

## I. Limbus and Their Cultural Heritage

The Limbus are one of the principal tribes of Mongoloid origin in Nepal. The etymological study shows that the term Limbu was derived from the Limbu word *Libong* that combines two morphemes, *li*: which means bow and *po* means 'to carry'. In the course of time sound changed into /b/ in the tongue of the Limbus. The word *Libong* means 'bow carrier' that has changed into Limbu later. The Limbus call themselves *Yakthumba*, a Limbu term that combines again two morphemes *jak* which means fort and *umba* which means brave and so, the Limbus are also known as brave-warriors or *Yakthumba*. Today the Limbus write Subba in the place of the Limbu but the word Subba was given by Prithivi Narayan Shah as their title. Dor Bahadur Bista says in a book '*People of Nepal*' that "[...] the title Subba was given to Limbu "head men" at the time when the territory of the Kiranti was annexed to the kingdom of Nepal by the shah king" (40).

In the history of Nepal, the Limbus are also recognized as the group of Kirat and the indigenous inhabitants in the hill side of Koshi and Mechi zones of eastern Nepal. The writer Eden Vansittart says in a text '*Nepal and the Gurkhas*' that "the eastern tribes are known collectively as Kiranti. Included in this group are the Limbus or *Yakthumbas* [...]" (97). At present, they have also migrated to the major cities and districts of the country like-Kathmandu, Dharan, Biratnagar, Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari. Limbus are found in Darjeeling, Sikkim, Aasam of India, Bhutan and Myanmar country. They are said to be original dwellers of Darjeeling and Sikkim of India. Dr. Chaitanya Subba writes in his text '*The Culture & Religion of Limbus*' as:

Limbus are a branch of Kirat segregated by the Gurkha rulers with special grant of land privileges and local authorities in some particular areas (Limbuwan) from the rest of their kindred. Historical documents

reveal that the term “Limbu” was used by Gurkha (Nepal) administration after 1774 [...]. (12)

As mentioned in history, Limbus are Kirat or of mongoloid origin. They ruled in eastern part of Nepal until they were defeated by Shah Kings. After the unification of Nepal they had granted special privileges of land and local authorities in their area.

There were thirty-two Kirat Kings in Nepal. The first Kirat King was Yalamber who defeated Mahispal dynasty and ruled over Kathmandu valley. They ruled over Kathmandu valley and their places until the last dynasty of Kirat King Gasti who was defeated by the Lichchhavi dynasty. After that a group of those Kirats migrated towards the east of Kathmandu valley. Now a days those Kirats are known as Rai, Yakkha, Sunuwar and Limbu. The writer Eden Vansittart writes in his book ‘*The Gurkhas*’ that “The Limbus, form a large portion of the inhabitants in the mountainous country lying between the Dudhkosi and the Kankai rivers in Nepal” (112).

The Limbus are found in majority in the areas of Dhankuta, Sankhuwasava, Terthum in Koshi zone, and Taplejung, Panthar and Ilam in the Mechi Zone. Beside these areas they are found in Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari and other parts of the Nepal. The Limbus are one of the major ethnic groups having their typical and distinct culture, tradition, religion, script and language. Limbu also have a religious text, *Mundhum*. The Limbus priests (*phedangmas*) enchant *Mundhum* during ritualistic-observation. They believe in the primordial mother goddess *Tagera ningwaphuma*, the creator of the whole universe, planets, Man and society as well as every living and non-living objects.

The Limbus themselves are of the belief that at one time in the past, they inhabited the hilly regions of the Tamba Koshi headwaters and from there they

migrated at a later date and the sect called Thambakholae is an indicator of this fact. They also believe that thirteen groups migrated from Lhasa in the north, and five groups came from the south in Kashi. While the former became the *Lhasa gotra* and the latter became the *Kashi gotra*. Dr. Rajesh Gautam and Asoke K. Thapa Magar write:

The Limbus also have a tribal structure and there are septs and sub-septs lined up in their social order. [...] the *Yakthumbas* are split into ten septs, namely: Panthar, Chhathar, Antharai, Yangrup, Chaibisa, Terathum, Charkhol, Maikhola, Phedap or Bhuinphutuwa, Tambakholae. (3)

Limbus have septs and sub-septs or clans among them and their tribes or clans were categorized by their place. They lived in their own place with cultural system and rule and regulation. Limbus are divided into several tribes or clans (*thars*). These clans are as Serma, Chemjong, Nembang, Lingden, Thamsuhan, Ingwa and so on. These clans are further divided into sub-clans: such as Chikcho, Chongbang, Imusong, Kurumbang, etc. are sub-clans in Kasum clan of Chhatthar. Thus, Limbus have own tradition, custom, culture and developing system of literature. They celebrate culture, custom and tradition by performing *Mundhum* occasionally in different ritualistic context for the settlement of a prosperous and perfect life. In this way, Nepal is a beautiful country having many features in culture of ethnicity and diversities in language and spoken as their native tongues though official language is Nepali. Most of the languages don't have their written scripts; they have only in oral forms. Only a few languages have both spoken and written forms. Some languages are disappearing day-by-day because of the lack of preservation from the government

and because of the dominance of privileged culture and languages. Among such languages the Limbu language is one that has both spoken and written forms.

The Limbu language belongs to Tibeto-Burman family. Limbu language is one of the major spoken and written languages of Sino-Tibetan language family [...] (Subba, 31). On the other hand, Dr. Rajesh Gautam /Ashoke K. Thapa Magar add saying that the language of the Limbu is under the Austro-Asiatic linguistic group, and again under the grand Sino-Tibetan heading, it is placed in the Himalayan group of Tibeto-Burman eastern pronominalised dialects. This Limbu language is called *Yakthumba pan* in Limbu community. According to J. R. Subba Limbu language as:

Limboo is one of the official language out of the eleven languages recognized by the Government of Sikkim on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1981. It is widely spoken by about two lakh people of India mostly in the state of Sikkim, hill areas of west Bengal, Assam and other North-Eastern states. About six lakh Limboo people speak this language in the world scattered throughout India, Nepal, Bhutan, Honkong, Singapore, Myanmar, Brunoi, Canada, UK and other parts of the world. (1)

Limbus are rich in language that they have advanced language as well as script (Sirijonga Lipi). They are developing their language in academic field as well as in media. In most of the part of eastern Nepal and Sikkim, Limbu language is spoken and it is recognized as official language in Sikkim state of India. In Nepal, basically the Limbu language is spoken in the eastern area of Nepal like Panchthar, Taplejung, Ilam, Shanknuwashava, Terthum, Dhankuta, Jhapa, Morang and Sunsari. The Limbu language is divided mainly in four dialects. They are such as- Panthre dialect, Chhatthare dialect, Taplejunge dialect and Phedape dialect. Though, there is the division in Limbu language, they can communicate with each other well. Among the

Limbu dialects, the Panthare dialect is dominantly used in Limbu communities. Even this dialect has become common dialect for them. In literature and media the Panthare dialect has been used in Nepal. The Limbus have their own script for writing and the script is *Kirat Sirijonga script*. This *Sirijonga* script had been almost disappeared for eight hundred years and it has been brought into practice again by Te-Ongsi Sirijonga Thebe of Tellok Sinam. But he was fled to Sikkim where he was put to death cruelly by the Lamas of Sikkim in charge of educating people in Limbu language and script in Nepal.

