contemporary Limbu Poetry

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by

Dipak Lungeli

T.U. Regd. No.: 6-1-1-103-97

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Tribhuvan University
Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences
Central Department of English

Letter of Recommendation

Dipak Lungeli has completed his dissertation entitled “Cultural Dissidence in Contemporary Limbu Poetry” under my supervision. He carried out his research from Feb 2021 to June 2022. I hereby recommend his dissertation be submitted for the pre/final viva voce.

Dr. Komal Phuyel

Supervisor

June 2022

Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation entitled “Cultural Dissidence in Contemporary Limbu Poetry” submitted to the office of the Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Tribhuvan University, is an entirely original work, and I have made due acknowledgements to all ideas and information borrowed from different sources in the course of writing the dissertation. The results presented in this dissertation have not been presented anywhere else for award of any degree or for any other reasons. No part of the content of this dissertation has ever been published in any form before. I shall be solely responsible if any evidence is found against my declaration.

Dipak Lungeli

June 2022

Approval Letter

This research work entitled “Cultural Dissidence in Contemporary Limbu Poetry” submitted to the Central Department of English in Tribhuvan University by Dipak Lungeli has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.
Members of the Research Committee

Dr. Komal Phuyel

Supervisor

Prof. Dr. Krishna Chandra Sharma

External Examiner

Prof. Dr. Jiblal Sapkota

Head of the Department

Central Department of English

Date:

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Abstract

The dissertation posits that contemporary Limbu poets emerged from the outskirts of eastern Nepal after the political movement of 2006 write against the mainstream Nepali culture and literature in a venture to claim for the recognition of their indigenous identity. The poetic dissidence makes the critique of mainstream power bloc and thus entails the rhetoric of the political resistance of marginal communities arising as offshoots of political trajectory of 2006. They foreground their marginal identity and at the same time question lacunae and hazards of literary and cultural mainstream of the country. Poets use *Mundhum* rooted cultural trope as dissident force against dominant ideology. At the same time, exhibiting pulsates of their *Mundhumi* cultural aesthetics and experimental intervention with local myths, images, and, symbols; they also add unique flavor of Limbu indigenous identity into the domain of Nepali literature. They stick upon their eccentric cultural exuberance to communicate, discuss and articulate their underprivileged conditions. To support the claim, I have approached the poems from the theoretical perspective of Cultural Psychology as mode of resistance in which poets manifest abstract cultural divergences, identity, behaviors, orientations and emotions constituting their ethnic identity. Hence, more or less in their aesthetic response to the political and social movements of the time, the poems configure with marginal identity politics. Moreover, acknowledging ethnic identity by means of literature, poets also attempt to arouse the spirit of cultural awakening in their community members.

Key Words: Culture, Dissidence, Identity, Indigeneity, Marginalization, *Mundhum*

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Chapter I: Locating Limbu Identity in Limbu Poems

The present research paper examines contemporary Limbu poets using *Mundhum* rooted cultural trope in the poems as dissident force against lacunae and hazards of the mainstream structure of their time. In order to show new herald of Limbu poems as dissenting enterprise reaffirming cultural identity from the margin, I have purposefully selected twenty-two poems of sixteen contemporary Limbu poets as the principal ground of study. The poems comprise isolated and anthological publication. The concept of ‘contemporary’ includes wide range of time but I delimit the contemporaneity of primary source to the poems written after people’s movement of 2006. It includes the works of Bairagi Kaila, Raj Manglak, Sameer Sherma, Sameep Senehang, Dharmendra Nembang, Roshan Yakso, Tanka Sambahamphe, Hangyug Agyat, Dil Dukhi Jantare, Upendra Subba, Chandrabir Tumbapo, Swapnil Smriti, Sundar Kurup, Ranjana Limbu, Prakash Thamsuhang, and Man Prasad Subba.

Belonging to Limbu ethnic background from eastern part of Nepal, most of the poets represent the spirit of different literary movements they belong to and some poets reflect their expressions individually. Veteran poet Bairagi Kaila in his contemporary poems reflects cultural issues of Limbu marginality. Upendra Subba and Hangyug Agyat represent *Shirjansheel Arajakta* (Creative Anarchy), a literary movement from margin that urges the inclusion of ethnic identities within mainstream Nepali literature. Raj Manglak, Sameer Sherma, Sameep Senehang embrace the spirit of *Uttarwanti Soch* (Postmodern Thought) experimenting local culture in poetry. Poets Dharmendra Nembang, Swapnil Smriti, and Chandrabir Tumbapo belonging to Bahurangbaad (Multi-Colourism) take the stand for pluralistic literature that would include the multiple colours (existences) of all class, gender, ethnic and geographical

identities. Rest of the poets individually expresses on Limbu ethnic issues from marginality.

Originated from the same territory of eastern Nepal, which they consider as Limbuwan, the poets disseminate in common the issues of their Limbu identity and culture. They posit that mainstream Nepali structure of culture and literature systematically imposes barriers to the representation of their identity. They also claim that indifference to their identity stems from monotype political system prevalent for a long time. Hence, in their cultural setting, Limbu writers' poetic dissidence entails the politics for the recognition and reception of their identity into mainstream domain. From the resistive spaces, they communicate, discuss and articulate their underprivileged conditions, and in turn garner a reinvention of their distinct cultural world.

The research applies theoretical insights of Cultural Psychology as a mode of resistance as the framework of interpretation in the study to support the major claim that Limbu poets use their Limbuness as cultural trope to make dissidence against the tendency of elite ruling culture in order to bring change beyond defunct literary and cultural structure. Cultural Psychology considers human culture and the mind as mutually constituted where human experience and action are shaped through their participation in the symbolic systems of culture. The constitution of human psychology involves the internalization of abstract ethnic divergences, identity, and emotions. The literary taste and sense of beauty cultivated in Limbu poems reveal the underlying aesthetic motivations and sensibilities of its people and culture. With symbolic representation of culture in literature, Limbu poets invite critical approach to discover the notion of beauty of art forms comprising their worldview, sensibilities, spirituality, behaviors, orientations, and, value systems. The lens of Cultural

Psychology finds a community member's particular way of life as culturally favored and flavored practices and manifestations. Besides, I have used different insights on the major aspects of Limbu culture, ethnicity, identity and marginality resourced from scholarly sources to supplement the theoretical framework of the study.

The issues of indigenous people substantially began to surface as a subject of discourse in Nepali context after the People's Movement of 1990. People's Movement of 2006 resulted into the trajectory of the country from monarchy to republicanism. It further garnered the process of political restructuring of the country paving way to an open space for wider debate of social inclusion of historically marginalized people. The movement reinforced ethnic consciousness among the marginal communities for unearthing multifarious issues of marginality. As a result, voice from the suppressed marginal identities amplified the issues of identity, right for self-determination, and autonomy. Ethnicity led identity politics in specific regional territories influenced marginal community demand for the endorsement of identity based federal state in the new constitution. As aesthetic response to the movement, marginal literature sticking into the same political motif emerged in Nepali scenario. Vanguard of Limbu poems from eastern region argued for their space in the mainstream. Because literature as the mode of cultural production manifests the specific socio political dimensions, this study analyzes Limbu poems by foregrounding the nexus between literature and culture.

The primary objective of the paper concerns with examining the dynamics of resistive Cultural Psychology in the works of Limbu poets. The dissertation confers that these poets imply their works as an agency to express real aura of living in marginality. Therefore, it interprets their poems along the line of poets' resistance consciousness and indigenous aesthetics from culturally dominated and socially

excluded ground. Moreover, the paper delineates existing relationship between Limbu ethnic identity and dominant ideology explored in the texts. It examines them deflating the tendency of elite ruling culture; against the dichotomy of self and others, dominant and subordinated, superior and inferior, high and low, and privileged and unprivileged. In addition, it disseminates common view of the poets on the history of exploitation and miseries of Limbu community continuously engulfed with discrimination and cleavages. Simultaneously, the paper delineates poets engaged in the historical, traditional, and socio-cultural attributes of the Limbu community shaping their distinctive ethnic identity. It scrutinizes poets thriving on comprehending their socio-cultural aesthetics and Limbuness in an endeavor to establish their unique cultural identity by revealing abstract ethnic divergences, identity, and emotions.

The paper also makes an overview of the genesis of Limbu ethnicity and their multifarious process of transformation from past to present. It reviews a long historical process of assimilation, adaptation, mediation and, accommodation of Limbu identity transmitted from the past generations to the present. At the same time, it shades light on different recognition and categorization of Limbu ethnicity formed by external forces of powerful state mechanism or by other dominant communities. It reveals that in the course of political transition, identities of Limbu have been shifted from previously dominant community to subservient and dominated minority, from the then mainstream people to marginalized minority community at present. To reify the cultural signification of Limbu, the paper explores the traces of *Mundhum* apprehended in contemporary Limbu poets. It shows Limbu hold their identity with unique culture, religion, language, literature, and the ways of living steered by *Mundhum* belief system.

Simultaneously, the paper reviews indigenous critics' observation of the history of Nepali poetry found configured with the power bloc of the rulers and their political influences. At the same time, the paper makes appraisal of Nepali literature written from the margin receiving appreciative as well as negative critical approaches. It also examines critics' responses to Limbu poems. Overall, the reviews reveal that Limbu poems have emerged as new herald in Nepali literature against the tendency of dominant mechanism. Against this backdrop, the paper scrutinizes Limbu poems under four different rubrics to discover how poets engage in exploring Limbuness as signature of their cultural identity. It delves into analyzing Limbu indigeneity used by the poets as a vehicle of Cultural Psychology as a mode of resistance against dominant power. With this, the paper examines Limbu poets from eastern region engaged in quest for their ethnic identity independent of dominant propensity.

Chapter II: Deciphering Multiple Jolts in Limbu Marginal Identity

The present section amalgamates different concepts on genesis of Limbu identity, ethnicity, culture, and their connection to Nepali literature and culture at large. At first, it accentuates on deciphering Limbu identity undergoing long historical process of assimilation, adaptation, mediation, and, accommodation with external political and cultural forces for its formation. It further unravels quintessence of *Mundhum* as philosophical, social, cultural, spiritual, genealogical and ideological belief system contributing Limbu culture and its representations persistent until present. The section at another level reviews the history of Nepali poetry to discover Nepali poetry instigating with power bloc of the rulers and their political influences subjugating the voice of marginal indigenous communities. The scrutiny also unfolds indigenous minorities raising questions of representation from marginal cauldron against the attitude of mainstream culture akin to state-power. The section further engages in unraveling of critical receptions to Limbu poems to figure out the point of departure for the study. As the framework of interpretation of the study, the section finally shades light on Cultural Psychology as a mode of resistance, a theoretical framework of interpretation concerned with relation between human psychology, culture, and its representations. It discovers Cultural Psychology i.e. indigenous root of Limbuness operated in the way the poets adopt an 'us versus them' mindset to exhibit their cultural experiences in favor of their own group over others.

Labyrinth Passageways in Limbu Indigenous Identity

Identity of Limbu people comprises multiple layers of complexities and considerations. Culture, belief system, language, territory they reside in, their clans, tribal system and, treaty contribute in the formations of their identity. They identify themselves but their identity is equally determined by external agencies, political process, and, assimilations. Within the dichotomy of self-identification and external identification, it is precisely difficult to find appropriate measurement constituting Limbu identity. Fragmented, multiply constructed, and, intersected in the course of time, Limbu identity keeps on constantly changing, sometimes in conflicting array. This section examines conflicting views pervaded within Limbu community regarding their genetic, cultural, historical, territorial, and political identity.

Majority of Limbu regard themselves as part of Kirati people. Some claim their ancestral connectivity with the historical Kirat rulers prior to Lichchhavi Kings in Kathmandu Valley of the then Nepal. For instance, Ramesh Kumar Limbu highlights Gopal Vansawali documenting thirty-two Kirat Kings ruling in the valley. As it mentions, *Yalambar*, the first king had participated in the war of Mahabharata (5). It is convincing that the Limbus are aboriginal people of Nepal but no supporting document is available to prove ancestral linkage of Limbus of east with the Kirat rulers of Kathmandu valley. Therefore, the assertion that Kirat Kings are ancestors of Limbu is doubtful. Some claim their root linked with *Khambongbas*, the aboriginals of *Yakthunglaje*, Tammorkhola of Taplejung at present. Some argue that Limbu, denoted by endonymic term '*Yakthung*' delineates the heroes of the hills in which 'yak' means hills and 'thung' means heroes or mighty warriors. Some associate *Yakthung* to the derivative of *Yaksha* and literally interpret as *Yaksha*, the winner. They designate their ancestral territory as *Yankthunglaje* (Limbu 5). Since Limbus

had autonomous state, they defined their king as *Yakthunghang* where ‘hang’ means king. From the kingship, the role of the Limbus has been changed into administrators. After the annexation of Limbu territory in Nepal, then Shah Kings had given them the honorable title called ‘Subba’ which meant ‘chief’ of the particular territory. They were the representative of the rulers provided with certain legal, economic and administrative authority such as collecting land revenue. Thus, formation of Limbu identity results from conciliation process between Nepali state ideology and the Limbu community itself. Yet consistency of unique socio-cultural and historical attributes comprising language religion, culture, and lifestyle maintained by themselves, Limbu community constitutes distinct identity. Despite variations in its clans, Limbu community shares a myth of common ancestry, historical circumstances and memories, common culture, and inclines with certain territory with a sense of solidarity.

At another level, critics have put different opinions on the genealogy of the term ‘Limbu’. For Krishnendu Dutta Limbu are divided into Lhasa Gotra (clans) (believed to be rooted from Lhasa Tibet) and Yunan Gotra (from Yunan China). From this clans, Das Limbu (ten Limbu) emerged and from which emerged thirteen other sub-groups (41). Dutta’s claim asserts that ancestors of Limbu of two clans descended to south from the north India and settled in different places of eastern Nepal. In Iman Singh Chemjong’s view, *Thibong Yakthung* was the common name given to the groups of ten Limbu chiefs. And, Limbuwan was the territory they had won with the help of ‘Li’ meaning bow and arrows (7). Chemjong recognizes that ancestors of Limbu were excellent in war skills that helped them establish their autochthonous geography in eastern part of Nepal. Thereafter, they overcame external forces, flourished, and sustained their own cultural world in the territory. Arjunbabu

Mabohang speculates that Limbu or Limbukhang were the great grandson of Lilimhang of Susuwaden, the capital located in the bank of Saptakoshi (46).

Mabohang's argument points at a distinct cultural world of Limbu already flourished in eastern Nepal since long time ago. Kajiman Kandangwa does not reach as far as Mabuhang reaches to illustrate the meaning of the term. For Kandangwa, Limbu was the name Gorkha rulers might have given to the people of Lumbasumba or Kanchenjunga (23). Mabohang defines Limbu in terms internal identification process of the community based on place they reside in. In contrast, Kandangwa defines the term in tune to the influence of external force of Gorkha rulers upon the Limbus.

Ramesh Kumar Limbu also agrees with Kandangwa on the point that "the term 'Limbu' was used by Gurkha (Nepal) administration after 1774" (6). Limbu assures that 'Limbu' was the given name by the administration of Prithvi Narayan Shah after the conquest of Limbuwan. Besides, an alternative viewpoint stands regarding the origin of the term. Birahi Kaila puts forth the claim that in Limbu language 'Lingba' literally denotes "self-grown or emerged". Hence, the term "Limbu" might have been originated from "Lingba" (22). Kaila's assumption is convincing because there is also a place named Lingba in Taplejung district. Critics engaged in the interpretation of the term 'Limbu' with conflicting views put the term in multiple jolts. From their arguments, it can be substantiated that Limbu people have been living in eastern part of Nepal since the time immemorial but the origin of the term 'Limbu' is problematic. These conflicting viewpoints provide a room to claim that the ancestors of Limbu in their mobility in different directions mixed up with similar communities and formed and transformed, shaped and reshaped different identity.

Indigenous people like Limbu possess older culture. Harka Gurung posits that Nepal interlocks two fundamental cultures, "one is Indic or (Khas) and the next is

Mongoloids” (505). For Gurung, Mongoloid culture is the root of all indigenous people residing in Nepal. It is older than the Indic. Mongoloid people were the rulers in the country but in time being Indic people ruled the former. Among many indigenous nationalities of the country, Limbu community also shares mongoloid culture. Limbu historian Iman Singh Chemjong asserts that Limbu people embody the mongoloid physical appearance and speak Tibeto-Burman rooted languages (9). In similar vein of Gurung’s assertion, Chemjong makes it clear that Limbu people as other indigenous groups have Tibeto-Burman rooted culture. They embody typical mongoloid traces of body type and culture. More or less, indigenous people of Nepal share mongoloid body type. In this background, Krishnendu Dutta adds more details of Limbu physical appearance, “Limbu have epicanthus fold. The cheekbones appear high with low nasal roots and a small flat nose. Facial hairs are rarely seen and lips are thin but prominent. Their complexion is fair to pinkish and the body is sturdy and strong, short to medium in size” (42). Limbu people thus have retained not only distinct culture but also distinct physical characteristics. Such somatotype favored them become warriors and the survivors in hilly and mountainous locale. Along with unique culture, their distinctive physical type also determines Limbu identity.