After the rise of democracy in 2046 B.S. in Nepal, the Limbu language and *Kirat Sirijonga* script have been developing day by day. Nowadays many books have been written and published in this language, newspapers and Media programs are publishing and broadcasting in Limbu language. According to B.K.Wanemfago, the Limbu language is:

It is said that Geographical terrains and inaccessible areas have affected the language in its evolution, yet this language is spoken throughout in a uniform manner by all Limboos. They do not find any problem in understanding each other. This is a unique feature in the language as it has remained common to all unlike in other communities of Mongolian origin. (10)

To develop the Limbu language and *Kirat Sirijonga* script there are many NGOs and INGOs, among them Kirat Yakthung Chumlung is working in the field present. Further to develop it there is establishing academic institutions day by day. In the context of Sikkim, Limbu language is one of the official language out of the eleven languages and this language has been subject in curriculum for Master degree level.

Though, the Limbu language is developing day by day through out the academic level in Nepal, too.

The extended area from the east of Arun river to the eastern border of Mechi river in the east, and border of Tibet in the north to Jhapa, Sunsari and Morang in the south is called Limbuwan. It is also called Pallo-Kirat or Far-Kirat. The Limbuwan involves Terhathum, Sankhuwasabha, Dhankuta, Morang and Sunsari in Koshi zone and Taplejung, Panthar, Ilam and Jhapa in Mechi zone or nine district of eastern Nepal. The name Limbuwan was kept after the victory upon local eight kings (*Apungi Hangs*) by the groups of ten chiefs and other common people with the help of bow and arrows. The Limbu term *Li* means *bow*, *Abu* means *hit* and *Wan* indicates to name or in Limbu language, the conquered country.

There is also another episode regarding the name Limbuwan that the Janapudas west of Singalila range, which was liberated from Lhasa Mong's rule by local people with their weapons- arrows and bows (*Li*) began to be known as Limbuwan. The writer Dr. Chaitanya Subba says that "the groups of ten chiefs were called Limbus of Arches and the land which they won with the help of *Li* or *bow* and arrows were called Limbuwan" (22). For Imansingh Chemjong, Limbuwan is:

They fined the northern boundary in Tibet; the southern boundary in the Indian plain at Jalal Garh near Purnea; the eastern boundary at river Teesta and the western boundary at river Dudkoshi. They further held a meaning at the holy place of *Ambe Pojoma*, discussed, consulted and decided to name the Kirat land by name of, 'Limbuwan'. (51-52)

Limbuwan is diverse as in geography and terrains as it is in cultural tradition. Eden Vansittart states about the territory of Limbuwan in his book '*The Gurkhas*' as "[...] the country of the Limbus, lies between the river Arun on the west, and the

Singalela ridge on the east” (217). The Limbus have an area traditionally their own called *pallo-Kirat*, *Far Kirat* or even more commonly called just Limbuwan the Land of the Limbus (Bista, 40). In ‘*Nepal and the Gurkhas*’, the writer Eden Vansittart again tells about the Limbuwan as “The sized the country as their own and fixed its boundary: on the north Tibet, on the south the plains, on the west the Arun, and on the east the Mechi” (101).

Further about the territory of Limbuwan, Chaitanya Subba states in his ‘*The Culture and Religion of Limbus*’ as:

Historically known as “Limbuwan” this area lies between the Arun river in the west, the border with Sikkim and west Bengal of India in the east, the northern part of the plains of Morang, Sunsari and Jhapa in the south and the border with Tibet, China in the north, almost covering area of 11,655 sq. Kilometers. (1)

Before the unification of Prithivinarayan Shah Limbuwan was ruled in federal system. They worked as rules and regulation of their country and they respected their leaders. They believed each other and worked in co-operatively in community. The Limbuwan was really the homeland of Limbus before attaching with the Gorkha. Now a days many tribes have settled here but we find the majority of Limbus with their own typical and beautiful cultural system.

The lack of support from the government the customs, cultures and religion can not well developed among the Limbu community, though they are living with their own beautiful culture by emerging cultures themselves. We can find that the Limbus have own cultures, language and others. They have been leading their lives as their own cultural system as well as they communicate their feelings, emotions,

thoughts and so on; in on Limbu language. We can say that the Limbuwan is really rich in culture, customs, language, literature and religion.

The culture is an ornament and property of the Limbus. Limbus have their own distinct customs, tradition and the festivals that make them typical from others as well as they are leading their distinct way of life according to the culture. The Limbus observe traditionally handed down divergent forms of culture from birth rite to death. The cultural performance is the unique feature of Limbu oral text. They also have a long-standing tradition of reciting *Mundhum* and variant forms of other oral texts. They observe and perform rituals and ceremonies in their own typical and distinctive ways. Chaitanya Subba, in his *The Culture & Religion of Limbus* states about the origin of the Limbu culture as:

*Mundhum* and other sources reveal that Sawa Yethang (great eight leaders), the progenitors of Susuwa Lilim Yakthunghang or Limbus, were the forces of certain rules, rites and ritual and a moral life begins with them. It is believed that Yetchham Thim, the basic rites, were evolved and practiced by Sawa Yethang with the help of erudite *Phedangmas*, *Sambas* and *Yabas* and these practices were unceasingly followed by their successive generations. (41)

Indeed, the Limbus have a dynamic culture, custom, religion and tradition, which they observe and perform as in different names. They have typical culture in birth and death rites and others like marriage, *Yalang* and *Palam* (Dhannach), *Sapokchomen*, *Kelang* (Dholnach) *Chokphung*, *Chasok-Thisok*, *Samyok Lung* and so on; all these are related with their holly text *Mundhum*. Basically, in the culture of Limbus the priests (*Phedangmas*, *Yebas* and *Sambas*) play a pivotal role. Almost all cultural performances and the concerned oral-poetic narratives are normally centered

on them. It seems that there are some similarities between Limbus and Rais in their culture, language and living styles. According to Bista, “Limbu religion is very closely allied to the Rai religion in that it has a number of local deities of mountains and rivers to worship” (45). Limbus are the worshippers of the nature. Even they believe that they are related with the nature. They called *Lumbongba* and *Khambongba sa* (the son/daughter of land) themselves and their holy text *Mundhum* is related with nature itself.