The Limbus assert themselves as indigenous people designated with identities of warriors, rulers and dwellers of the hills, companions of the nature. Further, they designate the titles of folklore architects, users of medicinal plants and natural resources, and the innovators of *Kipat*, the traditional land tenure system. With their distinctive customary practices and autonomous right, Limbu from the remote past had developed a unique culture what they claim as Limbuwan, their native cultural and political territory. The territory at present falls under Jhapa, Ilam, Panchthar, Taplejung, Sangkhuwasabha, Tehrathum, and Dhankuta districts of province number

one of republic Nepal. Like other indigenous group, Limbu community is influenced by external religion and culture. Because of the mobility of the people across the political boundaries of different countries, Limbu are settled in hilly areas of Darjeeling, Sikkim, Assam, Manipur of India, in Bhutan and Myanmar and across the globe at large. Regarding why Limbu are autochthons of hills and mountains, Chaitanya Subba remarks: “Mountains and hills were desired places of occupations of Limbus since the past” (17). Their claim of their lineage aroused from the soil and rock confirms them being indigenous inhabitants of hilly territories since long time. Limbu culture flourished and sustained in mountains and hilly areas of eastern Nepal what they commonly call Limbuwan.

Before the expansion of Gorkha Kingdom by Prithvi Narayan Shah many petty autonomous kingdoms and small principalities such as Baise and Chaubise Rajyas were in existence. In the east Wallo Kirat, Majh Kirat and Pallo Kirat were the kingdoms practicing with their autonomous rules within their forts and territories. Pallo Kirat comprised of many Limbu heads ruled Thums (hills). Hence, the Limbu rulers, the first settlers in Pallo Kirat had established unique political and cultural territory called Limbuwan. The Limbus had enjoyed their unconditional autonomy and sovereignty in their territory for a long time until they lost their independent status along the consolidation process of Nepali state campaigned by Shah. Limbu community at present blames that the monocultural Khas Hindu ruling system considered their language, literature and script as threats to a united Nepal. Although their script was banned and the possession of their writings was outlawed, they were also provided with some privileges.

In his unification campaign of Nepal, Prithvi Narayan Shah had signed a peace and conciliation treaty with Limbu Kings in 1774. It had guaranteed Kipat system, the certain rights provided to the Limbus regarding the use of their ancestral lands. Lionel Caplan avers: “The Nepalese governmental authorities have come to governmentally control all former tribal lands except those of the Limbu, who have retained their ancestral land rights” (qtd. in Burghart 109). The traditional land tenure rights given to Limbu community were determined through certain kinship system. However, with intervention of Land Reform Act in 1964 King Mahendra permanently dismissed Kipat system. The autochthonous land tenure was legally confiscated. Regarding Limbu losing their Kipat right, Thomas Cox expounds: “In 1886, Nepali government passed a law which converted all cultivated Kipat into . . . the property of Brahmins, making them the economically dominant group. In 1964, the Nepali government abolished the Kipat system of land tenure, resulting in the loss of the Limbu's remaining tribal lands” (1318). With the role reversal, many Limbu converted into tenants of the same land of which they were once owners. Many autonomous Limbu Kingdoms had finally been configured. With the annexation, more than the geography, they were subjugated culturally and linguistically. The loss of their ancestral land left profound scars in Limbu identity. As they consider that they are historically marginalized and battered by conspiracies of ruling class people, Limbu have been struggling for the revival of their lost right and identity.

In the course of history, The Limbus shifted from the position of ruler to the ruled. Regarding the marginalization process of Limbu, Ramesh K. Limbu convenes: “Limbu live under the rule of the high caste-hill Hindu elites. . . [being] excluded from power and privileges, and thus marginalized in the state mechanism” (4). Limbu throws light on deprivation of Limbu indigenous nationalities from equal privileges

and power due to single cause of ruling class attitude preceded from caste-based ideology prevalent in the country. In this regard, Harka Gurung detects that the richness of the past of marginal people are written out of national historiography, "the construct of dominant castes" (496). Gurung's assertion hints on why marginalized indigenous people like Limbu at present are remonstrating against dominant structure, writing back their history, and attempting to recover their ethnic identity.

Limbu community obtains and practices distinct folklore, religion, rituals, culture, language and literature. Linguistically, Limbu is distinct because of *Yakthungpan* or *yakthungba-pan*, their particular mother tongue. Harka Gurung asserts: "Ethnic communities mostly Mongoloid speak Tibeto Burman languages whereas most Caucasoid people speak Indo-Aryan languages" (49). Observed from this perspective, Limbu language is found to have its roots with Tibeto-Burman subfamily of Sino-Tibetan family. The idiosyncratic script of Limbu language is called *Sirijanga*. Birahi Kaila affirms that "the script was introduced by *tyewongs*, an intellectual Limbu king among his Limbu community in the end of early 10th century" (67). However, some credit *Sirijanga*, the Limbu cultural hero for its invention. Generally, subdivision of Limbu language falls into four dialects namely Pheddappe, Panthare, Chatthare and Tambarkhole, the dominant territories of then Limbuwan. In Tej Man Angdembe's elucidation, Limbu language "has complex type of object agreement" (17). Interestingly in a community where majority of population is Limbu, even non-Limbu people equally use this language as a means of mutual communication. However, historical circumstances reveal how Limbu language lost its originality as linguistic invasion of Khas language pervaded over it along the line of political invasion of Limbuwan territory. Linguist George van Driem avers: "After the Gorkha conquest . . . the influence of the Indo-Aryan language Nepali, or Khas

Kura, became increasingly felt in Pallo Kirat (Far Kirat), the homeland of the Limbu” (84). As such, Gorkha’s configuration process of Limbu territory influenced with the politics of language. Their new identity of the Limbus was gradually institutionalized in tune to the rulers’ outlook. More than their geography, they lost their ethnic identity along the shifting of power from ruler to the ruled. Despite hostile political transition they transgressed with, Limbu became able to maintain the spirit of *Mundhum* and thus sustained their culture.

Because of their unique culture, religion, language, literature, script, and ways of belief system Limbu are different from other communities. Yet, it is significant to mention that Limbu culture is composite belief system transmitted from the past generations to the present with a long historical process of assimilation, adaptation, mediation and accommodation. As such, different recognition and categorization of Limbu ethnicity was formed by external forces of powerful state mechanism or by other dominant communities. In other words, different sociocultural and historical attributes of Limbu was shaped by the result of their socio-cultural and political interactions with state ideology and dominant groups. In the course of political transition, identities of Limbu have been shifted from previously dominant community to subservient and dominated minority, from the then mainstream people to marginalized minority community at present. Currently, mainstream dominant state ideology views Limbu as ‘janajati’ whereas developmental agencies put them in the category of ethnic minority. However, Limbu assert themselves as ‘adibasi’ or indigenous nationality.

***Mundhum*, the Genesis of Limbu Identity**

Limbu people possess affluent *Mundhum* culture. They hold their identity with unique culture, religion, language, literature, and the ways of living steered by the life-force of *Mundhum*. Oral scripture of *Mundhum* constitutes religious, social and cultural belief system of Limbu people. Religion determined by a sentiment of belief unites human mind to celestial power for the safety and transcendental significance. With effervescent ritual practice and strong traditional knowledge, *Mundhum* forms such multitude of determination and belief system sustaining a unique culture until present. Limbu's distinct religion known as 'Yuma Samyo' or 'Yumanism' puts Yuma literally grandmother or mother earth in omniscient position. She is worshiped in all rituals. *Mundhum* ushers the watershed of inspiration, information and enlightenment to maintain the liveliness of culture customs, rites and rituals among Limbu people. *Mundhum* are prevalent in each cultural and ritual performance encompassing natural and supernatural world. As per the modes of performances, *Mundhum* guided Limbu folklore falls under narrative and non-narrative categories.

The narrative category comprises myths and legends, supernatural stories, local and historical accounts while non-narrative folklore consists of dances and dramas, songs, folk sayings. *Mundhum* operates with recitation process of Phedangwa, Samba, Yeba, Yema, Mangba, Yuma and Ongsi, Limbu ritual practitioners, shamans and healers. *Mundhum* as an umbrella concept "incorporates various entities such as legends, myths, folklores, prehistoric accounts, sermons and moral and philosophical exhortations" (Limbu 11). *Mundhum* has varied meanings depending upon the context and the subject matter. Chaitanya Subba contends: "It is a scripture, sacred narrative, mythology, legend, proto and pre-historic accounts, and folk literature and has various forms of cosmological, spiritual, genealogical, philosophical and sociological

deliberations, speculations and rationalizations" (13). It is Limbu indigenous knowledge system sustained through centuries in orally transmitted poetic tradition accompanied by ceremonies and rituals.

Solely based on orally transmitted tradition, *Mundhum* designates sacred scripture comprising the unique myths on the formation of universe, of entire living and nonliving beings. Based on certain beliefs, it provides fundamental guidelines to Limbu community to maneuver their culture. Moreover, *Mundhum* also include cultural songs like *hakpare*, folksongs like *palams* and *khyali. yalang* (paddy dance) comprising many mythical narratives. Performed in various socio-cultural occasions like wedding ceremony, death rite, fair, feasts and festivals they function as significant means of cultural bond among the members of the community. Thus, *Mundhum* also designate unique literary world of its own.

A wide range of contextual factors, physical circumstances and socio-cultural purposes determine the production, composition, presentation and reception of the oral *Mundhum*-texts. Enormous diversity and plurality characterize the material world in the innards of *Mundhum* in which Limbu "indigenous knowledge is gained from a way of living and being in the world" (Chiwanza et al. 5). *Mundhum* delineate the interconnected functioning, presence, and survival of different entities in this universe. Closely connected with indigenous spirituality, *Mundhum* is the guideline for systematic understanding of various natural and social phenomena and ways of living with them. For Bairagi Kaila, "*Mundhum* occupies great social and cultural importance in the Limbu tribe. It gives a superb expression to the development of religious, moral and social beliefs and assumptions in many mythological legends and folk tales" (Limbu Jatima 33). The deeply rooted philosophical themes of *Mundhum* guide Limbu ways of life, belief system, culture, and, socio-natural relationship.

Mundhum define nature as the source of human knowledge. To expand Kaila's assertion, *Mundhum* occupies an inherent connection with indigenous spirituality as a systematic knowledge of various natural as well as social phenomena sustained through the centuries accompanied by ritualistic performances and acquisition of mythic narratives. They envision surrounding natural species and supernatural forces as the guides of life. In *Mundhum* belief system, natural entities guide human beings for the insurance of their survival and existence and human beings, in return, pay deep respect to them.

Mundhum envisage synergic, cohesive and complimentary relationship between nature and human culture. They delineate the interaction and interconnection between human beings and nature serving to enhance “the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community” (Leopold 46) in kin-centric ecology. Human-nature entities interact, communicate each other, and maintain balance in the natural environment. Such notion of interconnection between human and nature in Naess' view is "biospherical egalitarianism to create an awareness of the equal rights to all things to live and blossom" (qtd. in Luke 5). In all *Mundhum*, *Tagera Ningwahphuma*, supreme female goddess is labeled as omniscient agent, the ultimate source of infinite knowledge and omnipresent at the same time. She signifies "immanent mind or repository of knowledge and also indicates the source of power and the provider" (Subba 53). Supremacy of female goddess in *Mundhum*'s cultural perception of earth as mother hence holds Geocosmic spirit. Geocosm regards earth as “nurturing mother, sensitive, alive, and responsive to human action” (Merchant 19). *Tagera Ningwahphuma* is thus sustaining force of the universe and the entire components within it.

Inter-species communication between terrestrial bodies of human beings and nature and celestial bodies of spirits and divinities mentioned in *Mundhum* denotes ecosphere as the holistic phenomena. *Mundhum* therefore comprise cosmogonic concept that all the natural, supernatural, material, non-material entities of this universe exist in harmony. Therefore, *Mundhum* ethics possess "deeper and more fundamental naturalistic philosophical or religious perspective" (Naess 49). However, the natural entities are separate but are not separate. Interconnectivity and interdependence between terrestrial and celestial agencies constitute the essence of *Mundhum*.

Limbu community lives in harmony with their traditional knowledge while maintaining integrity of the ecosystem itself. Their agricultural life, religious beliefs, feasts and festivals, rites and rituals, myth and language have profound attachment with their land and deep respect for "ecological comprehension of land" (Leopold 46) and "prehensile unification . . . and interlocked relation of these prehensions" (Whitehead 401). In the knowledge of the community, there is interconnection among flora, fauna, humans and the spiritual world. The *Mundhum* modes of eco-consciousness to surrounding nature involve the spirit of bioregionalism, "a responsiveness to one's local parts of the earth whose boundaries are determined by a location's natural characteristics rather than arbitrary administrative boundaries" (Nixon 198). *Mundhum* prioritize the belief that multiple existences of the entities in the universe have their own attributes and roles. In this sense, *Mundhum* represent basic tenets of deep ecology. Deep ecological thinking, as Fritjof Capra noted, represents "shift from self-assertion to integration" accompanied by a "shift from rational to intuitive, from analysis to synthesis, from reduction to holism, from linear to non-linear thinking" (24). Deep ecology purposes new norms of human

responsibility to change human exploitation of land into co-participation with the land.

Mundhum delineate the interconnected functioning, presence, and survival of different entities in this universe. These entities are treated, even revered as having their own spirits or souls, a concept emerged from animism. *Mundhum* accentuates the value of cosmic well-being, the welfare of all living organisms on earth. It believes that Limbu communities live interdependently with all forms of life in their surroundings. To quote Bookchin's word, they are ecocommunitites, "a decentralized community, sensitively tailored to its natural ecosystem" (qtd. in Luke 190) where ability of living in harmony with the natural world determines their physical and psychological health. Connectivity between human beings and the natural world constitutes common inseparable identities of both. *Mundhum* narrating the origins of humans who existed out of nature elucidate strong kinship between nature and human being. They pay high value to the reciprocity and interdependency of humans and nature.

Representation of Indigenous Identity in Mainstream Nepali Poetry

History of Nepali poetry unfolds the evidence of multiple shifts and turns in the poetic tradition along the lineage of political transitions occurring in different era and epoch. Different political transitions in the country paved way to the rise of indigenous writers from the margin. There are numbers of indigenous writers arising from the margin in the scenario of Nepali literature at present. This seems to be moving of epicenter of Nepali literature away from Kathmandu and the mainstream. However, indigenous critics blame that the history of Nepali literature still convenes the mode of expression of the rulers and thus configures with monolithic history of Nepal. They express that issues of indigenous identity is Nepali poetry has not got

significant reception given that the hangover of dominant policy of one language, one culture and one language of the country still prevails in Nepali literature. Against such suppressive environment, indigenous poets have been writing poems appealing for justice, democracy and freedom. Because representation of indigenous identity in mainstream is insignificant, contemporary poets engage in uplifting marginal voices against the mainstream literary canonical traditions. They attempt to contest with the traditional writing styles and thematic considerations by depicting indigeneity and sociocultural situations. Although indigenous poets are writing at their best for equal recognition, mainstream closes the window of open and fresh air of multicultural identity.

People's movement of 1990 elided long prevailing autocratic Panchayat system and re-established multiparty democratic system in the country. The political change granted fundamental rights to the people paving the way for the plural and multicultural society. Along the line of political changes, the poetry in post 1990 movement conversed with the arrival of new poets with novel styles as well as plural themes of marginalization, human rights, sociocultural and humanitarian issues spreading consciousness and social awakening in the people. After the movement of 1990, indigenous writers came into the literary scenario of Nepali literature. They engaged marginal voices against the mainstream literary canonical traditions. They depicted ethnic consciousness, dialectic and cultural situations, contemporary inequality and stiff satire against such discordances. Govinda Raj Bhattarai puts his view on the emergence of new poets and their poetic tradition in the following words:

A host of young poets have emerged in the post 1990 era. They have appeared with new styles and techniques, and new themes of writing too. Many poets from indigenous communities came with a strong fervor and zeal, questioning

their status as race, as tribe or an ethnic unit. Their share in national politics, their worries about the existence of language and culture are reflected in modern poems. In this period old generation or seniors are equally active whereas the young generation is much different. They are in consonance with the changing time. (xvii)

The emergence of new poets from different indigenous background in Nepali literary scene was possible through political changes. For these poets poetry became best means for raising voice from the suppressed marginal spaces to amplify the issues of identity, right for self-determination, and autonomy. The poems composed in the post 1990 era by the poets from indigenous and ethnic minorities convene striking features of evolutionary attitude, expression of contemporary social values and norms, opposition against oppressive political system and self-consciousness. As the offshoot of the political movement, such poetry manifests the vigor of cultural awareness into the artistic form of literature with ample use of cultural emblems to boost the very spirit of marginal identity.