The Limbus believe that the beautiful world was created by the God spirit, which is believed to be the supreme, most powerful and invisible spirit of knowledge and wisdom. The supreme most powerful and invisible spirit is called *Ningwaphuma* in *Mundhum*, the Limbu text. The leader has made rules for marriage, arbitration, purification and religion. The worship of God, the rules of purification on child birth and death are mentioned in the *Lepmuhang Mundhum*. (Chemjong, 19) These all cultures or rituals are performed basically according to context and situation relating with the Limbu text *Mundhum*. They have so many gods and worship them as a context and situation. *Yuma* and *Theba* are the household gods for Limbus. The Limbus have their own festivals like *Chasok Tangnam*, *Balihang Tangnam* and others in these occasions they share communal harmony, blessing to each other in the Limbu society.

Among the cultures *Yalang* (Dhan Nach) and *Kelang* (*Chyabrun*g Nach) are quite popular in Limbu community. The writer Rajesh Gautam and Asoke K. Thapa Magar describe about *Yalang* and *Palam* that “the Dhan Nach (*Yalang and Palam*) is a famous dance among the Limbu people and is called *Yarakma or Yalangma*. This dance is composed of a long line of girls and boys holding hand and placed alternately” (13). *Kelang* is also performed in the different occasion of the context like

marriage ceremony, feast and festivals and so on. On the other hand the Limbus have distinct and typical death rites, usually they burry the dead body in a common burial ground. In this case, Eden Vansittart says that “the body is laid out at full length and then carried to the spot chosen as a grave (and) *Phedangma* is given one rupee with which he is supposed to purchase the grave from the spirits of the place” (105).

Thus, the performance of culture involves a set of ideas, understanding, reference of oral-art in own typical tradition, method, diction, versification and melody of singing and reciting. In this sense, Limbu socio-cultural observance and its performance have been extended in a correlative system with the oral texts. Hence, they reflect the sense of cultural background in the realm of Limbu literature.

### **The Death Rite *Khauma* as a Ritual Performance**

The death and birth both are the universal rules of nature. The *Mundhum*, a holy text of Limbus has a tremendous influence on the belief system of birth and death rites. A number of stories and episodes are available in *Mundhum* Philosophy to strengthen the belief system, on life and death, rebirth and incarnation. The death rite of Limbus is related with the cultural performance and performance plays vital role to make it typical and distinct rite from others (death rites). Performance and its intrinsic value in divergent social and cultural context is a leading factor in constituting the oral text. Performance involves certain socio-cultural contexts, time and situation. The death rite *Khauma* is final rite of death ceremonies and all the relatives and participants of the funeral processions are invited in this ceremony. J.R. Subba explains about *Khauma* rite as: “*Khauma* is the final rite of death ceremonies. It should be performed within a year. For *Khauma* ceremony, all the relatives and participants of the funeral processions are invited” (485). The *Khauma* ceremony is performed in any odd day or odd month of a year from the day of the burial. Since,

some amount of money and arrangements are required for this ceremony, it is generally done in between the dry months of November to February. Further, Dr. Rajesh Gautam and Ashoke K. Thapa Magar describe about the *Khauma* as:

Death pollution is observed for a period of 4 days for a man and 3 days for a woman. During this period salt and oils are abstained from. On the final day of death pollution there is compulsorily a feast of meat, alcohol etc. known as *Samdahkhung* and all those who had attended the funeral are invited for this feast where they are all seated parallelly and facing the group which has been under observance of the pollution.

(10)

After the death of person, polluted family and relatives have to perform a ceremony as mentioned in Limbus' text *Mundhum*. Iman Singh Chemjong says in the book '*History and Culture of Kirat People*' that "the mourning should be observed for four days for men and three days for women [...] members of the house of deceased person should not take salt, oil, ginger and chilly within the mourning period" (28). In the ceremony time all the family and relatives of deceased person, *Phedangma*, *Mundhumian* experts, *Tumyanghang*, *Tumyanghangma* and others present in west side from the very house.

They sit in-group and *Phedangma* begins to enchant *Mundhum* as: Since, everybody present here agreed and gave consent through a dry stick, I most say that *La Re Kusa La Re Teyru Nam Re Kusa Nam Re Teyru* (Moon's children are taken by moon, sun's children are taken by sun), is not so? The *Tumyanghang* and others present agree this by saying *Teyruro, Teyruro*. (Taken away, Taken away). In this way, *Phedangma* (priest) enchants the *Mundhum* and at last he says that from this day, his or her soul is separated from those of us living in the world. And the response

is- Yes, he/ she is separated. Since, the ceremony of *Khauma* day, the Limbus believe that the family and relatives of deceased person get ride up from death pollution. They build the stone monument in the grave of dead body. For the grave in Limbu community, they erect a stone monument for the body, about five feet long and three feet wide at the bottom with four tiers for a male or three tiers for a female (Bista, 46).

Thus, the Limbus' *Khauma* performance is a dialogue in a dramatic environment between *Phedangma* and other participants. This dramatic performance takes place in the open air or in real life situation. The Limbus' dramatic performances indicate the death rite *Khauma* as performative.

The Limbu concept of life after death and the world of supernatural beings is typical its kind. They believe in a life after death and a place where the souls of the dead reside. The beliefs of stories and episodes death, rebirth and incarnation are available in *Mundhum* philosophy. They believe that the land of the dead is not a horrible place. It is not thought to be a place of eternal suffering for one's transgressions on earth. Suffering is a part of this life and those who suffer after death are the ones who refuse to leave this world, such as the spirits of people who died by violence, especially suicide or in childbirth. Indeed, that person who is killed by accident is somehow responsible for his/her own death in the same way that a victim of suicide is ultimately responsible for his/her own death. The death soul is called *Si-Sam*, in Limbu term.