People's Movement of 2006 fostered a fertile ground for the herald of indigenous writing from the margins as a counter force against mainstream literature and culture. The posterity of the political movements carved yet newer poetic terrains emerging from indigenous identities. The poets under literary movements of Sirjansheel Arajakta (2004), Bahurangbaad (2006), Uttarwari Soch (2003), Kukur Kavita (2014), Mukta Abhiyan (2016), Farak Ayam (2017), and, Itar Kabita (2019) urge for the change and restructuring of outmoded socio-political system which they recognize as regressive one. They promulgate the painful experience of subjugated communities suffocated under regulatory ideology revisiting their ethos and pathos, historical exploitation, economic crisis in subversive historical spans. They confer a

constant defiance against the ideological structure, the institutionalized values imposed as common knowledge to their general community by dominant culture. Simultaneously by employing local practices in lyrical expressions, they celebrate aesthetic realms and richness of their culture and ethnic identities abounded with idiosyncrasy as an attempt to reclaim their past akin to communal imagination. Govinda Raj Bhattarai further discovers the fervent spirit of nationalism in contemporary poems composed during Maoist insurgency and after people's Movement of 2006. He avers: "Nationality has become just a narrow limit to a modern poet. Different trends and movements, styles of writing and forms of poetry are borrowed, adapted, or developed on native soil. Most of them have indigenous efforts and flavor, color and quality" (xvi). Considering literature as a compensating means to the previously marginalized, oppressed and excluded people from the mainstream identity, the poems arising from the margin settle resistance force in favor of plurality, multiplicity and heterogeneity.

While indigenous minorities are subjected to a marginal space, literature becomes the effective way to express their remonstrance and anguish against mainstream attitude akin to state-power. Literary intervention of marginality in Nepali literature has shifted the way of observing things from mainstream perspective to the native and ethnic ones. Emerged from the counter vault, marginal literature asserts to bring fore the issues of indigeneity and ethno-cultural values left behind the murky curtain of reticence. Writing from the margin as a process of understanding, exploring and sharing the experiences of marginal people occupies a significant space in Nepali literature contributing to the richness of its diversity. Nevertheless, the way marginal indigenous identities are relegated from mainstream state mechanism, literature of margins are neglected and omitted from the canonical standard and discourse of

Nepali literature. Taranath Sharma reviews the history of Nepali literature classifying many periods under the canonical rubrics of Prithvi Narayan Shah's *Dibyopadesh*, Bhanubhakta Acharya, Motiram Bhatta, Lekhnath Paudyal, Laxmi Prasad Devkota, and B.P. Koirala (18-23). Sharma omits the names of marginal literary figures and thus configures with monolithic psyche of elite groups whose influence is prevalent in Nepali literary discourse. Many critics and writers raise their critical eyebrows against monopolist structure of Nepali literary discourse. Harka Gurung observes Nepali literature, like the type of its history as "a monologue with no voices from below" (496). Gurung is critical to the absence of marginal voices in literature. He avers that Nepali literature configures with monolithic history of the country. Ethnic minorities have been censored from mainstream Nepali literature garnered by canonical tendency of power, Abhi Subedi, contends: "The subject of ethnic culture and tradition and their effect in poetic expression is the most significant. It is surprising, however that despite the expression of different indigenous identity, their choral voices of rebellion, they do not get reception into the criticism and discourse" (4). Subedi's surprise emerges against monolithic tendency of Nepali literature that does not consider literature of marginality as standard literature. He asserts for the inclusion of marginal literature in mainstream literature and discourses.

The writers from the marginal ethnic community use pen and paper as the creative vehicle to assert marginal literature as a corollary project of identity politics resonating the issues of inclusivity and indigenous marginality. Marginal poetry problematizes exclusionary politics of the state. With the counterforce of writing poems they attempt to recreate an inclusive national identity that would assert their historical, cultural and communal sense of nationality. Abhi Subedi further observes the trend of the contemporary ethnic poetry:

The post-conflict Nepal opened up new debates about rights and equality among all groups of marginalized people and the neglected but rich cultures.

In a short time waves of self-assertion have swept the country. Voices unheard before are heard. People have been using different kinds of forums to speak from. But poets have used the most subtle but very strong ways of presenting their cultural ethos, their creativity and sense of resistance. (2-3)

Subedi views the rise of the new trends of literary writing in Nepal as aftermath of socio-political changes. Poets arising from different marginalized ethnic communities regard the act of writing poetry as rewriting of the history of cultural ethos, injustice with apparent sense of resistance towards regressive history. Subedi further observes Limbu poetry as minor literature in tune to the theoretical insights of Deleuze-Guattari's observation of minor literature. He remarks: "I find Deleuze-Guattari model to the minor literature very productive mode of discussion to apply in the context of the Limbu poets' use of Nepali language and their pattern of intervention and their sense of immediacy" (5). With a view from margin to intervene a center, minor literature uses a major language to reterritorialize once 'de-territorialised' facets of history, culture and literature. As such, minor literature from the margin writes against the grain to deconstruct the established rigid centers.

Rajan Mukarung and Upendra Subba allege Nepali literature merely as the reflection of monocacy of elite ideology pervading in the country as it eulogizes the state and the rulers. Defining the dominance of monolithic mainstream tendency as the cause of exclusion of ethnic identities in it, they contend: "Nepali literature will be incomplete unless the inclusion of culture, rituals and the practices of different ethnic identities are guaranteed. It would be lame and deaf unless unveiled cultural dimensions of ethnic groups are recognized" (13). In the same vein, Tanka Prasad

Neupane observes that Nepali literature is influenced by Hindu religion and culture. As issues of margin are never reflected, discrimination operates in Nepali literature. For this reason, there is need of the kind of Nepali literature that could acknowledge marginal writings as national literature (Trans. is mine 13). Similarly, Yug Pathak's finds mainstream Nepali literature adhering to the racist concept of Hindu nationalism. It valorizes its own but condemns the others. Preceding writers established the supremacy of Hindu-Arya civilization eliding the issues of marginal people. Succeeding writers iterate the same tendency (Trans. is mine n. pag.). Neupane's and Pathak's contention on the nature of Nepali literature vindicates it as the venture of elite class. Elite tendency at mainstream does not provide space to the representation of marginal voices. Thus, in their view, Nepali literature remains as monolithic project of one elite group.

Nepali literature written from the margin receives appreciative as well as negative critical approaches. Abhi Subedi appreciates the new trend of writing appeared in Nepali literary scenario in which "feelings with strange mixture of anger are expressed; and celebration of marginalized class, women and Dalits are represented" (56). Subedi finds the role of socio-political movements shaping the ethnic awareness of the marginal writers. Sanjeev Uprety in the same manner associates the marginal writings "with the issue of rewriting of political structure of Nepal in the backdrop of 'People's Movement of 2006'" (134). Uprety further asserts that such rewritings of marginal writers "deliberately violate the earlier modes of writing as they reflect indigenous cultural symbols, myths and essences arguing in favor of difference" (134). Uprety inspects the issues of marginality being emerged in Nepali literature as the impact of consciousness building political movements of latest decades. Uprety's enquiry centers on how the marginal writings capture the issues of

recognition and representation of their cultural identity along the line of political restructuring of the country. Likewise, Bairagi Kaila detects emerging marginal literature as new space where "ethnicity, gender and social inequalities and domination, marginalized language, religion, and cultures have received space as the subjects of equal right and claim" (Custody of Ribs 5), the issues of marginal identity and representation sanitized by mainstream tendency before.

From the opposite vault, marginal literature receives scathing criticism impugned as racist, separatist, derogatory, and loutish representation. The dominant group appropriates the movement as extremist and racist conspiracy designed to break national harmony and unity as if it expatriates them. It evokes established conviction of dominant psychology. Marginal writers reveal how they were the victims of insult and offensive treatment made by mainstream literary mindset. Chandrabir Tumbapo states: "Narrow-minded people show their aversion that identity means racism and identity literature is extremist literature. We have not challenged Hindu civilization or Brahmin-Kshetri writers but the discriminatory state policy" (qtd. in Sangam n. pag.). Tumbapo throws light on the discriminatory allegation of racism to marginal literature arising from the rigid boundary of elite ideology promoted by the state. Similarly Rajan Mukarung reveals: "Whenever I go, I'm followed by only one allegation of being racist writer. However, I take it for granted because such mindsets stem from monolithic ideology backed up by state mechanism from the ages against which we are waging literary war" (06:56:07:17). Mukarung's expression exemplifies the common plight of marginal writers. Such contemptuous treatment to the writers represents supremacy of the dominant elite power.

The monolithic mindset valorizes canonical literature as Nepali literature but narrow mindedly considers marginal literature as racial and separatist enterprise.

Hangyug Agyat aligns with Mukarung's contention as he remarks: "Identity is not separatism. When we began the movement, we had a slogan—Nepali, the common identity. We advocated for the inclusion of language, culture of all ethnic communities, but our issue was misinterpreted" (qtd. in Basnet n. pag.). Agyat rectifies the dominant misconception on literature of identity persuading it as inclusive venture to make all identities as Nepali one. Swapnil Smriti, another poet observes the narrow definition imposed to literature of identity, "The issue of identity in literature is evocating for national unity but very sadly the majority of an opposite group is interpreting it as project of communal disintegration" (qtd. in Bishwakarma n. pag). Smriti implicitly indicates such regressive thought underpinning from single most hangover of dominant ideology. As such resistance literature of the margins remonstrates against this type of regressive and exclusionary treatment.

Against the monolithic barring of Nepali literature, Indigenous poets react against established ideology in Nepali literature. With a rupture in traditional mode of monolithic writing, they attempt to set up new trends inclusive of cultures. These poets favor ethnic identity and consciousness in their works to go against discriminatory and monocratic literary practices. Guided by spirit of ethnic consciousness, they attempt to establish indigenous identity and culture appealing to Nepali literature to expand its horizons. Indigenous poets originate from a particular cultural vantage protesting against mainstream tendency. From the murky station, the poets make critical stance against literary tendency of glorification and praise of state and the ruler's influence of classic narratives.

Limbu Poems as New Herald from the Margin

A dent to ethnic identity leaves serious impact upon the members of the community as a whole. In such moment, literature becomes the vehicle to express anguish and anger against the dent. Limbu writers in their poems vehemently explore their resistance consciousness born out of their experience of literary and cultural marginality. Since the publications critics have been engaged in unraveling multiple issues of Limbu in the poems. Basically, they zero in on deciphering social, psychological, political and cultural dynamics on one hand and formalistic and experimental on the other. Critic Basanta Basnet discovers the abundant use of local Limbu dialects, symbols and myths rooted from *Mundhum* in Upendra Subba's poems. He notes: "Instead of grand symbols Upendra Subba uses his local dialects, Mundhum, history and cultural emblems. His use of idiosyncratic images and symbols obviously strikes the mindset of readers those searching for new tastes" (n pag.). Basnet focuses on the new taste of Limbu ethnoaesthetic cultural realms used in Subba's poem.

Sushanta Gurung in similar vein reviews Subba's anthology of poem in the light of Limbu cultural eccentricity: "Upendra's poems are example of how poetry would discover undergrounded social chapters. His poems portray the complete picture of eastern Limbu territory. He recounts the myths pertaining to the collective consciousness of his community those inclined to the worshipping of nature" (n.pag. Trans. is mine). Gurung foregrounds Subba's poems uncovering hidden social realities of Limbu ethnic communities, their struggle, hardship and cultural intricacies governed by mythical aspirations. Gurung finds the poet frequently visiting his local world in order to discover communal history and indigenous Limbu identity. Bairagi Kaila ascertains the influence of postmodernist spirit in *Custody of Ribs* of Hangyug

Agyat, another poet under *Sirjansheel Arajakta*. He remarks: “The language of the poems in the anthology deconstructs established standards of mainstream Nepali literature as it experiments with ethnic terminologies” (*Custody of Ribs* 10). Rajan Mukarung configures with Kaila in his observation of *Midnight Tangsing*, another anthology by Agyat. He alleges: “Agyat is too much affiliated with postmodernism. With referential play of language that fuses western myths with the east *Midnight Tangsing* consequently shocks the mind of the readers” (*Midnight Tangsing* 13). However, Kaila and Mukarung do not judge Agyat’s politics of language written in postmodernist notion of multiplicity as an effective tool for marginal identities to challenge the monotypic barriers for the assurance of equal existence.

Critics have put their different views upon the poems of Dharmendra Nembang, Swapnil Smriti, and, Chandrabir Tumbapo the poets under *Bahurangbaad*. Shrawan Mukarung reviews Dharmendra Nembang’s anthology *Country Map Shakes When I Speak* as the poems embodied with democratic spirit to be listened and felt. The title of the anthology gives value to the supremacy of people’s voice and the power of democracy (24:36:28:01). Mukarung classifies the types of poems into two. One is to be spoken with high pitch at the time of political movement and next to be contemplated to grasp the implied meaning within its abstract form. He categorizes Nembang’s poems in second type. Anupama Regmi discovers in the poems the vision of rainbow village, a utopia of colorful society beyond social discriminations and inequalities. (02:54:04:56). The vision of rainbow village is philosophical essence of multicolorism propounded by the poets under the movement. The literary movement reinforces the recognition of multiplicity and diversity of identity into the mainstream.

Sanjeev Uprety affirms that Multicolorist poets like Dharmendra Nembang, Swapnil Smriti, and Chandrabir Tumbapo define the physical world as the

composition of multiple colors. They negate the division of the society made based on winner or the loser of history and instead speak in favor of multiple, dimensional society (139). In Uprety's assertion, multiple colors insisted by the poets in their poems are the colors of visionary multicultural society and the multiple people of caste, class and gender living together in harmony. For instance, Uprety observes, "the images in Chandrabir Tumbapo's poems indicate the different colors of life and the physical world . . . where human beings are thrown out of history once tightened with the boundary of ethnicity and culture" (146-47). For Uprety, Tumbapos' poems are abstract but not at the height of the poems of Dharmendra Nembang. In the similar vein, Govindaraj Bhattarai appreciates Tumbapos's poem with "novelty in style and theme" (135) engaged in retrieving the harmonious color of human society. Abhi Subedi comments on the poetic style of Tumbapo who "projects a strong sense of poetic pragmatism and looks at his people's identity in the emergent Post-conflict Nepal" (7). Subedi reads Tumbapo in the light of Peoples Movement of 2006 that paved the way to marginalized poets asserting for the ethnic identity via the means of literary creativity.

In different ways, Tika Bhai convenes that *Baduli ra Sudur Samjhana*, anthology of Swapnil Smriti, drags the readers from the village to the city with the images of rural settings. He finds "rebellious tone of the poet in expressing the plight of the country battered by civil war, suffocation and uncertainty" (Tikabhai). He regards Smriti's revolutionary conscience, belief in the power of people, and critique of the history and time as the props of his poems. Critic Amar Nembang in the similar fashion associates Smriti poems to the representations of world of faith, justice, consciousness and spirit of new generation:

The most powerful aspect of Swapnil's poetry is his fearless disclosure of expressions to the present time reality. He maintains undaunted faith towards truth and its exposition in his poetic expression. His poems are epitomes of dream, hope, struggle and aspiration to emerging consciousness of new generation, of new era. He is critique of slanted conflict, reality and ironical situation. (Nembang Trans. is mine)

Sanjeev Uprety interprets Swapnil's poems as revolutionary tropes making aware to the consciousness of this generation and era. He avers: "Swapnil Smriti's poems flow in tune and touch both mind and heart. Some poems are revolutionary. They advocate for social justice" (1). Uprety considers Smriti's poems as emblems of social awakening appealing for orderly human society of justice and equality. Likewise, Prakash Thamsuhang reads *Limbuni Village* of Raj Manglak as the experimental form of concrete poetry. Thamsuhang argues: "The credit for first writing of concrete poem in Nepali literature goes to Bairagi Kaila. In recent time, it is replicated by the poets of *Sirjansheel Arajakta*, *Bahurangbaad* and *Uttarwari Soch*. Raj Manglak one of the Uttarwari poets follows the footprint of Kaila" (8). Because concrete poems are composed or designed to be consciously seen, Manglak's use of "new images and experimentations violate the traditions and seek for new construction of meaning" (Bhattarai 33). At this point, Sanjeev Uprety regards the writing of concrete poems of *Uttarwari* as poststructuralist and postmodernist practice where "Derrida has become Limbu" (135). Uprety considers *Uttarwari*'s concrete poems the means of rewriting the political structure of the country. They deconstruct the very notion of center to foreground the indigenous identity at margins.

The critical apprehensions of mainstream Nepali literature detect the lacunae of inclusivity to be filled with representations of marginal dynamics whereas assessment

of critical approaches received by Nepali literature written from the margin reveals appreciative as well as opposing treatment. At another level, revisiting the cases of allegiance as experienced by marginal writers shows the rigid mindset of the mainstream power bloc. In addition, the reviews on the history of marginalization of Limbu people in Nepal reveal their subjugation of identity homogenized and hegemonized by dominant state mechanism. The reviews also discover that identity politics at the cost of elite people constitutes the marginalization of indigenous ethnic group and their ethnic identity remains in the flux.

The critical appraisal to literature reviews on the primary texts diagnoses only the limited discussion of the issues of ethnicity and marginality. It paves way a new ground of study to discover the quintessential mark of Cultural Psychology akin to Limbu cultural dynamics, resistance and representation the poets in common exhibit in their poems. Provided with this point of departure, the study engages in deciphering the use of *Mundhum* rooted cultural dynamics of Limbu in selected texts and thus invites the readers to feel the presence of hitherto absent representations of Limbu ethnic identity distant from granted views of oppressive systems. Because the quintessence of Limbu cultural significations in the poems heighten the sense of resistance; and, also because the significance of literary resistance lies in its functioning as one of the creative means going against hegemony; the study proves the poems under discussion as marginal literature and thus manifest into literary resistance. It also delves into discovering significant representation of the ethnic identity of Limbu in the poetic language of the texts entailing the politics of equal reception and recognition in Nepali literature and culture. At this point, as the poems demonstrate; the significance of literary resistance lies in its functioning as one of the creative means going against the hierarchy prevalent in Nepali literature and culture.