In the contest of death rite of Limbu culture, when someone dies a normal or natural death, open floor in front the main door is cleaned to keep the body there usually facing westward. The body is laid out in full length and is washed with clean water. Old clothes are taken off and the dead body is shrouded with white plain cloth. A *Chedhap* (bamboo stretcher) is prepared to place the dead body. Gun is fired and

the dead body is taken away to the burial ground. *Mundhumian* expert or *Phedangma* purchases the ground for dead body with one rupee dolor to *Tageranungwafumang* or the creator of this earth. The old and young females sit around the dead body and sing a melancholy song by weeping. Dr. Rajesh Gautam and Asoke K. Thapa Magar write in the text '*Tribal Ethnography of Nepal*' that "the old and young females collect at the side of the corpse and sing a melancholy song weeping at intervals, and even wailing miserably during this period the coffin is prepared" (8). The *Khong* (coffin) is prepared and the dead body is put in coffin and kept the *Khong* or coffin in the pitfall. Then the *Phedangma* chants:

Since man has been cursed by God to die, today this man's/woman's husband/wife, brother/sister etc. (says the name) due to his/her illness was bedridden. While he was alive the lama and *Kaerung* were read for his/her health, *Jhankri* and *Bijuwa* did all they could for him, medicines of all kinds were used, but nothing happened. This person was destined to die and so he/she lived only up till today/yesterday etc. Thus today this man/woman (says the name) has left and gone.

(Gautam and Magar, 8-9)

In such a way the death if a person has to be publicly announced to the whole community and the response of those collected is *Pero Hou* or yes, he/she has gone. Again the *Phedangma* says, "The descendant of God is taken back to him and descendant of son or daughter is taken back by the sun, and the descendant of the moon is taken back by the moon" (10). Again the gathering repeat – yes, he/she has been taken. The *Phedangma* says:

The deceased has taken along with him/her all the household problems losses, dangers, and all the difficulties, and now we pray to the lord to

protect the remaining members of the household from such trouble.

(10-11)

The gathering responds with – yes keep them protected. The *Phedangma* continues:

We pray to the lord not to turn the soul of this deceased into a pig or a fowl instead either make him/her in someone's son/daughter and keep him/her in heaven. (11)

The response is, – yes, keep him in heaven.

Finally the Phedangma says:

In the beginning man was made of mud and ashes, but on account of the *Mulungsema* and the *Maelongna*, all mankind had to die and finally turn to dust (mud), so all those gathered here for this funeral should give a handful of mud each. (12)

Then he takes a handful of mud and throws it into the grave followed by the others there. Then the grave is filled in and a wall of stone is erected over it. The writer Dor Bdr. Bista says in his text '*People of Nepal*' that "Limbus bury their dead on a hill, in a common burial ground of the entire village or of several neighboring settlement. They erect a stone monument for body [...]" (46).

Mourning is observed for four days for men and three days for women and salt, oil, ginger and chilly are not taken by close relatives of the deceased person in the mourning period. They should eat simple food and fruits and should not use metal plates for this purpose. They should not talk to those whose mother tongues or ethnicity differs. The writer Chaitanya Subba writes in the text '*The Culture and Religious of Limbus*' that "they should not play, entertain, worship or bow down (salute) to senior relatives. They should not wear the sewn clothes and women should not comb their hair and wear ornaments and colorful garments" (221).

There are some differences in observing the mourning period from place to place. The writer Dor Bdr. Bista says:

[...] the mourning [is] observed for seven days by the nearest relatives, except at the death of small children and the mourning period was four days for a small boy and three days for a small girl. There are some differences in observing the mourning period between the Limbus of two sects *Niti* and *sammriti* (*smriiti*?), a culturaldivisoin imposed by the state during the Rana autocratic regime. *Sammritis* are more influenced by the Hindu custom and tradition whereas *Nitis* are less influenced and, often said, even allowed to eat beef. (qtd. in Subba 221)

In this ritual ginger, garlic, chilly and meat are fried and kept in a small leaf plates separately. All the plates of prepared spices and meat are placed on a winnowing bamboo tray and tow bottles of alcohol are also kept there. A folded white clothes of almost half meter is placed on the bamboo tray and coin of five rupees are kept on top of the clothe with the new clothes and caps of those who are observing the mourning ritual. The mourners have to face the west and *Phedangma* or priest starts his *Mundhum* facing towards them. Other *Tumyahang* (gentlemen), close relatives and villagers present on that occasion. *Phedangma* chants the *Mundhum*, addresses the gathering and close relatives for their consents and performs the ritual of purification. The *Phedangma* addresses and asks the assembly: "Listen gentlemen! Today, such and such person of our village is dead and gone from among us. Is this true or not?" (Chemjong, 29). The assembly should answer: yes, yes! He or she is dead and gone from among us. We know about his/her illness and we tried our best to cure him/ her. But, it was by the will of god *Ningwaphumang*, his/ her period of life is completed

and therefore he/she is dead and gone from among us. He/she has been separated from us forever (29).

The *Phedangma* says, has he/she been put into the lap of his/her forefathers in heaven or not? (29). The assembly response, yes, yes! He/ she has been accepted into the lap of his/her forefathers in heaven (29). The *Phedangma* says has he/she not faced with any kind of obstacles on his/her way to heaven by the evil spirits? (30).

The assembly: No, no! He/she has not faced with any obstacles of the evil spirits on the way to heaven. He /she was the creation of the *Ningwaphuma*. So he/she went to heaven or forefather's land directly (30). The *Phedangma* says that then he/she is dead and gone is no more among us. When s/he has been accepted by his/her forefather in heaven, then will you purify his/her living relatives and set them free from the boundaries of impurity? (30). The assembly response:

Yes, yes! We will purify them. We will make them free from the boundaries of impurity. From today onwards, his/her living relatives are all pure. From today, they are free to talk, walk, to eat everything as usual. They are free to mix around with all. Their friends and relatives give them best wishes. Let God *Ningwaphuma* save them from many sorts of distress and calamities in future. (30)

After then, at last *Phedangma* again says: from today onwards, you are free from all kinds of impurities. All the gentleman who have assembled here today made you free and pure as they are. Now you can take salt, oil, ginger, chilly as usual. You are free to talk, move and work as usual (30-31). *Phedangma* asked them to bow down before all the *Tumyahan* (gentleman) present that assembly. The purified persons bow down before the *Phedangma* and all the people of assembly. The polluted persons are purified and allowed to attain in celebration like singing or

dancing or rejoicing in any function. The writer Imanshing Chemjog says in his book '*History and Culture of Kirat People*' about dead pollution as "[...] they were in great trouble and request the gentlemen present to kindly purify them from that day onwards so that they would be free to move or work or eat or drink as usual" (29). The writer Prakash Phombo says that "since today, he/she is separated from living person and is sent to forefathers' land" (39). The Limbus perform *Tangsing Takma* or *Tangsing Tak* for wishing peace their ancestors' spirits in heaven. Dor Bdr. Bista states about *Tongsing* as:

*Tongsing* is technically the name of small bamboo basket filled with earth where small sticks are stuck upright in the middle representing the spirits of deceased persons and living ones and is placed at the bottom of about twelve feet bamboo pole stuck in the central of the courtyard. (qtd. in Subba 156)

*Tongsing* literal meaning is an act of cooperation, coming together, come in agreement of condition, becoming correct or fitting. Hence, the *Mundhum* is full of various myths, legends narratives and oracles, which guide the social, ethical and religious concepts and shape the attitude and behavior of Limbus. Thus, there can be found the philosophy of life as well as death and relation between living person and dead person after the performance of *Khauma* in the Limbu text, *Mundhum*. Limbus have tremendous beliefs that their dead relatives will reach in beautiful, peaceful and immortal place where *Ningwaphumang* and forefathers live.

The Limbus have tremendous influence of the belief system of death and death rites. In Limbu community, it has eight types of death on the basis of causes of death and occurrence of death in different life stages of the individual. Indeed, there seems to be an idea that people who are killed by accident are responsible for their own

deaths in the same way that a victim of suicide is ultimately responsible for his own death. The creator god *Tagera Ningwaphuma* has provided the Limbu community with *Mundhumian* expert priests. *Phedangma*, *Samba*, *Yeba*, *Yema* etc. to protect the living against supernatural forces through offerings to gods and goddesses and avoid the unnatural death. Hence, there are the types of death recognized in the Limbu community:

While a child dies just after his or her birth or dies before *Yangdangphongma* (child naming) ceremony, the death is called *Lamdoba*. The household family, few *Tumyahan* and *Phedangma* assemble and the dead body is taken out for burial by his or her father or uncle or grandfather without doing any death ritual. While burying, the head of the dead body is placed towards the west. On the burial a flat stone is placed. After that the *Phedangma* prepares an effigy of the child, puts it in a cradle, collects the soul of the child and puts in it. Thereafter the effigy is left on the graveyard of the child by *Phedangma*. He stops the soul of the child over there and returns. No pollution is observed in the family in this case. Dor Bahadur Bista says that "mourning is observed for seven days by the nearest relatives, except after the death of small children" (46).

When a child dies after the ceremony of *Yangdangphongma* (child naming) but before the appearance of milk teeth. All the clothes of dead child are taken out, and the body is wrapped with white cloth. The dead body is taken out by the father or by his uncle, and the house is cleaned with clean mud. The body is kept in the burial facing westward and materials, clothes are kept there. The people returning from the burial are purified with *Namuyoba* (a kind of plant) and water. Pollution is not observed in this case.

When death of a child occurs after the appearance of his/her milk teeth but before shedding of his / her milk teeth is called *Tanglinghangsa's* death. The dead body is buried by the family members, *Tumyahang* and the *Phedangma*. The body is taken out by two persons from the house and the house is cleaned with clean mud and water. Just like the *Susuna*, burial rituals are also not performed at the burial place. The people returning from burial are purified with *Namyoba* (a kind of plant) and water. Pollution period is observed up to the next morning. The priest or *Phedangma* purifies the family members in the morning through *Mundhum*.

When a person commits suicide, the death is termed as *Sogha*. In such a case, the deceased body's clothes are not removed; the body is tied in a bamboo stretcher or *Chedhap* and directly carried to the burial place or nearby riverside. The burial rituals are not observed, the *Yeba or Yema* puts *Mangenna, Yang, Sumbrok, Tikhanam, Yang- Mundri, Seseprung, Menchemnaphung*, etc. on the body. After then, the dead body is burn and the *Chedhap* (a bamboo stretcher) should be cut into pieces. The *Yeba or Yema* through *Mundhum* gives warning to the soul of the deceased not to come out from his or her grave and trouble the people. The funeral procession returning from the burial are purified and cleaned by *Sidingyukmey* (a kind of thorny plant) and water before they reach to the deceased's house.

When death occurs due to the attack or influence of evil spirits such as childbirth, death due to accident, or death cause of any violence, the death is called *Sugut*. The dead body might be brought to the house. The dead body's clothes are not changed. The *Chedhap* is covered with white cloth and burial rituals are not observed. Other burial observations are done same as *sogha* death. If the death occurred outside the house, there is no need of house purification. *Phedangma* purifies the house, in the case of such death occurred inside the house. The soul of such death is not received

by the forefathers. They become the evil spirits and wander around giving trouble to the people. The evil spirits are known as *Sogha*, *Sugut* or *Susik*. Hence, in *Tongsing*, *Yeba* or *Yema* enchants *Mundhum* to take them away to the land of forefathers.

The death occurs in the war, and then the death is called *Nahang*. The clothes of the dead body are not altered; the body is covered with white cotton cloth and put in the box. In the case that the event happened far from the house then the member of the family spread *Samtakhong*, and start pollution from that day. In course of death occurred near his house, the dead body is brought to his house. Thereafter, some thing is done as above. The body should not be kept inside the house. The dead body is buried and *Phedangma* enchants the *Mundhum* to drive the soul of deceased person away to the land of forefathers. Pollution is observed four days for male and three days for female by the family members of deceased person.

If the servant dies, such death is called *Yok's* death. The head of the dead body is placed towards the south in the house. The *Chedhap* is prepared and the dead body is wrapped with white cotton cloth. But, the head of the deceased's body is placed towards east in the burial. If the dead person has the son and daughter of family then the pollution is observed four days for male and three days for female. Other rituals are not usually performed as *Kuso Lamba* death.

If the death occurs in a natural way, such death is called *Kuso Lamba*. The clothes of the dead body are removed and replaced with the cotton clothes and face is kept open. After the death the hands and legs are straighten; the palms are opened and turned towards the front. The mouth, eyes and nose are cleaned with cotton. The dead body should not be allowed to touch by the people other than the family members and the members of Limbu community. A responsible family member should look after the dead body.