The poems under discussion as marginal literature thus manifest into literary resistance functioning as a significant vehicle on behalf of the oppressed Limbu community to react against dominating power dynamics.

Dissidence in Limbu Cultural Psychology

The present qualitative study delves into the intensive study of the primary texts to gather in-depth understanding of the cultural dynamics of Limbu community. It also examines poets sticking upon the eccentric cultural exuberance and pulsating *Mundhum* rooted poetic and political flection. With this, it engages in identifying the existing relationship between Limbu ethnic identity and dominant ideology reflected in the texts. In the primary texts, it examines historical, traditional, and socio-cultural attributes of the Limbu shaping their distinctive ethnic identity. Further, it scrutinizes on the resistance subtleties of the poets claiming for the equal reception and recognition of Limbu literature and culture in mainstream domain. To meet aforementioned objectives, the researcher uses theoretical concept of resistive 'Cultural Psychology as the framework of interpretation in the study.

In the discourse of methodological enterprise, Cultural Psychology considers human culture and the mind as mutually constituted where human experience and action are shaped through their participation in the symbolic systems of culture. The constitution of human psychology involves the internalization of abstract ethnic divergences, identity, and emotions. The literary taste and sense of beauty cultivated in indigenous literature reveal the underlying aesthetic motivations and sensibilities of its people and culture. The symbolic representation of literature by indigenous writers invites critical approach to discover the notion of beauty of art forms comprising people's worldview, sensibilities, spirituality, behaviors, orientations, and value systems. The lens of Cultural Psychology finds a community member's particular

way of life as culturally favored and flavored practices and manifestations. It treats symbolic states of individuals as part and parcel of a particular cultural conception acquired and in return manifested by means of different customary practices. It reveals the ethno-cultural and aesthetic milieu of indigenous art cemented with the facets of their folklore, myths and rituals. In pursuant of intervention it reasserts the uniqueness of indigenous people's cultural performances.

Cultural Psychology treats symbolic states of individuals as part and parcel of a particular cultural conception acquired and in return manifested by means of different customary practices. It studies symbolic states of individuals within institutionalized practices or content laden variations of human mentalities. It engages in observation of and reflection upon the activities ontologically activated and historically reproduced cultural conceptions in the form of arts like literature. It believes in reciprocity and mutual embeddedness of culture and human psyche. However, Cultural Psychology is not subfield of abstract psychology but interdisciplinary field. It views that the process of becoming a self is contingent on people interacting with and seizing meanings from their cultural environments where mind and culture are ultimately inseparable. Human is culturally constituted. Cultural factors give meaning to our thoughts, actions, and feelings.

Cultural Psychology tunes ear for the voices arising from the depths of ethnic origins displayed in the art form, and rigorously engages its keen eyes on discovering the cultural eccentricity. It helps revealing the incredible amounts of ethnic knowledge of particular indigenous people, their conflicting values and cultural hierarchies within the paradigm of the society. While concerned with the discourse of indigenous art forms, it appreciates the reflection of ethnicity and identity in expressive forms of art with attendant meaning and affect. At its best, the endeavor of

Cultural Psychology engaged in indigenous art forms discovers literature as a vehicle of indigenous cultural movement. The intervention unfolds how indigenous writers in literature use their cultural emblems, symbols and images to manifest the vigor of their resistance against dominant culture and literature. The concept of Cultural Psychology hardwired with resistance examines poets spurring resistance in the texts. It deciphers how the authors probing into literary resistance via aesthetic dimension of art promulgates subordinated experience of indigenous communities. It also decodes how literature takes turn into the resisting force against the ideological structure, the institutionalized values in favor of their cultural awakening.

In the light of methodological framework, the dissertation critically discusses the literature of resistance written from marginality opposing literary and cultural supremacy and challenging canonical traditions in the sphere of Nepali literature and culture. It scrutinizes how they oppose mainstream standards prevalent in Nepali literature to affirm for equal recognition of marginal literature in literary domain. It examines in the poems how literature functions as resisting force to challenge mainstream traditions in order to assert the issues of ethnic marginality within the literary-cultural domain. Scrutinizing Cultural Psychology as a mode of resistance in poetic form, the study endeavors to make the point that the Limbu poets questions the barriers; claim for the equal reception and recognition of their marginal literature and culture; and, herald for representation of their distinctive ethnicity and cultural identity in mainstream domain. Besides, to supplement the theoretical framework of the study insights on the major aspects of Limbu culture, ethnicity, identity and marginality resourced from scholarly means has been collected, reviewed, analyzed, and, synthesized. Notably, I have translated the quoted portion of the primary texts and the secondary sources in Nepali used for the research.

Chapter III: Limbuness as Signpost of Cultural Identity in Limbu Poems

This chapter scrutinizes Limbu poems under four different rubrics to discover poets engaged in exploring their cultural identity. It delves into analyzing Limbu indigeneity used by the poets as dissident vehicle of Cultural Psychology against dominant power. Representing eastern regional space and ethnic identity, Limbu poets engage in seeking for independence from domineering structure of the state. Saliently, with their dissident expression in both form and content of the poems, they claim for the representation of their hitherto absent unique identity. From the vault of multicultural spirit, they engage in seeking for open and fresh air from the suffocating closet of mainstream culture and literature. In their poems, the voice from the margin manifests into mutinous vehicle against dominant structure of the state mechanism. Orientated towards the politics of inclusive society, cultural autonomy, and, sovereignty, the poets apply idiosyncrasy of their indigenous culture as trope to challenge the pervading hierarchy in both cultural and literary disciplines at national setting.

Limbu poets use ethnic flavor of *Mundhum* to instill their cultural identity and at the same time as powerful means of resistance. In addition, most poets regard expansion campaign of Prithvi Narayan Shah subordinating their autonomous territory and culture and succeeding state ideology as serious dent causing their cultural trauma. With nostalgic expression to then territorial and cultural autonomy, they imagine for the reinstatement of their idyllic past. Because culture and mind as mutually constituted, Limbu poets engage in romanticizing aesthetic dimension of their culture to establish distinct signature of their indigeneity. They invest different literary techniques and rhetorics to express Cultural Psychology and resistance dynamics. Some experiment with pictorial representation of their identity. Limbuwan

territory is once envisioned by some poets with the rhetoric of their place attachment psychology. Specific *Mundhum* dimensions in some poems ascertain poet's deep attachment to his indigenous identity and culture. Some poets regard their culture as art and imply ekphrastic intervention to manifest the vigor of the aesthetics of marginal Limbu identity.

Typographical Display of Limbu Indigeneity in Limbu Poetry

In a unique way in their concrete poems, Limbu poets blend hitherto absent and unrepresented folklore aesthetics and historical images with western poetic experimentation. Thus, in both form and content, the poets add innovative experimental taste that adds up newness to experimental conventionality of the very poetic genre. The poets reiterating the convention of typographical poetic craft coated with cultural and historical dimensions ascertain two deliberate purposes; to showcase Limbu cultural assets which have formed their unique ethnic identity, and, to display the heightened sense of dissidence against the structure of elite culture. With this, they claim for recognition and reception of their literature and culture in mainstream domain.

Raj Manglak, one of the poets under *Uttarwanti Soch*, builds a diagram of Kundalini (horoscope) with *Mundhum* related association of ideas and the present being of Limbu. In Limbu culture, *Phedangwa* interprets someone's fate and fortune based on the belief system where specific spiritual powers both good and bad are supposed to influence him or her. On this ground, Manglak's poetic experiment by using cultural trope on one hand conveys the cultural uniqueness and on the other hand in a mutinous tone against the incursive force of the rulers, discovers the current existential questions of the Limbus.

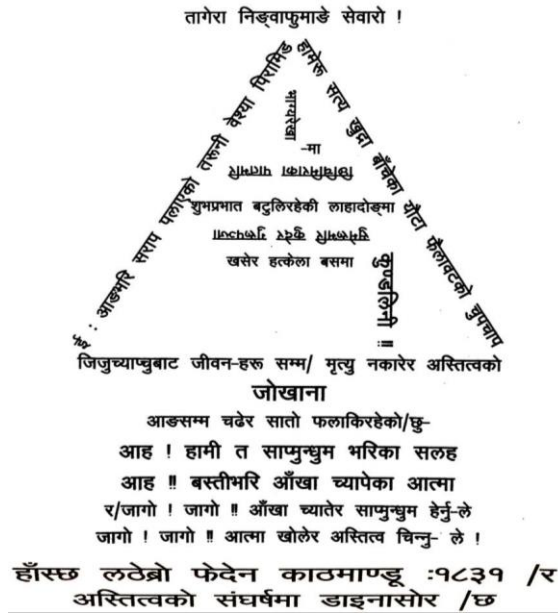


Fig.1: Raj Manglak's poem "Kundalini"

(Source: *Limbuni Village*, page 43)

Manglak begins his poem with the worship of *Tagera Ningwahphuma*, the supreme female goddess. In Limbu belief system, she is labeled as omniscient agent, savior, and ultimate source of infinite knowledge and omnipresent at the same time. Based on *Mundhum* premises, Limbu ritual performances both auspicious and inauspicious mandatorily inaugurate with the worshipping of *Tagera Ningwahphuma*. Mangalk upholds *Mundhumi* restored behaviour, "recombining bits of previously behaved behavior" (Schchner 35). Poet's adaptation and transformation of cultural practice into the poem reinforces the reshaping of Limbu ethnic identity. He reverses the title of the poem to display destabilized condition of Limbu people. Over the past two centuries, then rulers systematically consented Limbu community follow their socio-cultural and religious governing system. Manglak levels this incursion as "curse on the body" making them muted and "live with long-drawn-out silence" and "fragmented truth" of their own. Poet infers to the political gripping of Limbu territory by Shah Kings who subsequently subjugated inhabitants' language and

culture. Gradually, the use of Limbu language got both legal and pragmatic restrictions. Critic Govinda Tumbahang observes: “King Rana Bahadur Shah issued a royal order forbidding the use of Limbu language in any official letters to be addressed to the king (3). Once independent and unique with its own native language and culture under the rule of Limbu Chieftains, Limbu’s indigeneity lost its tune along the line of annexation process. The assimilation processes with host culture of the rulers led Limbu people gradually forget their native culture.

In the line reading “smirks disable Pheden against Kathmandu: 1831” Manglak juxtaposes absurd and paralyzed condition of Pheden, one of the Limbu lands meaning foothill (aberrated as Phidim in the invasive course of Nepali language) with Kathmandu of 1831. The date 1831 B.S. (1774 AD) has left a permanent dent to the psychology of Limbu people. Prithvi Narayan Shah’s expansion process of Nepal recognized the Limbu’ autonomy through a peace and conciliation treaty issuing Red Seal to Limbu Kings in 1774. Although the treaty had guaranteed special rights to Limbu over their lands, it shrewdly restricted the autonomy and self-rule of Limbu, and marked a bleak age in Limbu history. Limbu community at present regards the treaty as conspiracy and thus it becomes more subjected to cultural trauma of the community. Theorizing cultural trauma, Jeffery Alexander, revisionist trauma theorist avers: "cultural trauma occurs when members of a collectivity feel they have been subjected to horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways" (6). Manglak reverberates the very scars of cultural trauma in the poem. He reflects the incidents of their testimony invaded, culture, religion, and language destroyed by the treaty of 1774 leaving back the permanent wounds in collective psychology of Limbu people.

Manglak dramatizes the scenario of validated ruling system sanitizing indigeneity of Limbu people. He is critical of the oppressive structure enforcing the *Khas* language that filibustered Limbu's cultural values once articulated by their own system of language. Manglak uses the imagery of "pyramid of whore", to suggest the seduced and defiled body of atavistic land ravaged by the traitorous treaty. With ethnic consciousness formed within him, the poet feels the "brave spirit of his ancestors transformed in his body" as he performs "*jokhana* of existence". With *jokhana* the act of predicting someone's fate and fortune Manglak reiterates *Mundhum* based *Phedangwa* tradition, a shamanistic performance unique to Limbu community. With this act, he reveals his self at present privileged with the inheritance of ancestral brevity reinforcing his readiness to fight back against the invading force is explicit. Manglak uses the image of "closed eyes of the village" to refer to the prolonged silence of Limbu community residing in Limbuwan village. Against this situation, poet appeals for cultural awakening as he avers, "awake! awake! with opened eyes, with the spirit of seven *Mundhum*, recognize your existence from the soul". He realizes for the emergence of cultural renaissance to retrieve the lost identity based on the fundamentals and prehensive deliberations dispensed by seven *Mundhum*.

In the same tune to Manglak, Sameer Sherma, another *Uttarwanti* poet in his poem "Afflicted Again" portrays how the incident of 1774 inscribed permanent scars of displacement and marginality in Limbu people. Using the image of "confused and paralysed footsteps", Sherma shows subdued and subjugated position of his community under grinding supremacy of exotic rulers marked by the treaty. Sherma feels "flabbergasted" by systematic acts of outsiders that flipped the ethnic and cultural identity of Limbu community. He becomes more attuned to this act of

marginalization and identity crisis. In his expression, “burning fury against gripped 1774 on the fist”, Sherma manifests anger as well as inflicts pain against deceitful annexation of their territory and culture. Poet’s endurance verging on status quo of marginality gets subordinated by the sense of resistance and ethnic consciousness.



Fig.2: Sameer Sherma’s Poem “Afflicted Again”

(Source: *Ankhihyal*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2004, pp. 20.)

Sherma feels his Limbu identity endangered by outside forces and feels for a necessity of a decisive movement to regain the lost territory and identity. Raj Manglak further crafts *Silamsakma*. *Silamsakma* denotes cultural insignia of Limbu patented from "religious performance of Tangsing where *Phedangwa/Samba*, Limbu priests restrict the path of dead spirits so as to maintain the safety of the community" (Manglak 104). *Silamsakma* is a compound word in Limbu language in which *si* means death, *lam* means the way whereas *sakma* means to impede or stop. Putting together, it means to restrict the path of death for the safety of life. It thus signifies the connection of Limbu people with metaphysical power. The myth of *Silamsakma* traces back to the primitive time of *Ketihangwa* and *Ketihangma*, Limbu ancestors who happened to lose their many children due to plague spreading over their village. Feared by being sterile, they pleaded *Lepmuhang*, the mythical savior with godly power. *Lepmuhang* solves the couple's problem. Virat Anupam writes:

Lepmuhang sent his men *Phenjiri Phendasamba* and his disciple

Phenjhangwa to *Ketihangwa's* home. They performed rituals to stop death.

They adjoined two stems of *Ghungring* (Burma reed) blending with *Meerihembang Khiru* (the symmetry of nine different colourful threads). *Silamsakma* got originated this way. Reciting mantra *Phenjiri Phendasamba* and *Phenjhangwa* put it in the sacred place of *chula* (oven) thus rescuing the couple from further deaths of their children. *Silamsakma* then designates an essential component while in the process of *Tangsing*. *Tangsing* proceeds with the installation of *Silamsakma* at the main pillar of the home signifying security of the family. (Anupam Trans. is mine)

From *Mundhum*'s point of view, the top of vertical axis in *Silamsakma* symbolizes heaven. In contrast, the bottom of the same axis symbolizes hell. The right point in horizontal axis indicates the beginning of life whereas the left stands for an infinite position of human spirit. The central position in the middle designates the living existence of human being. Only word used in the poem "I" placed at the center signifies human identity. It represents distinct Limbu subjectivity in general. Raj Manglak shows distinct Limbu community with their unique cultural belief systems. "I" also indicates the poet's declaration of self-identity of Limbu associated with ancestral realms of ethnicity.

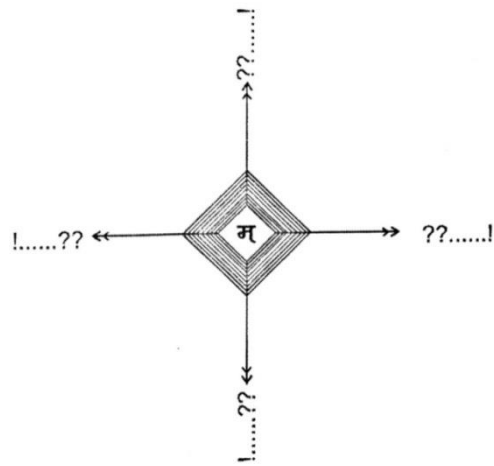


Fig.3: Raj Manglak's poem "Kundalini"

(Source: *Limbuni Village*, page 43)

Surrounded by question marks, exclamatory signs, dots all-around the identity of "I" evokes the sense of identity crisis of Limbu people created by influence of overriding culture. In other words, it refers to the loss of self in an atmosphere of dominant system eliding Limbu's distinct ethnic identity. Gregoire Schlemmer well illustrates the invasion, "with the domination of the Indo-Nepalis in the country, ethnic populations, as well as low castes, were rejected for a long time as marginal; prevented from holding any kind of influential function, and also from writing a history of their own" (119). *Uttarwartis* define the invasion upon their ethnic culture as internal colonization. In Sagun Susara's word, it is "invasion of socio-cultural life of indigenous community by one religion, one language, and one culture policy of state mechanism. Therefore, we defy homogeneity in favor of pluralism" (n. pag). Manglak's implication of the question marks in the poem suggests his resistance against internal colonization of autonomous state of Limbu. Further, with the use of exclamatory signs and dashes, he ironizes the fragmented state of Limbu community in their own territory. Moreover, he revisits the fundamental identity of "I" (Limbu ethnicity/territory) violated by ruling culture.