The dead body should be placed on east-ward direction. On a brass plate, some rice (uncooked), a *Diyo*, a *Lohota* with water and *Namyoba* and *Mikchiri* flower may be placed at the head-side of the dead body. *Chedhap* is prepared and the *Chedhap* is covered with white cloth thereafter the dead body should be kept there. The piece of cloth is stretched on two bamboo splits crossed and tied to form a *Namthepa*. The gun is fired and the dead body is taken away to the graveyard *Nagra* is beaten and *Tumyanghang* leads the mourners by walking front carrying *Khukuri* (*Feja*). Dr. Rajesh Gautam and Asoke K. Thapa Magar say, “the procession is led by the *Phedangma* carrying a naked *Khukuri*, chanting and simultaneously shouting and jumping” (8).

After the reaching on the graveyard, the *Phedangma* begins to purchase with one rupee dollar, the land for dead body with *Ningwaphumang* by enchanting the *Mundhum*. The *Khong* (coffin) is prepared by other procession and other young persons dig the ground for the dead body. Before putting the dead body inside the pitfall, the body is turned round the grave and the body is to be begun to burry. When the grave is half filled, two long cotton strings with *Sapsing* are stretched one at head-side and other at leg-side vertically inside the grave. The grave is again filled with the soil, and then these strings are pulled out by two men facing out from inside the grave and jumping out at a time saying *Lanthemoo* (come out) along with the *Phedangma*'s *Mundhum*. After then all procession return back to the house and before reaching the house all procession are cleaned by *Namyoba*, clean water and touched the fire.

The pollution is observed four days for male and three days four female. During the period of pollution the family and close relatives are not allowed to eat oil, chilly, salt, ginger, garlic and meat, until the observing of *Yuma Chhama* and *Khauma* rituals by the *Phedangma* and *Tumyahang*. Thus, the Limbus follow the cultures,

customs and rituals as their holy text Mundhum has prescribed. Phedangma, Yeba, Yema, Samba and Tumyahang play pivotal role in the performance and observation of Limbus cultures.

Thus, long tradition with unique customs and lifestyles, typical values and belief system, mythology, folklore and various elements of oral literature evince that Limbus have distinctive cultural heritage. The spiritual concept, philosophical explanation, traditional system and living way of life are embodied in Mundhum a text. Phedangma, Yema, Yeba, Samba, Tumyahang and Tumyahangma play important roles in the performance of Limbus cultures. They perform all cultural performance as mentioned in Mundhum. Limbus follow their cultural performance according to Phedangma or Samba.

## **II. Nation, Nationalism and Communal Culture**

The term *nation* as defined by *Oxford English Dictionary* is “a community of people or peoples living in a defined territory and organized under a single government.” In the view of this definition, nation means territory controlled by a single government and inhabited by a distinct population with a common culture that shapes the identity of its citizens. In this definition, the term nation includes government, using government and nation as complement to each other.

In modern time, the concept of nation and nation-state has heralded, probably the highest level of conflicting ideas and definitions. Many critics opine that the traditional sense of definition of nation has to be redefined as the previous explanation was centered on the bourgeoisie's periphery. In this context, one of the strongest opinions is of Bill Ashcroft, who writes, "Nation is a bourgeoisie concept" (118). Ashcroft's view become applicable as most modern nations have dismantled or degraded the voice and culture of the down-trodden classes of people into their so-called national culture and its wave of nationalism.

Nationalism in modern history is a movement in which the nation-state is regarded as paramount for the realization of social, economic, and cultural aspirations of a people. Nationalism is characterized principally by a feeling of community among a people, based on common descent, language, and religion. On the history of nationalism, Ashcroft writes,

During the eighteenth century, nationalism emerged as a distinctive movement. Prior to that, states usually were based on religious or dynastic ties; citizens owed loyalty to their church or ruling family.

Concerned with clan, tribe, village, or province, people rarely extended their interests nationwide. (121)

Historically, the tendency toward nationalism was fostered by various technological, cultural, political, and economic advances. Improvement in communications extended the knowledge of people beyond their village or province. The spread of education in vernacular tongues to the lower-income groups gave them the feeling of participation in a common cultural heritage. Through education, people learned of their common background and tradition and began to identify themselves with the historical continuity of the nation. The introduction of national constitutions and the struggle for political rights gave peoples the sense of helping to determine their fate as a nation and of sharing responsibility for the future well-being of that nation. At the same time the growth of trade and industry laid the basis for economic units larger than the traditional cities or provinces. Nationalism is a theory of political legitimacy, which requires that ethnic boundaries should not cut across political ones. It follows that a territorial political unit can only become ethnically homogenous.

Most modern nations have developed gradually on the basis of common ties of descent, religion, and language. Many exceptions exist, among them Switzerland, the United States, Israel, and India. Switzerland is a nation in which no common religion or language was ever established. The Swiss include many adherents to both the Roman Catholic and Protestant religions; they have no linguistic unity, for German, French, and Italian are spoken in distinct regions of the country. Swiss nationalism was fostered primarily by isolation in a mountain region, the determination to maintain political independence, and rivalry among imperial powers, which kept each from aggression against Switzerland. According to Benedict Anderson, "nationalism is imagined as a community, because regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nationalism is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (125).

The United States was formed largely by British immigrants with disparate religious ties and was developed to a great extent by other immigrants having little in common except a yearning for religious, economic, and political freedom. American nationalism was based primarily on a dedication to the concept of individual liberty and representative government derived from British traditions. What was considered in Great Britain the birthright of Britons became in the U.S., under the influence of 18th-century Enlightenment, the natural right of every person. The Declaration of Independence marked the consummation of this libertarian ethos.

Israel was formed almost entirely from the immigration of diverse national groups of Jews who shared a common ideal based on religious nationalism. The traditional aspirations of Jews for a national revival in Palestine had remained unfulfilled for almost 2000 years. As a result of genocide perpetrated by the National Socialist rulers of Germany before and during World War II, Jewish national aspirations suddenly achieved dynamic force. More than a million refugees from many different countries immigrated to Palestine. They learned Hebrew, the re-created national language, and established a new state with Judaism as the state religion. Among world Jewry, however, the Jews of Israel are a minority; most Jews continue to live as minority religious groups in their native countries.