Overwhelmed by the identity crisis of devastated "I", Manglak vehemently resists against the invasion. Most significantly, Manglak sketching *Silamsakma* appeals for unity among Limbu community, the way the symmetry of nine different colorful threads, signifying the influence of nine different planets upon human subjectivity, unify them in order to fight against the regressive tendency of the dominant agency. Manglak displays the dynamics of marginal indigeneity in the poem in order to transgress the illusive closet of enforced identity assigned by the rulers. At large, he reveals the repressed multifaceted identity of Limbu at the level of distinct language, culture, religion, tradition, and belief system.

Sameep Senehang, another poet under *Uttarwanti Soch*, in his poem *Chyabrung* exhibits how *Chyabrung* (musical drum) becomes a constitutive part of Limbu identity formation. Robert Walker contends: "Behaviors associated with music making cannot be isolated from the socio-cultural context in which such behaviors take place because it is within this space that music has a purpose and is assigned meaning" (11). Indeed, each ethnic community possesses the distinct musical instrument assigning their particular identity. Senehang in cultural psychological enterprise of "thinking through cultures" (Shweder 72) shows *Chyabrung* bending Limbu community together with common cultural and psychological ties. He exhibits the intrinsic aesthetics of Limbu culture inherent in *Chyabrung*. Additionally, he uses it as a metaphor of resistance against dominant culture.

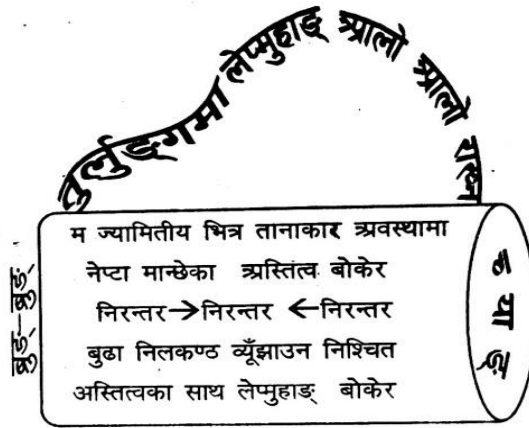


Fig.4: Sameep Senehang's Poem "Chyabrung"

(Source: *Ankhihyal*, vol. 11, no. 3, 2005, pp. 24.)

Senehang's pertinent visualization of *Chyabrung* beyond its literal sense of musical instrument signifies the socio-cultural system of Limbu people. The onomatopoeic expression, *chyang . . . brung . . . brung* a sharp, vibrant tune impulsively coming from two openings on either ends in the poem gives the impression of *chyabrung* being played lively in the rhythmic pattern of cultural symphony of Limbu. In addition, it echoes the resonance of the cultural awakening. Senehang provides artistic shape to the poetic line "to keep *Lepmuhang* afresh in the hanger" creating the impression of the real placement of *chyabrung* somewhere in the wall. The sense of ethnic consciousness to continue pristine pride of ancestral heritage remains intact in the line. On the top of it, the poetic line reiterates mythic resistance of *Lepmuhang* a freedom fighter, the ideal hero as the myth recounts, had saved Limbu community from hostile situations. Poet's reference to the mythical character echoes *Lepmuhang's* vibrancy of resistance in his present self against dominating cultural force.

The rest of the lines in the poem draw the shape of tightened skin cords, necessary means to produce different tunes in the drum. The word formation of harmoniously tightened strings of *Chyabrung* represents Limbus' geographical

territory where the harmonious community lives with communal ties. The musical drum thus represents the common identity of the Limbu community sharing same myth, religion, culture, and ritual practices. The poetic line "The sleeping God" indicates *Phaktanglung* (Mt. Kanchenjunga), the serene god of Limbu. With the utmost sense of "to awake" symbolically referring to the awakening of *Phatanglung*, the speaker wants to awake his community; lead them to the state of ethnic sovereignty free from the oppression of internal colonization of ruling class.

The speaker wants to continue the ancestral spirit of *Lepmuhang* as he mentions, "carrying the existence of *Lepmuhang*" as a motivating factor of resistance "aimed at achieving some sort of change" (Hollander and Einwohner 536). The poet denounces his ethnic pride as he refers his existence as "man with flat nose", the typical facial feature of Limbu in particular, indigenous people in general. The flat shape of *chyabrun* echoes the flat face of Limbu. The speaker 'I' in the poem represents the prototype of the Limbu community, the distinct cultural identity living in harmony with their unique culture. Senehang with the portrayal of ethnic somatotype in the poem thus aestheticizes the idiosyncratic realm of Limbu indigenous identity. The imagery in the line "inside the geometry" symbolizes poet's pursuit of idyllic territory. With an unattainable desire to retrieve the atavistic land, the poet is guided by the spirit of ethnic consciousness and cultural renaissance.

Some Limbu poets have adopted the postmodernist spirit of multidimensionality and plurality to represent the marginal, indigenous and cultural dynamics in their poetry. For instance, poets under *Bahurangbaad* adopt experimentation garnered by postmodernism. They express their linguistic and cultural experiences anointing western experimental practices with the aesthetics of their local indigenous folklores. Multicolorists delineate society as bundle of multi

colors i.e. multiple existence of language, religion, culture and lifestyle. Each has unique essences free to be uttered and sung. On this theoretical ground, Dharmendra Nembang, one of the poets under this movement deconstructs the notion of centrality and celebrates the life and experience of those destabilized from the center.

In his poem “A Snapshot of Kathmandu” Nembang sketches a camera loaded with graphic picture of Kathmandu. By virtue of being the Capital of Nepal, Kathmandu symbolizes centrality (metaphysics of presence in Derridian term) which entails permanence, authority, and control. It became official center of country after Prithvi Narayan Shah’s expansion process of modern Nepal. Maintaining the legacy of centrality Kathmandu, the trope of state power in the center keeps on upholding the constancy of wholeness of authority. However, Nembang in Derridian scrutiny of its structure questions the logocentric grounding of order, harmony, and coherence.

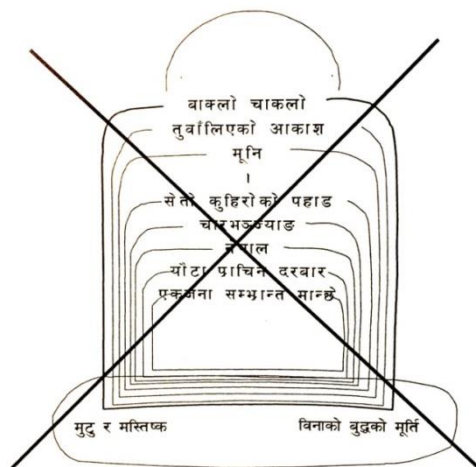


Fig. 5: Dharmendra Nembang’s Poem “A Snapshot of Kathmandu”

(Source: *The Place of Suicide*, page 42)

Arguing from the margin, Nembang questions the center of privileged ideological structure. “Thick haze” symbolizing rigid, centripetal psyche of the rulers has obstructed openness of the sky i.e. multi ethnic people and culture in the country. The imagery in “The hill of white cloud” represents the policy of ‘one nation, one

language and one religion' adopted by the rulers of the country. The colossal notion of Kathmandu based state mechanism caused detrimental impacts on the minority groups like Limbu at the margins. It resulted into the loss of their self-identities. The state ideology from the center privileged dominant elite groups who formulated national policies and codes of conduct and hence underprivileged minority groups pushing them to the margin.

Nembang displays many crevices, gaps, and cracks in Kathmandu. He revisits history of unification of Nepal led by Prithvi Narayan Shah herein referred to as 'A ruler' then king of Kathmandu. Shah annexed Limbuwan, the autonomous forts and territories of Limbu once characterized by their indigenous skills and knowledge systems into the homogeneity of modern Nepal. With the image of "Old durbar" Nembang delineates Shah's monarchic and autocratic legacy; the central power of state subordinating the marginalized Limbu. Limbu indigeneity and culture was suspended with the imposition of ruler's method of tribal absorption and their way of acculturation. In another words, monolithic state ideology of single nation, culture, religion and language sowed by Shah prevailed posthumously. Poet regards Kathmandu, now the official center of country as "statue of Buddha without heart and mind", shrewd and indifferent in respect to the inclusiveness of embedded margins. Still the centric psyche of Kathmandu shrouds with "four narrow passes"; the significations of constraints and barriers of constituted by state mechanism. The poet at the point raises his eyebrows against the dominant ideology of Kathmandu. He attempts to blur the hierarchy between rulers and ruled, between center and margin, between single and multiple identities.

Nembang counters the idea of Kathmandu as transcendental center of the country. He refutes against fixed or static dynamics of its institution. He asserts for

existence of multiple identity beyond the center hitherto excluded by the institution. The idea of exclusion means absence of any presence or which is excluded from instituted. The relationship of hierarchy between Kathmandu and the outside, dominating and dominated respectively, must be blurred. Poet from the ground of deconstruction puts Kathmandu under erasure (X). In Nembang's deconstructive act of resistance "Derrida has become Limbu" (Uprety 135). He becomes critical towards the dominance of Kathmandu way of thinking over the margins and attempts to destabilize its previously fixed categories in favor of multi-coloured existence of Limbu people at margins.

The use of mythical, cultural and historical images in cubic painting type of structural experimentation in the poems discussed above, Limbu poets enhance the vividness of indigenous culture. Displaying Limbu ethnic identity within unique artistic structure of culture and history based symbols; these poems invent new structure of writing in Nepali literature. They challenge the canonical standard of mainstream literary convention. By doing this, they challenge the very notion of homogenized culture and thus amplify literary resistance. On top of this, artistic drawing of poets' typography with substantial use of tropes associated with culture and historical-political events shores up their contemporaneity.

Platial Attachment to Limbuwan in Limbu Poems

Platial attachment assures a personal and communal agency by virtue of her/his psychological bond with geographical and socio-cultural structures of the particular place. This section scrutinizes how Limbu poets affirm their steered ethnic pride, sense of loss and wistful yearning of retrieving vanquished land of identity. The attachment results not simply by the reason of someone's geographical connectivity to the place but is constituted as a set of her cultural and ethnic identity rooted with

essence of the soil. More than the geography, platial attachment is abstract agency; it is a felt value and reverence to the place. However, the deterioration to the land by some external enforcement dents the communal identity of the people residing there in. In this case, platial attachment becomes more vibrant. For instance, Limbu people's aura of platial attachment heightened after annexation of their Limbuwan territory by Prithvi Narayan Shah in his expansion process of Nepal. Feeling nostalgic of the loss of then autonomous geography, the community engages in different ways ranging from political movement to literary expressions to perpetuate it.

Cultural and social structure of a person is grounded on the place he lives. Intersubjective structure of a place promulgates common aspirations, beliefs, and set of experience apparent to the members of the culture. This attachment, as Edward Relph mentions, "constitutes our roots in places; and the familiarity that this involves is not just a detailed knowledge, but a sense of deep care and concern for that place" (37). However, placelessness creates identity crisis of the community. It dismantles tripartite harmony between the place, people and their two-way identity. The breaking of mutual root intertwining these three leads to a shock, pain, confusion, and sense of drifting towards uncertainty. The feeling of placelessness leads to the feeling of outsidership with the place. In the following excerpt from his poem "Refugee's Opinion and Leopard in Maligaun" Bairagi Kaila is exhorted with this symptom:

The stranger invaded
 and emptied gratuitously our serene nature
 like grappling the free fly of birds
 the encroacher seized our land, forest and the water
 and our right to live happy life. (610 Trans. is mine)

Kaila in his expression evinces Limbu's disenfranchisement in their own Limbuwan striated by outsider's encroachment. By "stranger's invasion" he is indicating to Prithvi Narayan Shah's suzerainty of Limbuwan to Gorkha Kingdom.

Marginalization of Limbu thus underwent the process of assimilation to ruler's culture geared by Shah. Gradually, new cultural codes and monarchic patronage subjugated Limbu people's language, religion, and culture. "Misnomered", as Kaila indicates, many Limbu indigenous names of the places were distorted or replaced by Nepali names. For instance, *Phaktanglung* was misnamed as Kanchenjunga and Pheden was deviated as Phidim. He becomes critical to this linguistic invasion of outsider. The dominant ideology restricted and thus marginalized Limbu native cultures and identities. Mahendra Lawoti avers: "different native languages, religions and cultures were undermined through its assimilation policies . . . [the state] promoted the upper-caste hill Hindu culture and values behind the façade of modernization and development" (24). The legitimization of regressive ideology by the dominant political power running the state mechanism played the major role for marginalizing Limbu ethnic identity. Kaila further speaks:

Alas! The village he misnomered
 the river, hill, mountain he misnomered
 my country in own soil
 I searched
 but was doomed to foreigner's rule
 who erected the flag and seized my country?
 alas! where am I? Where is my country's map? (611 Trans. is mine)

Kaila's frenzy lamentation on the loss of Limbu indigeneity evokes his ethnic existence ruined by the outsider's infringed ideology. Being "doomed to foreigner's

rule” poet becomes anxious on the loss of long-standing mythical or historical heritages and identity of Limbu along the loss of territory. Steven J. Heine links Cultural Psychology with self of individual. He maintains: “the process of becoming a self is contingent on people interacting with and seizing meanings from their cultural environments” (1428). Kaila finds gap in his interaction with the place of cultural environment. Feeling of pity and helplessness suggested by the image of “grappling [of] the free fly of birds” echoes the feeling lost self and refugeeness. Poet’s identity crisis exhaled in the expression “Alas! Where am I? Where is my country’s map?” reinforces the feeling of placelessness of Limbu community in general inside their “own soil”. His anger on the loss incites resistance as a result of feeling of infliction and injustice. When aura of placelessness overtly governs victim’s psychology, it intensifies his unalienable craving for palatial attachment. Whereas Kaila laments on the loss of his place, Roshan Yakso in the following excerpt from the poem “Give Me My Limbuwan Back” is tempted towards recovering the loss:

Kathmandu!
 I ask for my Limbuwan
 you seized from me yesterday/
 I ask for my right
 I ask for my identity
 I ask for my existence
 give it back to me. (Yakso Trans. is mine)

The agency lacked, Yakso yearns for Limbuwan home and the reassurance of his belongingness to home. His displaced ‘self’ longs for sticking to the place. It is because people's identity is shaped by the place “within and with respect to which subjectivity is itself established” (David and Malpas 35). But the shift of his ‘self’

from place to placelessness has troubled his agency. In an abhorring tone, he blames power actors those residing in capital Kathmandu and exercising hegemonic legacy as responsible for his segregation from the place. In his expression, “Give it back to me” Yakso addresses Kathmandu and makes a vehement claim to return back once seized territory. He further problematizes linguistic colonization of rulers lurking behind his identity crisis:

I ask for *Phaktanglung*

which you made *Kumbhakarna*

I ask for *Mukumlung*

which you conversed to *Pathibhara*. (Yakso Trans. is mine)

For Limbu people in general *Phaktanglung* and *Mukumlung* denote reverent and holy places of divine existence. Several *Mundhum* discuss genealogical and spiritual linkage of Limbu with these places. Poet expresses his annoyance against places’ name vanished along the line of interloper’s invasive enterprise. He regards this regressive act as stark blow to faith and existence of entire community. Jurgen Habermas affirms language as “a medium of domination and social force which serves to legitimize relations of organized power” (259). Yakso feels power bloc used Nepali language as a weapon to systematically elide the local culture and belief system. In reaction against misnaming enterprise of their native places by the attackers, Yakso’s dissident tone and position is vibrant and daring. Whereas Kaila remains agonized to platial detachment, Yakso goes to the excess of boldly resisting against it by making call for the reassurance of his lost identity. However, unlike Kaila’s and Yakso’s lament to the loss, Tanka Sambahamphe in in the following excerpt from his poem “Limbuwan” feels Limbuwan is not yet vanished:

Limbuwan was there

from the ages

inside the country map of Nepal

has it erased?

Never.

It has remained still the same

and, will remain same

until the existence of earth.

the invaders attempted to destroy its boundaries

and said a unified Nepal.

was it destroyed as they thought?

Never.

it's restoring its life again. (Sambahampe Trans. is mine)

Sambahampe assures eternity of the ancestral place beyond its political deterioration.

In his expression “Limbuwan was there from the ages/ it has remained still the same

and, /will remain same until the existence of earth”, he idealizes the territory. More

than the sticking sense to the territory, he consoles with intrinsic intensity of the place

in his ‘self’ constituting his platial engagement. In an ethnic cabaret, poet glorifying

Limbuwan indicates his denial of Prithvi Narayan Shah’s unification process.

Despite the land possessed in the course of “unified Nepal”, he questions, “was it

destroyed as they thought?” and recognizes that it was “Never”. Poet realizes that the

liveliness of the Limbu heritage preserved and practiced by its community members

has given life to back the place where they “can breathe and speak and produce . . .

the same culture” (Gellner 38). In his insistent entanglement to the place,

Sambahampe evokes Limbuwan in idealised form. In the same tune to

Sambahamphe, Hangyug Agyat in the following extract from his poem “Limbuwan” glorifies the timelessness and immortality of Limbuwan:

Limbuwan exists
 in the children taking birth everyday
 in the plants sprouting everyday
 in the soil, the water, the air,
 and, in daily growing marches
 For, Limbuwan is essence of life
 Limbuwan beats in the heart
 Limbuwan flows in the vein
 ask the deities dwelling in *Phaktaglung*
 is there ink to erase the Limbuwan? (36 Trans. is mine)

It is significant that human identity is more ascribed to subjective perceptions and consciousness of the place rather than to its objective physical boundary. Platial identity is thus the internalized structure of the place and life experience. Agyat, hence ascertains his embodiment to Limbuwan “as essence of life”, in which integral organic function such as “beats in the heart/flows in the vein” constitute Limbu’s identity in general. It proceeds with cumulative transformation of essence to new generation the way “soil”, “water”, and “air” of the place keeps on recharging its existence. Agyat embeds terrestrial existence of Limbuwan to celestial sphere of “deities dwelling in *Phaktaglung*” to glorify the magnificence of place. He further valorizes Limbuwan as transcendental phenomena:

Apocalypse may end the earth
 Masses and planets may collapse
 Or the entire universe may disappear in void /

Time may stop

Every star one by one may fall in black hole

Yet will exist the Limbuwan. (37 Trans. is mine)

Ronaticization of the ancestral place is one of the basic characteristics of place attachment. Agyat brings reference from *Mundhum* to regard Limbuwan as metaphysical essence which is beyond possible apocalypse. *Mujingna- Kheyangna Mundhum* narrates the future happening of apocalypse destructing every essence in the universe. However, *Tageraningwaphuma*, the supreme goddess is said to protect the place where her creations inhabit (6 Kaila). Poet regards Limbuwan to be the habitat of the creations of *Tageraningwaphuma* and thus justifies its eternal essence. Agyat adds philosophical color of *Mundhum* to the poem to reinforce idealization of the atavistic land. Whereas Agyat delineates his ancestral territory from philosophical ground of *Mundhum*, Dharmendra Nembang in the following excerpt of his poem “Limbuwan Village” captures perennial existence of the place:

Limbuwan Village

distant from here is Limbuwan village/

in Limbuwan village too is life and, the world

Limbuwan means a history

Limbuwan means a culture

Limbuwan means a civilization

Limbuwan means a soil

Limbuwan means an ecology. (12 Trans. is mine)

Nembang applies deconstructive view point to foreground the absence of Limbuwan against centric power structure of the state, or fixed point of presence. With this, he attempts to blur the hierarchy between centre and margin. In his ironic expression

“distance from here” he criticizes distancing system or legitimized censorship of the margin by the centre. Once the territory was incorporated into nexus of the central power, Limbu’s history and culture were subjugated to the privilege of mainstream culture. Nembang’s concern sticks on the representation of the margin against discursive taint of the state. In his critical appraisal to the central power authority, he attempts to rejuvenate spirit of systematically stripped out autonomy of distinct “life”, “history”, “culture”, “civilization”, “soil” and “ecology” of Limbuwan. Verging on recursive ground of place attachment, Nembang resonates the issues of inclusivity and indigenous marginality. In the same tune to Nembang, Raj Manglak rejoices with platial spirit of Libuwan as he paints the picture of ancestral place with variegated colors of culture and ethnicity. In the excerpt below from his poem “Limbuni Village”, he aestheticizes *Mundhumi* culture while valorizing the place specialized as Limbuni village:

In Limbuni Village

dance the young daughters the *Dhan Nach*

In front of the bowl of *Jaand*

carol the old aged

the melody of *Hakpare*.

Phedangbas contemplate on the ritual of *Tangsing*.

In the light of the Kupi is visible their own civilization

Visible is ancestral history on the *Phalaincha*. (21 Trans. is mine)

Limbu culture comprises of unique ritual performances, food habits and art objects. *Dhan nach* (yalang in Limbu language), a folk dance, *hakpare* a folk song in poetic expression, *Phedangwa* (shaman), *tangsing* (shamanistic performance), *jaand* (millet beverage), *kupi* (traditional wick), *phalaincha* (resting place made of wooden or stone

in memorial of deceased person) are typical *Mundhumi* cultural attributes of Limbu community. Manglak visualizing unique signatures of Limbu culture, “an historically transmitted pattern . . . of inherited conceptions . . . by means of which men communicate, perpetuate, and develop their knowledge about and their attitudes toward life” (Geertz 89), shows Limbu cherishing their identity. Their expressions and behaviors embody the feeling of attachment towards place; reflect communal harmony and spiritual value systems constituting their way of life. Manglak visualizes cultural endowments commencing liveliness of Limbuwan as distinct existence portrayed in the form of Limbuni village. He further moves from position of cultural aesthetics to the domain of identity politics to fortify the vibrant sense of platial attachment:

knock at the door in the village
 you will find nowadays
 the Limbu brothers
 assembled in *Chumlung*
 around the hearth
 to proclaim that the country is theirs too. (22 Trans. is mine)

Chumlung in Limbu language denotes ‘assembly’ which Manglak refers to Limbuwan political movement emerged as aftershock of people’s movement of 2006. Many indigenous communities from the margin garnered identity politics making claim for autonomous territory of their ethnic heritage in restructuring of federal government system. Within the context, Limbu ethnic based political parties and indigenous organizations in solidarity as suggested by “The Limbu brothers assembled” activated the political movement. They demanded for autonomous Limbu ethnic province historically existed as Limbuwan comprising nine districts of eastern Nepal as

Limbuwan state with the claim that “the country is theirs too”. The emergence of new Limbu paradigm in political discourses of identity-based federalism left a significant mark in Nepalese state building process. Manglak poeticizes the affinity of Limbu people to their land manifested in extent of political form. It is also striking to argue that whether the loss of identity is communal or individual, the person subjected to this experience strikes back to avoid being lost in the labyrinth of dominant oppression. Emotions of love and hatred operate in such situation. In the extract below from his poem “Chyabrun” Dil Dukhi Jantare affirms:

Guzzling termites devoured
 Limbuwan home
Tangsing ritual needs be performed
 to remove the termites
 and chase away
 let’s rebuild the home
 with the power of *chyabrun*. (581 Trans. is mine).

Jantare in his enterprise to create pursuant dissidence against the oppressive agency and in turn to channelize the drive of place attachment; engages in cultural politics of emotion viz. affective dimension of love and hatred. Regarding the nature of love and hatred emotions, Sarah Ahmed asserts: “more they circulate, the more affective they become, and the more they appear to contain affect” (120). For her, emotions of love and hatred circulate in tune to the fashion of surplus value system of economics. In this system, the value of money increases its magnitude in its circulation with the increased value of commodity. Jantare magnifies emotions of hatred against the invaders or “common threat” (121) so that it will be circulated among his community

members. Ahmed further affirms, as a result of this, surplus value of love towards the place i.e. Limbuwan will simultaneously be circulated and thus increased:

The passion of these negative attachments to others is redefined simultaneously as a positive attachment to the imagined subjects brought together through the repetition of the signifier . . . that supposedly explains this shared “communal” visceral response of hate. Together we hate, and this hate is what makes us together. (118)

Jantare uses “guzzling termites” as a metaphoric signifier of invaders “devouring Limbuwan home”. With the signifier, he creates negative attachment so that communal visceral response of hate will be circulated against. Poets imagined subject i.e. Limbuwan autonomous territory reinforced by cultural signifiers like *Tangsing* and *Chyabrung* is instantaneously supposed to receive positive attachment from his community circulating and sharing the same emotion of love. With this emotional politics, poet creates atmosphere of communal togetherness with the dichotomy of hatred against the common threat and love for their rejuvenation of autonomous abbot, a sense of place attachment.

Limbu poets in above discussed poems take common stance for the rejuvenation of their ancestral homeland. From the vantage point of fallen apart margin, they assert collective expectations of recognition of their place and culture. The poets evoke that Limbu community is subjugated and thus suffered from crisis of identity within homogenizing national structure wiping out their indigeneity and place identity. Against the setting of multiculturalism and inclusivity, these poets make a common appeal for reviewing cultural and geographical considerations once set by the power authority. Thus, they demand for the revision of exclusionary tendency of one nation, one language, one religion and, one culture. In common they

depict vibrant affinity of the community with their land. For them, Limbuwan does not only denote a fixed physical boundary but also is densely entangled with the epitome of Limbu cultural identity. Guided by the fabric of Cultural Psychology, they disseminate their community's deep and profound attachment with the land.

Mundhum Aesthetics in Limbu Poems

Limbu poets in their works glorify their indigeneity arising from *Mundhum* origins and instill a sense of pride of cultural heritage. Simultaneously, with ample use of cultural fabrics as the mutinous vehicle, they raise a dissident voice against the power bloc of the state. With glorification of 'self' and dissidence of 'other', they cultivate the sense of cultural awakening among the community members lagged behind. The poets engage in persistent defiance against the dominant Nepali literary and cultural structure and pose resistance against ideological power that has hit a serious dent to their collective ethnic identity. The poets revisit the previous breaches of history perpetuated against their distinctive ethnicity and cultural identity. They enumerate eccentric cultural exuberance of *Mundhum* into poetic and political flection as modes of resistance to instigate for awakening. They revive the vibrancy in communal awareness in an attempt to claim for the equal reception and recognition of their marginal subjects in mainstream domain.

For instance, Upendra Subba in a heightened sense of ethnic consciousness foregrounds his Limbu identity and cultural pride against rigid boundary of the homogeneity of ruling culture. Subba in his poem invests huge amount of cultural flavors instigated from *Mundhumi* belief system of his community which maintains "reciprocity and mutual embeddedness of culture and psyche" (Shweder 63). He uses ethnic symbols to bring forward the aesthetic dimension of Limbu indigenous life system. At the same time, the motif also follows the demonstration of deprived and

marginalized condition of his community in a monopolized setting of the country. As a project of resistance, he counters mainstream practices perpetuated by the state mechanism. In the following excerpt extracted from his poem, “I Viewed Sagarmatha Shorter” Subba challenges the established code of mainstream culture:

From *Sohonamlang* hill

I viewed *Sagarmatha* shorter

indeed! I was standing tall here

and saw an old chestnut tree

standing as hollow as my country

from the hole of this tree too

misty *Sagarmatha* was seen farther and lower

I closed my one eye and saw it again

but my vision was perhaps obstructed by daisy flower

Sagarmatha was out of my sight. (68-69 Trans. is mine)

Sohonamlang, a pilgrimage hill of Limbu, situated in Panchthar district has its association with the event of Namsami-*Keshami Mundhum*. *Mundhum* recounts, *Khappura Mellanghangma*, the mother gave birth to two sons, *Namsami* and *Keshami* the elder and the younger respectively. *Namsami* but happened to metamorphose as a tiger and frequently attempted to eat *Keshami*. In a tricky way, *Keshami* killed *Namsami*. He then dried *Namsami's* skin in *Sohonamlang*. Of its skin he made *chyabrun*. In Limbu language *Sohonamlang* denotes as ‘skin drier’. Subba’s intrinsic affinity to the place originates from his *Mundhum* lineage of ethnic identity.

More than the stature of mountain itself, poet uses image of *Sagarmatha* to refer to the highest locus occupied by the cultural homogeny of the rulers in a structural hierarchy where Limbu indigenous culture is placed at the bottom. With the

reversal of the situation where Subba valorizes *Sohonamlang* against the shortness of *Sagarmatha*, he conveys the message that the worth of own culture is highest beyond the measurement. With reverence and attachment to *Sohonamlang*, poet challenges the hierarchy between high and low culture endorsed by the nation. The image of “Old chestnut tree standing as hollow as my nation” suggests structure of the country out of order and totally unbalanced. In present Nepalese context, Gerard Toffin observes, indigenous identities raising voice from the margin, “defend minority cultures against intervention by the state, which is conceived as a foreign coercive force” (69). Subba resists against this monotype tendency and insists on restructuring the system to make equal recognition to all culture. Whereas Subba valorizes his cultural pride of *Sohonamlang* against *Sagarmatha*, Chandrabir Tumbapo in the following extract from his poem “Kumbhakarna Alias Phaktanglung” opposes intrusive *Kumbhakarna*, a narcoleptic Hindu cultural image displacing *Phaktanglung*, trope of Limbu’s cultural faith:

Old narrator!

slowly I began to nap

as you bathed me/

By the time I slumbered,

from the ash hill of true history

dawned every morning the false history

people lived a narrow life

writing forbidden books

against great wall of hatred erected. (566 Trans. is mine)

Tumbapo reflects tragic happenings taking place in Limbu territory after the arrival of Prithvi Narayan Shah addressed as “old narrator”. *Phaktanglung* as described in

Mundhum narratives connotes a savior god of Limbu community. Poet feels “slumbered”, an identity in crisis resulted along the process of “bathed” symbolically referring to the act of Shah’s invasion which cut off his connection of faith with sacred mountain. *Kumbhakarna*, Hindu mythological character from Ramayana replacing *Phaktanglung* suggests the act of subjugation of native language and culture by Hindu ideology. The poet argues that hegemonic effect upon the Limbu existence, led way to rulers supremacy of false narratives “great wall of hatred” upon which true account of “narrow life” of the oppressed was subdued. Voice was raised from the margin but went suppressed along the line of dominating narratives. In his pursuant offense to the cacophonous misnaming of *Phaktanglung* as *Kumbhakarna*, Tumbapo’s blow of resistance against corrosive force becomes more vibrant in the second part of the poem. He maintains:

I will wake up now old narrator
 all earthquakes will take place
 as I unveil *Phaktanglung* from *Kumbhakarna*
 from my right eye closed
 from ocean like deep sleep will rise up the ultimate tsunami
 as I uncover *Phaktanglung* from *Kumbhakarna*
 from my left eye closed. (567 Trans. is mine)

In his newfangled spirit of cultural awakening aroused from hibernated ‘bath’ of the intruder, poet declares his readiness to fight against the superseding fabrics of dominating power. “I will wake up”, he announces and supplies dashing symbols, “earthquake” and “tsunami” to foreground his dissident motive of reversing the situation. Regarding how hegemony gives birth to resistance, Crystal McKinnon asserts: “Indigenous social spaces through which Indigenous cultures and identities

have fought displacement and assimilation that also remain threatened. These are the sites of political, cultural and social colonization where the settler's language, behaviors, beliefs, values and ideas are hegemonic, and where Indigenous peoples continue to resist" (257). In his vehement desire to restore once lost pride of indigenous identity embedded with cultural faith on *Phaktanglung*, Tumpabo articulates his defiance against established conviction of dominant power affixed with *Kumbhakarna*. Subba and Tumbapo use Limbu spiritual agencies as metaphor of resistance but in the following extract of poem "Refugee's Opinion and Leopard in Maligaun", Bairagi Kaila problematizes spatial identity in order to show rootlessness of his community under political influence of invaders. He avers:

History repeats time and again, so is said
 sons of soils are chased away
 frequently from their own *kipat* land
 refugees they are
 exiled and countryless
 refugee thought I'm
 from this camp
 from that camp
 searching for country
 claiming for identity /
 for the sake of my folks sovereignty and freedom. (611 Trans. is mine)

Kaila becomes critical to the identity crisis of Limbu people caused by the dominant influence of the rulers. Limbus' Kipat, the autochthonous land tenure system was legally confiscated with Land Reform Act in 1964 by King Mahendra. To this displaced condition of Limbu, Kaila affirms as, "sons of soils are chased away". How

Limbu lost their right on their Kipat, Thomas Cox expounds: “In 1886, Nepali government passed a law which converted all cultivated Kipat into . . . the property of Brahmins, making them the economically dominant group [and] . . . in 1964, the Nepali government abolished the Kipat system of land tenure, resulting in the loss of the Limbu's remaining tribal lands” (1318). Kaila contends this isolated condition of Limbu community from own space as “refugees they are exiled and countryless”. With the authority reversed, many Limbu were converted into tenants of the same land, “camp” of which they were once owners.