India is a nation in which the Hindu religion served as the cohesive traditional element in uniting peoples of various races, religions, and languages. India achieved national unity through the influence of Western ideas, notably those of British origin, and in struggle against British rule.

The beginnings of modern nationalism may be traced back to the disintegration, at the end of the Middle Ages of the social order in Europe and of the cultural unity of the various European states. The cultural life of Europe was based on

a common inheritance of ideas and attitudes transmitted in the West through Latin, the language of the educated classes. All Western Europeans adhered to a common religion, Catholic Christianity. The breakup of feudalism, the prevailing social and economic system, was accompanied by the development of larger communities, wider social interrelations, and dynasties that fostered feelings of nationality in order to win support for their rule. National feeling was strengthened in various countries during the Reformation, when the adoption of either Catholicism or Protestantism as a national religion became an added force for national cohesion.

History of nationalism in Europe has its root in the French Revolution. National feeling in France until then was centered in the praise of the King. As a result of the revolution, loyalty to the king was replaced by loyalty to the *patrie* meaning 'fatherland'; however which is now replaced by 'motherland'. The rise of France from monarchy to republic in 1789 became the turning point in Europe for the rise of nationalism. According to John Mcleod, "nationalism can refer to an ideology, a sentiment, a form of culture, or a social movement that focuses on the nation" (71).

The rise of nationalism coincided generally with the spread of the Industrial Revolution in England, which promoted national economic development, the growth of a middle class, and popular demand for representative government. National literatures arose to express common traditions and the common spirit of each people. New emphasis was given to nationalist symbols of all kinds; for example, new holidays were introduced to commemorate various events in national history.

National culture is associated with nationalism. However, mere association with nationalism is not sufficient to define the term. A noted critic on Nation and Nationalism, Frantz Fanon defines the term, as: "a national culture is the whole body of efforts made by a people in the sphere of thought to describe, justify and praise the

action through which that people has created itself and itself in existence” (117). This national culture was supposed to address the problems of the entire caste, creed and gender of people residing within the nation, but, has dramatically failed in most cases.

However, accurate concept of nationalism has been notoriously difficult to define, as it is practically impossible to infer all vast forms and types of nationalism prevailing in the various parts of the world. As Benedict Anderson points out:

It would be more exact to say that nationalism has proved an uncomfortable anomaly, precisely for the reason that has been largely elided, rather than confronted. The proletariat of respective nations has to settle matters with its won bourgeoisie before coming to a particular explanation of what exactly is nationalism? (123)

Nationalism is in a constant state of conflict with the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, which has degraded the concept of nationalism itself.

In the most recent periods, a flurry of theoretical activity has made the issue of national culture, one of the most debated topics of contemporary theory. However, the works of Franz Fanon, Homi Bhabha and Timothy Brennan have illustrated the importance of this attempt at retheorizing nationalism. As Brennan notes, “The rising number of studies on nationalism in the past three decades reflects its lingering, almost atmospheric insistence in our thinking” (23). We could also say that the interest in nationalism throughout the world reflects the growing disillusionment in postmodern world with nationalism and its excesses. Post colonial societies are increasingly way, therefore, of that neo-universalistic inter-nationalism which subsumes them within mono centric of European dominated networks of politics and culture. The fiction of national essence is rejected for the more refractory and

syncretism complexes of ordinary experience as a way of approaching literary production.

Although nation, like race, has only the most tenuous theoretical purchase, in political practice it has continued to be what Anderson describes as “the most universally legitimate value in political life of our time” (Anderson 1983: 12). While nationalism operated as a general force of resistance in earlier times in post-colonial societies, a perception of its hegemonic and mono logic status is growing. From the point of view of literary theory, nationalism is of special interest since its rise, as Brennan and Bhabha note, “it is coterminous with the rise of the most dominant modern literary form, at least in European and European influenced cultures – that of the novel. These ties between literature and nation evoke a sense of the fictive quality of the political concept itself” (Brennan 27). In this sense, the story of the nation and the narrative form of the modern novel inform each other in a complex reflexive way.

### **Communal Culture and Identity**

In simple parlance, communal is related to community, and in turn, the culture of these communal people is communal culture. People living and sharing common understanding and way of living, within a social group, with distinct language, norms and ethics and tradition makes the communal culture. Communal societies have long existed as reactions against the prevailing social order, meaning in opposition to the so-called nation culture. In the past they were established by religious, political, social and economic reformers. Religious communal groups have the longest and most successful history.

During the middle ages, the Roman Catholic Church had established monasteries all over Europe. Some monastic orders are still in existence today. Persecution of certain sects during the Protestant Reformation provoked a wave of

communal movements; some of these groups migrated to America, where a few, such as the Shakers, still survive, although in very small numbers.

Many secular communal groups were formed in the early 1800s, often as a response to the growing industrialization of society. The greatest number arose in England, the most industrialized nation of the time. Most of these early socialist communes were short-lived.

Many communal movements have emerged in the United States, where accessible land and political freedom have encouraged social experiments. Two early religious communes – the Oneida Community and the Amana Society, a sect that is now an agricultural cooperative in Iowa – became so prosperous that they were reorganized as business firms. Political and economic communes such as New Harmony flourished in the three decades before the American Civil War (1861-1865) and at the end of the 19th century.

A resurgence of communal movements occurred in Western Europe and the United States during the 1960s. Members of these new communes often felt alienated from their societies and stifled by its constraints. An example of this later movement is Twin Oaks, near Louisa, Virginia, based on the principles in the American psychologist B. F. Skinner's book *Walden Two* (1948). Religious communes continue to be founded, including the Bruderhof (Society of Brothers), first organized in the United States in 1953; and the People's Temple, which ended in mass suicide in Jonestown, Guyana, in November 1978.

Except in the United States and Europe, some major recent communal movements are sponsored or supported by governments. Jews went to Palestine to live early in the 20th century; the first kibbutz was established in 1909. Before the government introduced a system to gradually abolish communes in 1979, an estimated

four of every five citizens of China lived in rural communes. Communal movements on a smaller scale are found worldwide.

In the context of Nepal, there has no delimitation on the formation of communal groups. However, it will be justified that in ancient Nepal, there was communal rules, during the different era. The Mahispal, the Gopalas, the Kirats, the Mallas, and the Shahs rules that dominated Nepal during different time frame were communal groups of people, who came to power and dominated the rule through the hegemony of their culture and custom.