Kaila highlights collective pain of Limbu society caused by loss of their ancestral land and prepares for a fight back. Historically marginalized Limbu have been struggling for the revival of their lost right and identity. In this connection, Kaila denounces a war against conspiracies of dominator, “I will fight a war, one day long than *Mahabharata* against despotism and tyranny from my own camp” (611). Poet's overt sense of resistance becomes apparent in his expression. With his readiness to wage a war having a magnitude more than that of *Mahabharata*, Kaila reinforces for the need of a decisive movement against injustice propounded by the dominant class. Kaila straightforwardly presents his idea of dissatisfaction against the dominators but poet Swapnil Smriti uses allegory of things falling apart in his home land. In the following excerpt from his poem “The Story of the *Kabhra* Tree under the *Chautari*” he juxtaposes the fall of *Kavra* tree and rise of *Peepal* tree to symbolically depict the deterioration of pristine Limbu culture by foreign intervention. In a *Mundhumi* way of narrating the myth, Smriti unfolds the tragic consequences taking place along the sprouting of *Peepal*, a sacred tree in Hindu religious ideology. He observes:

Kabhra tree was another name

for aboriginals ancient civilization

its root had turned towards *Cholung*
 in its root fragranced the ancient communism
 In an unknown past,
 saw distant ancestor
 the dream of thunder lightening striking the tree
 off the dream he saw
peepal tree sprouted from tumbled down *kabhra*
 then happened everything
peepal rooted deep in *kabhra*
peepal grew as *kabhra* gradually parched away. (98 Trans. is mine)

With indication of “aboriginal’s ancient civilization” Smriti flashes back to show harmonious society of Limbu people bounded by their own belief system. The image of *kabhra* tree symbolizes *Mundhum* guided culture and Limbu indigeneity. In *Mundhum's* cultural perception *Cholung* (stone pillar) towards which Tree is orientated, designates ultimate place of heaven safeguarded by the creator. *Cholung* represents a Cultural Psychology of “tacit cultural norms from a native's [Limbu’s] point of view” (Wierzbicka 221). It denotes a system guided by modern sense of “communism” as poet supplies its resemblance to ancient Limbu society. In a lamenting tone, poet reveals the strike of “thunder lightening” of cultural intrusion devastating the glorious harmony. He exposes a poignant existential crisis of ethnic community within the turmoil of subordination process. The falling of *kabhra* resulted into the decline of communal identity, history, culture and civilization of entire Limbu people. Once pristine forms of primitive cultural values lost the tune with the intervention of the foreign culture. Smriti further goes on unveiling aftermath of cultural intrusion in Limbuwan. He recounts:

along the falling of *kabhra*
 fell down the youths head once held high
 fell down the *Mundhum* of old aged
 fell down the hearts and their country
peepal displacing *kabhra* paved way to
 the rituals of domination and discrimination
 around the *peepal* was built a *chautari*
 blood was sacrificed each morning
 by the time *peepal's* history began
 hatred was born in human being
 born the rage
 born the war. (99-100 Trans. is mine)

In allegorical way, Smriti exhibits political influence of ruling class injecting cultural barrier to Limbu people in their own territory and hence dismantling pristine values of local people steered by *Mundhum* culture. Falling down from *Mundhumi* values, the head, and hearts of Limbu people along the falling of *kabhra* tree indicates loss of their identity. Smriti uses “*peepal*” as metaphor of all pervading influence of dominant rulers and *chautari* built around *peepal* indicates rulers’ religion based socio-political system exercised against local inhabitants. By using the image of “blood sacrifice”, poet forefronts Hinduisation of Limbu imposed with compulsive provision to celebrate Dashain and sacrifice blood to Hindu deities on the festive occasion. As evidence, Limbu people had to figure their fingerprint on front wall of their home. Otherwise, state watchdogs scrutinizing the action would report to the rulers and the rulers used to punish accordingly. Smriti discerns Dashain as Hindu rulers’ politics of conversion imposed against Limbu indigeneity. Bell Hooks

convenes that marginality, “offers the possibility of radical perspectives from which to see and create, to imagine alternative, new worlds.” (qtd. in McKinnon 261-62). Indigenous people escape the pervasiveness of state ideology within the spaces of marginality; and create new revolutionary approaches that would maintain their cultures and lives. Smriti realizes that “*peepal’s* history” of imposition only sowed the seed of “hatred” and “rage” which in turn are growing as revolt at the part of awakened community. He reflects herald of the revolution taking place in new generation powered with ethnic consciousness, high sensibility and realization towards bringing the change and transformation.

Unlike other poets, Sunar Kurup depicts image of legendary figure *Kangsore* from Limbuwan history in order to convey his awakened sense of resistance against prevailing marginalization of his Limbu community. Limbu community iterates and reiterates the heroic status of the legend in different contexts. Communal hero *Kangsore* occupies honorary space in Limbu political discourses celebrated as cultural icon of freedom fighter, savior of the Limbu territory and victorious against Gorkha enemies. Multiple victorious wars he fought against the troops of Prithvi Narayan Shah made him the hero earning the reputation of Limbu warrior. Historian Imansingh Chemjong recounts: “*Kangsore* was the chief of Limbu warrior at the time Libuwan was defending their territory against Gorkha attack. In his leadership Limbu soldiers safeguarding political boundary of Arun River, defeated Gorkha troops for seventeen times in different hill ports. Later on *Kangsore* was killed in a deceitful way” (92 Trans. is mine). In the following extract from his poem “Phoolkumar Chowk” Kurup uses *Kangsore’s* marvelous posture as a trope to support his idea of why the contemporary time demands for the necessity of yet another decisive war:

In *Kangsore* Chowk

is standing *Kangsore*, the commander in chief
 furling in his wrist
 the sword and bow and arrow basket
 he is looking at his ancient palace
 beyond the horizon
 he looks as if for years
 he is waiting for ultimate horrendous war. (39 Trans. is mine)

Kangsore's vigour of bravery has become ultimate desirable force at the present context where Limbu people have been waging cultural movement against ideological structure of state power. In the same line, Kurup portrays his lively posture and romanticizes the past bravery of the legend to extrapolate his heroism and brings back his victorious personality. Unlike classic style of populating the poem with lengthy description of bravery, poet invests economic use of images to exhibit warrior's personality type. The subtle image of "*Kangsore* Chowk" represents Limbuwan territory once safeguarded by the legend. Poet wishes to revitalize the same place identity once again.

Kangsore's body posture as suggested by gerund forms "standing" and "looking at his ancient place" echoes his continuous presence as protector of communal land. The expression "sword and bow and arrow basket furling in his wrist" reinforces the emotions of bravery vibrant in his body where "sword" and "bow and arrow" epitomize his ceaselessly active war temperament. His gesture of "looking at ancient palace" implies his spatial attachment to the Limbuwan. The final imagery "waiting for ultimate horrendous war" is especially important in the poem. *Kangsore* adheres in Limbu Cultural Psychology as "culturally constituted human" (Cole 439). Poet magnifies the revolutionary zeal of *Kangsore* given that he

reveals his home invaded by the enemies and thus he must strike back with a decisive war to retrieve the land. In this way, Kurup exclusively uses the disposition of legendary figure to show dissidence against long rooted invasion of foreign rulers. By dramatizing communal figure in the poem, poet attempts to represent Cultural Psychology of the community oriented against homogeneity of one culture, one language and one religion of the ruling class. The way Kurup embellishes legendary character *Kansore*, Hangyug Agyat vanguards *Lepmuhang*, *Mundhumi* mythical character celebrated as hero in Limbu community for liberating his community from the danger. In the following excerpt from the poem "Ganeshnath" Agyat's raises his critical eyebrows against Hindu cultural codes and patronage subjugating Limbu people and their cultural identity:

Father Pandit!

is your Shastra only legitimate to rule the country?

partition why it becomes

while we tend to become 'we'?

is not your caste system a partition of whole humanity?

I now become *Lepmuhang*

and make a self- determination. (34 Trans. is mine)

Agyat ascertains for the end of discriminating censorship imposed against ethnic cultural existences in the nation in order to respect the differences of socio-cultural diversities. In preamble of their manifesto, creative anarchists declare, "ideological tyranny and cultural monocracy of Hinduism governing against cultural diversity since the ages must come to an end" (11 Trans. is mine). Agyat in tune to the spirit of their literary movement defies monocratic engineering of state ideology.

Characterizing "Father Pandit" as addressee in the poem, he epitomizes rulers of the

country in particular and rubrics of Hindu based political structure of the country in general. Poet's indication of "Shastra" refers to monotype Hindu ideology legitimized as political system of the country extensively expelling multicultural dimensions of marginal ethnic groups. In "you" versus "we" dichotomy of ruler and ruled, the poet observes his ethnic identity blurred behind nationalist rubric engineered by Hindu "caste system". Agyat ironizes how ethnic minorities demanding for acknowledgement of their right and justice are derogatorily censored and at the same time, their movement is blamed as "partition". However, poet considers Hindu "caste system" effacing marginalized identities as prevalent partition. Because poet realizes that recognition to ethnic identity of his community has gone awry in the fabrics of censorship, he decides to metamorphose as *Lepmuhang*, the liberator in order to the rescue the community from the apocalypse of domination. *Mundhum* narrates story of *Lepmuhang* saving his community. Upendra Subba recounts:

In ancient time, earth was filled with corruption and violence. Human beings forgot the path of religion. *Lepmuhang*, a man with great soul was devotee of goddess *Tageranimaphunma*. One day while he was taking river bath, a fish pleaded him to rescue. He rescued it and brought back home. It became gigantic enough so *Lepmuhang* carried it to river. In its departure, fish told him to prepare a boat and rescue his people from apocalypse about to take place eliminating everything on earth. *Lepmuhang* followed the advice and saved his men. (9-10 Trans. is mine)

The mythical allusion of *Mundhum* on one hand ascertains poet's deep attachment to his indigenous identity and culture and on the other hand reinforces his determination to resist against dominant structure of the state parallel to the apocalypse. Agyat indicates Limbu community living a life of discrimination, subjugation and

exploitation must need a rescue from all pervading suzerainty of dominant ruling class. At this juncture, Agyat's intending to be *Lepmuhang* connotes his desire to liberate his ethnic community from dominating nexus of the rulers. Poet in his illustration maintains the quality of cultural resistance in which "minority communities [like Limbu] attempt to preserve the minority culture against assimilation to the host culture" (Hollander and Einwohner 536). Identity based resistance of the marginal Limbu poets like Agyat aims at achieving change for justice and equality.

Resistance poems of Limbu poets discussed above resonate the overturning of state's century old sole locus of political structure. Thematic solidarity maintained by the poets going against predatory state mechanism orientates towards revitalizing their long lost rights to autonomy, sovereignty, and self-determination. They fuel *Mundhum* rooted resurging tropes to contest against straightjacket of ruling class endorsing the dispossession, regulation, and displacement of Limbu identity. In a cultural, historical, and structural context of censorship, these poems instill anti-authoritarian rhetorics to evoke a protest from the testimony of silenced citizenry. Against deeply entrenched structure of dominant power, these resistant poems hold a critique from the arena of struggle and hence they turn to be political project. Poets posit a collective cause of liberation of Limbu community for a common land Limbuwan, for a common Limbu identity and culture on the basis of which their poetic resistance is perpetuated.

Ekphrastic Limbu Indigeneity in Limbu Poems

Ekphrastic dimensions of different art forms, performances of rites and rituals, songs and dances stemmed from *Mundhumi* belief system spawned in poems as the stuffs of culture keep Limbu identity intact. Limbu poems discussed under this rubric

use idiosyncratic aesthetic impulses of distinct culture and hence maintain Limbu ways of seeing and being. Rhetorical technique of ekphrasis in poetry consists of ‘closed’ and ‘open’ variants. In its ‘closed’ category, the poem explicitly identifies and reframes what is visible of the work of art, mostly the painting. By contrast, in ‘open’ type, poem implicitly captures unframed description of actual scene, rather than a pictographic representation. The poems discussed in this section fall under later category. Ekphrastic display of Limbuness in Limbu poems reinforces as survival source of cultural identity, and, at the same time it functions as mode of resistance in liberation endeavours. Poets manifest the vigor of cultural aesthetics into the artistic form of literature to boost the very spirit of marginal identity. In this venture, they not only reflect essential quality of their culture but also create it. This section makes a critical scrutiny of the politics of Limbu poems rendering and restoring their unique indigenous aesthetics into poetic form.

Aesthetics of indigenous art is closely connected to particular cultural identity and individual identity sticks to that collective identity. In this regard, Richard A. Shweder avers: “Culture and the mind can be said to be mutually constituted” (qtd. in Heine 1423). Music and dance, fundamental assets of culture pertaining to particular community evoke cultural identity. Specific ties to these art forms hence reflect an individual’s one's existence. Upendra Subba in the following excerpt from his poem “Singhkhyale” reverberates a particular dance popular in Limbu community. With ekhprastic invocation "an expository speech, distinctly presenting to view the thing" (D'Angelo 440), he attempts to establish distinct cultural identity. He reflects the vivid action of *Singhkhyale* dance and bridges its inherent Limbu aesthetics with emotional temperament of the readers. Subba expresses:

Come on chaps with your strength full

let's clash in *singhkhyle*
 scuffle our fists
 chanting, squealing and blaring
chhui khyap khyap
chhui khyap khyap
 rival I'm searching for
 provoking a quarrel
 prancing I'm in the mid of fair
 let's compare appetite
 and energy saved for years
 how much maneuvered are you? (43 Trans. is mine)

Singhkhyle, Limbu's typical dancing game of tussle voluntarily takes place in public gatherings such as in fairs and festivals. It involves the participation of muscular adults chanting in rhythm and tussling their hand, shoulder, elbow and hips against each other at their best to outsmart the rivals. Winner receives communal admiration, an aesthetic return for his masculinity. Losers suffer a psychological disgust. Associated with carnival "appetite", the occasion involves "chanting", "squealing" and "blaring", drinking, dancing, singing, merrymaking and animalistic behaviors, the typical part and parcel of Limbu indigeneity transmitted from remote past. Limbu people inherit bundle of cultural performances and therefore repute "music, dance, or visual arts, as the celebration of human continuity with the earth and identity" (Ballengee and Morris 31). Recapturing the communal ritual in poetic form, Subba exposes vivacity of the art and its aesthetic impulses. Repetition of the line *chhui khyap khyap* involves both verbal and bodily actions. At the time of game, participants rhythmically chant *chhui* in a sustained and loud note followed by *khyap*

khyap an onomatopoeic mimicry used by the poet to resemble the rhythmic beat of “prancing” together.

Subba reenacting the momentum of dance in the poem does not only showcase exuberant cultural aesthetics but simultaneously expresses his implied sense of resistance against the oppressor. In his readiness to contest against the opponent, he avers, “rival I’m searching for/ provoking a quarrel”. In his fuming expression, Subba make sense of revolt against dominant power explicit. Crystal McKinnon regards indigenous music and cultural performance as the site of resistance. She avers: “the places they performed, and the spaces they and their audience created when they performed would generate critical sites of indigenous resistance” (255). *Singkhyle* comprises active participation of both dancers and audiences. Subba plugs communal space of aesthetics perception of the performance with collective resistance force. In his flamboyant expression, “compare appetite and energy saved for years”, he indicates to years long assertive power and their ambitious craving of dominance with his newly emerged ethnic consciousness and resistance force. In his question, “how much maneuvered are you?” Subba interrogates suzerainty of rulers that relegated Limbu community from their *Limbuwan* home. With this, the mimicry of *sinkhyale* dance and its aesthetics in the poem manifest into a resisting performance.

Some female Limbu poets rising in the arena of writing from peripheral space add new dimension to the richness of Limbu poems, and thereby to Nepali literature. Few in numbers, these female poets beyond the discourse of gender issue, stick upon cultural context to explore its unique aesthetic realms. For instance, Ranjana Limbu in the following excerpt from her poem “Dissatisfied Poem” uses emblems flavored by Limbu places, rituals, myths, ancestral treasures and music to sketch the lively picture

of her Limbu identity. She embeds her ethnic identity with terrestrial and celestial agencies parceled from *Mundhumi* convention from the times immemorial:

What I'm, from this nature I'm
 from this nature, received all what I have
 worshipped *simebhume* dwelling around here
 asked for power with the deities residing here
 arranged *mangena* in *kakphewa* and *sisekpa*
 and raised the honour of *Chotlung*
 made the flute piercing holes on bamboo from here
 danced with *chyabrun* made of *khamari* tree from here
 and created distinct indigenous melody of own
 echoes still these melodies in my ears

chyabrun dhum chyabrun dhum chyabrun dhum. (630 Trans. is mine)

With ample supply of paintings like cultural images, Limbu constructs a visual art gallery of distinctive Limbuness. In her ekphrastic way of recapturing art like cultural facets which seem as really and lively as they are, she illuminates rhetorical vividness to the cultural existence of Limbu in general. In her ekphrastic enterprise of “speaking out or telling in full” (Heffernan 302), *Mundhum* guided aesthetics appears apparently visible. Moreover, she brings forth the Limbu people’s profound attachment with nature as she avers, “What I’m, from this nature I’m/ from this nature, received all what I have”. In her assertion, she applies *Mundhumi* view of human beings and nature as part of an extended ecological family sharing embedded, interacted, interdependent and interconnected ancestry and origins. Bairagi Kaila asserts: "nature has provided Limbu's survival needs, aspirations and accomplishment and in return they have strong reverence to nature. It is intrinsic interconnectivity between human

being and nature" (22:23-23:45 Trans. is mine). Worshipping of *simebhume*, the spiritual agents, and "deities residing" in nature, formation of "flute piercing holes on bamboo" and *chyabrun* from *khamari* tree display Limbu people's spiritual, psychological and, aesthetic attachment with nature.

Limbu's cultural mode of agricultural practices, *kakphewa* and *sisekpa* respectively denoting the month of January and July follow specific rituals of planting and harvesting. In these images poet recaptures the aesthetic art of ritualistic performance where community sings and dances, involves sharing happiness and showing harmony with nature. Poet's reference to *mangena*, a shamanistic ritual aimed at raising honor and dignity of person and *Chotlung* (stone pillar) symbolizing heavenly place evoke connectivity of human life with spiritual power affecting their life. Poet illuminates flute and *chyabrun* the faculty of Limbu musical art of "distinct indigenous melody" in order to disseminate inherent relation of music with indigenous identity of the group. The onomatopoeic rhythm, *chyabrun dhum chyabrun dhum chyabrun dhum* of *chyabrun* ushers to poet's denouncement for cultural awakening. The photographs of cultural art recaptured and reflected vividly in the poem render intrinsic aesthetics of Limbu indigeneity.

Limbu poets valorize their culture equated with nature to decipher the aesthetic faculty inherent in the place they live and they have internalized. The place attachment they embrace has intrinsic affinity with nature. In other words, poets' *Mundhumi* cultural models of nature include humans as one cohesive aspect of the nature they live within. They recapture the picture of pristine nature bestowing profound sense of beliefs and aspirations. Foregrounding their interconnection with natural agencies in poem, the poets capture verisimilitude cultural beliefs of their living and being. For instance, Sundar Kurup in the following lines extracted from his

poem “The Journey towards Hill” valorizes ethnic aesthetics of Limbu embedded with nature in juxtaposition to the western images of philosophy, science and political power:

While passing by Limbu village
 through the hilly woods
 I found in the branches of ancient tree
 Karl Marx’s beard like mosses
 and felt that he must be writing his incomplete books
 hiding inside the woods hereby.
 I felt Albert Einstein fade up of his theory of relativity
 is living here somewhere
 playing violin, learning *Mundhumi* songs from Limbuni birds
 when I hear from the hilly canyon
 the sound of clashing swords
 I feel as if Napoleon Bonaparte
 is learning the art of war from *Kangsore*. (82-83 Trans. is mine)

Kurup in a glorified emotionality propounded by his cultural pride valorizes his cultural standards which transcends standard of western knowledge system. By “Limbu village” and “hilly woods”, poet refers to Limbuwan, the ancestral homeland of Limbu. With this reference, he strengthens a formed attachment to the place and woods that abound him the pride of ethnic identity antecedently attached with them. With the imagery of “Karl Marx . . . writing his incomplete books”, poet considers Marx’s theory inferior to the richness of knowledge propounded by *Mundhum* which guides Limbu people and their belief system. Kurup points at *Mundhum* guided affluent Limbu society of the past beyond the hypothesis of Karl Marx.

Likewise, Kurup in his assertion of “Napoleon Bonaparte learning the art of war from *Kangsore*” glorifies Limbu communal legendary *Kangsore* as par excellent than Bonaparte. *Kangsore* occupies honorary space in Limbu political discourses celebrated as cultural icon of freedom fighter, savior of the Limbu territory and victorious against Gorkha enemies. The imageries of “Albert Einstein fade up of his theory of relativity” and “learning *Mundhumi* songs from Limbuni birds” are suggestive of inferiority of western science in front of affluent knowledge described in *Mundhum* on the formation of universe, of entire living and nonliving beings. Innards of *Mundhum* comprise the participation of nature. “Limbuni birds” for instance suggests the source of human knowledge inherent in nature. Hence, the existence of human life in the surrounding nature as extended family constitutes an art of synergic, cohesive and complimentary bond. Steven Leuthold asserts: “traditional indigenous arts involve embodied . . . experience. A state of immediacy and immersion, an experience of oneness between the audience and the artwork seems present in much indigenous expression” (321) Kurup illuminates aesthetic dimension of his unique cultural gallery, the paintings of embodied experience of Limbu people constituting their oneness of identity.

In tune to Kurup’s celebration of his cultural identity equated with nature, Prakash Thamsuhang in his poem “Human of Green Planet” elaborately records the genealogical details of his people interlinked with nature. Supplying the details as displayed in their physical appearance inherited from antiquity, Thamsuhang celebrates the aesthetics of Limbu identity and aboriginality. Indigenous Limbu, the descendent of the earliest known inhabitants of nature, continue the characteristics of indigeneity to uphold their identity. Such aesthetics of indigenous people is more or less common throughout world. In the following excerpt, Thamsuhang observes:

The aroma of wild flowers
 fragranced from your body
 you must have come through the trail of woods
 your pedigree, your culture, your aesthetic cognizance
 you must be of different country
 yam like forearms
 sturdy hands as *saal* trees
 you must be of different earth
 daisy flowers thrust in ears
 bangles of thrones worn in wrists
 you must be the primitive humans of the universe.

Oh! Humans of green planet! (page 52 Trans. is mine)

Thamsuhang portrays a vivid picture of “you” addressee as epitome of Limbu people with the distinct biological properties inherited from both nature and ancestors living in the nature. Thamsuhang interacts with the addressee and decodes in him an unprecedented quality. He then celebrates the ethnic aesthetics of the Limbuness the addressee possesses. The somatotype the addressee embodies, functions as a site of poet’s indigenous agency and persistent cultural pride given that “the body has very specific cultural, historical, and ideological roots” (Segal and Tillett ix). Thamsuhang romanticizes Limbu body with “yam like forearms” and “sturdy hands as saal trees” as his identity trope. Foregrounding specific body type as reclaimed agency of his identity, he confronts against the the imposition of dominant groups discriminatory legacy based on body binaries. In epiphanic expression, poet retrieves his indigenous body memories. In doing so, he reframes Limbu body within political framework to reclaim indigenous agency.

The imageries of nature i.e. “green planet”, “aroma of wild flowers fragranced”, “trail of woods”, “yam like forearms”, “sturdy hands as saal trees”, “daisy flowers thrust in ears”, and, “bangles of thrones worn in wrists” supplied to the formation of addressee evocate his identity descended from nature. Thamsuhang in his disposition smears the philosophical colors of *Mundhum*, which views both human being and its surrounding nature as part of an extended ecological family that shares protracted ancestry and origins. Poet reinforces the idea that Limbu people are integral part and parcel of nature and the composition of human-nature cohesion thus creates a unique art. The addressee maintaining “the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community” (Leopold 46) affirms his Limbu identity as profoundly attached and comprehended with the lineage of nature. Thamsuhang, showing addressee’s deep attachment to the place, retains the idea that Limbu as people of nature hold special relation to their ancestral land with fundamental values, aspirations and aesthetic cognizance.

Aesthetic dimensions of distinctive myths, folklores, songs, food and drinking habits and ethnomedical knowledge rooted from both spiritual and physical world together constitute the richness of Limbu culture. These essential components of culture help Limbu manifest their ethnic identity. Although dominant political power keeps on influencing their identity, Limbu people persistent to their cultural performance have made it lively and effervescent. Joane Nagel reflects that, “Political policies and designations have enormous power to shape patterns of ethnic identification when politically controlled resources are distributed along ethnic lines” (157). However, Limbu ethnic groups sticking to their culture have safeguarded its traditional values. In this venture, the contribution of Limbu poets restoring their cultural life into literature is equally significant. For instance, Man Prasad Subba in

his poem “My Kirati Mother” depicts a verisimilitude art of different Limbu belief system ranging from myth to ethnic knowledge system:

Adding *sekmuri* and *andang* flowers on *kalash*
 my mother, the granddaughter of *Tigenjongna*
 examined the endless conflict between
 manhood and animality
 she put infant me on the cradle
 and sang *Perengwa Samlo* lullaby in melodious tune
 of the millet grown on own field she fermented exhilarating jaand
 and surpassed her maternity period with its gumbo.
 I grew up breastfed with such drink of valour!
 She cured my future feeding me
chimphing and *khanakpa* and a bit of *bikhuma*. (48 Trans. is mine)

Nostalgic in tone, Subba’s poem captures an image of his mother nurturing and mothering him in typical *Mundhumi* belief system. In valorizing her mother as the descendent of *Tigenjongna*, the poet brings allusion from *Namsami-Keshami Mundhum*. It recounts *Tigenjongna*, the mother giving birth to two sons, *Namsami* and *Keshami* the elder and the younger respectively. *Namsami* but happened to metamorphose as a tiger and frequently attempted to kill *Keshami*. In a tricky way, *Keshami* killed *Namsami*. With reference to the allusion, poet reveals Limbu identity primordially rooted with myth. Imagery of *sekmuri* and *andang* flowers signifies holy offerings to the spiritual powers at the time of ritual occasions. These flowers are typical to constituting Limbu identity. They also imply embeddedness of the community with benevolent nature. Moreover, adoration to mother and sacred value assigned to flower together symbolize matriarchal Limbu society.

Limbu community has sustained its distinctive folksongs, food and drinking habits and ethnobotanical knowledge as their cultural heritage and thus has maintained their culture alive. *Perengwa Samlo* as indicated by poet denotes cradlesong, which follows a soothing refrain in unique melody. Although, lullaby is common in every culture, *Perengwa Samlo* is different Limbu genre. Besides, Limbu people have peculiar food and drinking habit marking their identity. Food and drinks used in rituals and as subsistence means function as identity signature of community in general. For instance, poet's reference to *jaand* i.e. millet beverage in Limbu community is essentially prototypical. Cramer et al. assert: "the ways that we eat and dine with others can be categorized as ritualistic because they involve repetition, expected behaviors, and roles for both participants and the food" (xi). Daily life, rituals, festivals, public ceremonies or any performative occasions of Limbu community follow the convention of *jaand*. Poet associates the drink as significant marker of Limbu ethnic identity.

Moreover, Limbu indigenous people possess ethnomedical knowledge and traditional ways of healing passed down from one generation to another. Such cultural heritages have helped them recognizing themselves as a distinct community. Poet referring to *chimphing*, *khanakpa* and, *bikhuma* used in different ailments are medicinal plants already recognized and practiced by Limbu ancestors. The legacy of knowledge and practice prevails at present too. It also indicates community's affinity to the surrounding nature, which has bestowed them the survival sources. Distinct lifestyles, cultural activities and behaviors mark Limbu community, which in turn help them shape and reshape their ethnic identity. Stephen J. Heine asserts: "Cultural Psychology views mind and culture to be ultimately inseparable. Our thoughts, actions, and feelings are shaped by cultural information that gives them meaning"

(31). Poet recaptures the cultural activities Limbu people acquire, practice and rehearse shaping their identity. Moreover, Subba views his culture as art and in his ekphrastic display of the aesthetic dimension of his culture; he establishes his distinct ethnic identity.

The poems discussed above engage in ekphrastic exploration of aesthetic dimensions of Limbu cultural art. Poets dramatize abundant repository of folklores, ritualistic performances, terrestrial and celestial significances, physical features, food habits, language, songs and musical instruments to establish the aesthetics of their Limbu indigeneity. Although subordinated into the nexus of elite culture, Limbu poets restoring their cultural aesthetics in expressive art form attempt to transcend the restricted boundary. They use local flavor, subtle style, and invent new subjects to Nepali literature. Most strikingly, they foreground local myths, symbols, and allusions rooted from *Mundhum*. With constant sticking to their indigenous art forms of culture, these poets delve into reviving and thriving cultural behaviours constituting their identity.

Limbu poems discussed in various rubrics in this chapter reflect distinct Limbu identity. Poetic works of Limbu poets reflect, generate, and, express varying degrees of situations Limbu people have been coping with. From the vault of marginal historical and socio-cultural contexts, poets use poetic expressions as a means of reconstructing their identity. They attempt to decipher and defamiliarize the dominant power structure of the state. In their poems, they create private political space of resistance to challenge the long rooted oppression flourished against the community. From the resistive spaces, they communicate, discuss and articulate their underprivileged conditions, and in turn garner a reinvention of their distinct cultural world.

Chapter IV: Dissident Call for Change in Limbu Poems

Written from the outskirts of eastern region, Limbu poems function as agency of Limbu marginal identity within historical and cultural sphere. Writers' emphasis on ethnic issues in the poems reinforces the spirit of their literary movements; the alternative approach to addressing real experiences of marginalized Limbu identity. Poets articulate a new vision against the roots of inequality and offer the new taste of indigenous social and cultural phenomena in their venture of seeking for the integration of their literature into mainstream literary domain. They seek to speak on behalf of their community as they celebrate peripheral cultural aesthetics as a source of pride. They break the silences of their cultural space with rhetoric of dissidence against cultural and literary relegation. Poets as agents of their community occupy oppositional space against legitimacy of dominant power. Hence, as defiance against prevalent structure, Limbu writer provide agency of identity in their poems.

Limbu poets emerge from the periphery to talk about the periphery; about the outskirts in the social, cultural, and, literary context. The peripheral position these writers occupy analogously represents the marginal position of Limbu community. From, social, cultural, and, geographical margins, they circulate a decentralized circuits of literature to ensure their ethnic identification. In fact, a defiant attitude of Limbu poems against the canon installs a rupture with mainstream tendency of literature and culture. Writers engaged in a contest against systematic parameters of othering, create room for self-representation and speak for themselves. They create an alternative form of poetic expression to give life to the aesthetics of marginal Limbuness. The poetic politics in their valorization of culture fosters the uplifting of communal identities from the bottom to the universe of mainstream. Poets depict not only cultural traits of Limbu people but also explore their experiences historically

entrenched within the dichotomy of powerful and subjugated, rulers and ruled, center and margin.

Against the history of their marginalization, poets reflect the issues of communal identity and values. They claim mainstream ideology as major constraint restricting their ethnic identity. From the space systematically excluded by the state, poets attempt to transgress rigid boundary and exploitative measures of elite cultural system in the quest of their identity. As new generation of their community, Limbu poets reinvent cultural narratives and mythological stories in poetic form. In their poetic enterprise, they retain their restored behavior to preserve and sustain their ethnic identity. They record in poetic forms the integral part and parcel of *Mundhum*, orally transmitted heritage in an endeavor to give life back to richness of Limbu culture. Heightened sense of ethnic consciousness in Limbu poets reinforce exhibiting pulsates of their cultural aesthetics never represented in Nepali literature before.

Moreover, poets' experimentation of blending indigenous local tastes with the dimensions of recent literary theories, trends and styles contributes to the richness of Nepali literature. Poets invent new style in form and content bringing local myths, symbols, and allusions as a literary resistance against the convention of mainstream poetry. Such marginal intervention upon the mainstream or voice from the margin represented in the poems functions as literary war against pervading structure of the country for the equal reception and recognition of their marginal literature and culture. Limbu poets revive their cultural aesthetics with substantial use of cultural assets rooted from unique myths, folklores, rituals, music, songs, geography language, and, food habits. In other words, they display their Limbuness in an endeavor to establish their unique cultural identity, concretization of abstract ethnic divergences, identity, and emotions. At this juncture, acknowledging ethnic consciousness of what

it means to be member of the group, poets also attempt to arouse their community members with decent call for cultural awakening.

The poetic works depict Limbu life and culture as complex belief system transmitted from the past to the present with a historical process of transaction. They bring forth the aspirations, behaviors and lifestyles of Limbu people as the markers of shaping and reshaping their ethnicity and identity. They show Limbu community living with *Mundhum* distinctively subsisting language, script, culture, religion, and ways of living a life, which have made them different from other communities. They also reverberate their community experiencing cultural trauma and dire identity crisis under dominating sociocultural structure particularly stemmed from Prithvi Narayan Shah's annexation of their homeland territory. Expressing a nostalgic rage against the ignorance upon their cultural significations and loss of identities, these poems appeal for reformation in current structure of the country for the inclusivity of their indigenous identity.

Limbu poets embrace optimistic view for inclusive nation composed of the propensities of ethnic identities. In this sense, these poems configure with the spirit of people's movement of 2006 implanting ethnic consciousness among the marginal communities for unearthing multifarious issues of marginality. As an offshoot of the movement, literary works of Limbu writers amplify the issues of suppressed marginal identities. Guided by new perspectives and consciousness poets redraw the boundary of political structure. Poets foreground marginalized state of Limbu community in a venture to challenge the rigidity of state attitude for the sake of recognition of their identity. Poets interrogate institutional subservience fortified by state power in expression of collective cultural psychology of Limbu people at margin. With their

creative means, poets point at cracks in dominant ideology to be repaired in order to create an inclusive society.

Limbu poets use their poems as vehicle to confront against discriminatory power bloc of the country. However, it should be acknowledged as aesthetic response to correct the breaches caused against their ethnic identity and culture over the centuries. More significantly, dynamics of resistance and cultural representation portrayed in Limbu poems offers newfangled area in the scholarship. The academia like ours should appreciate with significant recognition and reception to this fresh venture in literary discourse so that inclusive margin would add more color to the richness of Nepali literature. Moreover, academia should reflect the spectrum of new possibility conferred by Limbu poems in the process of theorization of resistance in Nepali literary discourse. Nepali academia has not yet adequately explored the area of resistance literature emerging from the margin. Building a discourse around the body of indigenous knowledge on resistance dynamics posed against mainstream ideologies would pave way for new understanding of marginal viewpoints.

Present research paper delimits its study area within the sphere of contemporary Limbu authors from eastern Nepal. Further delimitation consists of the selection of the poems based on and suited to the dynamics of dissident Cultural Psychology. Many poems and other genres of Limbu literature deliberately left behind remain as fresh territory to be researched. This study does not claim that findings are exactly similar or dissimilar in other social, cultural and political conditionings of other ethnic communities of Nepal. Within its delimitation as well, the study does not cover the area of gender, philosophical, economic and other cultural issues pertinent in the texts. Numerous texts published and available in both printed and electronic forms will help prospective researchers working on different

dimensions of Limbu identity. Moreover, comparative study with the literature of other ethnic communities in different variables will reinforce to significant findings of marginal issues. Interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary studies of Limbu literature pertained to the socio-political, cultural, economic, and philosophical dimensions of similar and different ethnic communities at the door invite for further research endeavors.

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