### **Tension between National and Communal Culture**

It is very obvious, as Michael Foucault says, “Power is Truth.” It is truly applicable in the sense of imposing culture in various nations. During the Mallas reign, their culture and tradition flourished and other ethnicities civilization was subsided. Similarly, the Aryan culture flourished in Nepal, after the unification of Nepal by Prithvi Narayan Shah. Fanon, discussing the pitfalls of the national culture and how it sinks ethnic customs and tradition writes:

The danger of a national bourgeoisie using nationalism to maintain its own power demonstrates one of the principle dangers of nationalism – that it frequently takes over the hegemonic control of the imperial power, thus replicating the conditions it rises up to combat. It develops a function of this control, a monocular and sometimes xenophobic view of identity and a coercive view of national commitment. (117)

As such, the concept of national culture has been limited to certain groups of people. However, a successful government tries to uplift the fact remains that it is almost impossible to address the culture of all caste and creed of people by however, developed state, it might be. In words of Fanon, “the tension between the so-called

national and ethnic culture, is but a process” because, “the vice situation of the culture would have been, again the domination of the present day national culture” (121).

National culture, instead of being the all embracing crystallization of the inner most hopes of the people, instead of being the immediate and most obvious result of the mobilization of the people, will be in any case only an empty shell, a crude and fragile travesty of what it might have been. The faults that we find in it are quite sufficient explanation of the facility with which, when dealing with young and independent nations, the nation is passed over for the race, and the tribe is preferred to the state. These are cracks in the edifice which show the process of retrogression that is so harmful and prejudicial to national effort and national unity. We shall see that action.

This traditional weakness, which is almost congenital to the national consciousness of underdeveloped countries, is not solely the result of the multi nation of the colonized people by the colonial regime. It is also the result of the intellectual laziness of the national middle class, of its spiritual penury, and of the profoundly cosmopolitan mold that its mind is set in.

As, such the national middle class, that takes over power at the end of the colonial regime is an underdeveloped middle class. It has practically no economic power, and in any case, it is in no way commensurate with the bourgeoisie of the mother country which it hopes to replace. In its narcissism, the national middle class is easily convinced that it can advantageously replace the middle class of the mother country. But that same independence which literally drives it into a corner will give rise within its ranks to catastrophic reactions, and will oblige it to send out frenzied appeals for help to the former mother country. The university and merchant classes which make up the most enlightened section of the new state are in fact characterized

by the smallness of their number and their being concentrated in the capital, and the type of activities in which they are engaged: business, agriculture, and the liberal professions.

Neither financiers nor industrial magnates are to be found within this national middle class. The national bourgeoisie of underdeveloped countries is not engaged in production, nor in invention, nor building, nor labor; is it completely canalized into activities of the intermediary type. Its innermost vocation seems to be keeping in running and to be part of the racket. The psychology of the national bourgeoisie is that of the businessman, not that of a captain of industry; and it is only too true that the greed of the settlers and the system of embargoes set up by the colonialism have hardly left them any other choice, but to patch up with the colonizer's culture. As Partha Chatterjee quotes:

Thus, historically the political community of the nation superseded the preceding the cultural system of indigenous groups and people. In the process of conquering of the minority's tradition and culture, there occurred a fundamental change in modes of apprehending the world, which more than anything else made it possible to think on the crisis of nation and nationalism. (126)

The mentality of the national bourgeoisie is such that they find their identity in crushing the ethnic recognition. They have conquered the communal identity in the process of establishing their own, but ultimately has invited national and international crisis.

Thus, nation, nationalism and cultural identity in the present world are overwhelming concepts that has added to new form of local and global strife. This

conflict probably has invited another form of emergence of nations with no particular form of national cultures based on a linguistic community.

### **III. Influence of Nationalist Culture in Limbu Death Rite *Khauma***

A long tradition with unique customs and lifestyles, typical values and belief system, mythology, folklore and various elements of oral literature evince the extensive and distinctive cultural heritage of the Limbus. The spiritual concept, philosophical explanations, eschatological deliberations or reflection and ethics governing social relationship embodied in *Mundhums* have profound impact on their life. Their cultural heritage still exhibits the distinctiveness in all its manifestations and their indigenous religious concepts find its expression in their living lore and rites of passage with distinct explanation of phenomenal as well as numeral world. With the unification of several small states in Nepal, the Shah Kings ruled constructing the imaginary national identity in order to establish and maintain control Hinduization for homogeneity worked to enforce artificial parameter and practices. That limited the rights of different group throughout the nation. The government began to despise and suppress indigenous culture and did not take interest to promote aboriginal cultures rather they were colonized internally. They were subjected to political, culture domination and economical exploitation found that their own culture acted as identity.

As mentioned in *Mundhum*, when a Limbu dies, the corpse is carried over to the burial grounds called *Lepung Daen*. Women also accompany the funeral procession but do not help in carrying the corpse. The procession is led by the *Phedangma* carrying a naked *Khukuri*, chanting and simultaneously shouting and jumping. In Hindu community, the funeral procession is led by priest blowing conch shell and corpse is carried by the family members and procession as well as in Buddhist society, the corpse is carried over the burial grounds drums, *Jhamta* and other cultural musical instruments are played in the funeral procession. These cultural funeral processions affect in the Limbu community. Nowadays, in some places, when

a Limbu dies, the corpse is carried over to the burial ground and conch shell is blown leading the procession as well as drums, *Jhampta*, *Damaru* are beaten along dancing. It shows that within Limbu community, they perform the funeral procession in different ways even they are compelled to follow the national cultural performance that the state itself focuses to the nationalist cultural performance. Amilcar Cabral says that "[. . .] capital impose new types of relationship on indigenous society, the structure of which become more complex, and social conflicts" (55). Generally, the state imposes its new ideology in the indigenous society and breaks the relationship of indigenous people on the other hand, aboriginal, cultural performance is restricted by the government for performance in the name of ideology, peace process and development and then complexity, social conflicts begin to appear in indigenous society.

According to *Mundhum*, the Limbu text, in natural death the corpse is buried on the burial ground in Limbu society. But if the death is in accident or event or unnatural then the corpse is cremated, not buried. Further, when a Limbu dies, gun is fired for information to the relatives and neighbours; thus, guns are fired to give information about the death, before the corpse is carried over to the burial grounds and before the corpse is buried in the grave. But in national or Hindu culture, the corpse is cremated instead of buried in the crematorium and the members of dead person cut their hairs besides female, take bathe and wear white clothes. This cremated cultural performance can be found in some Limbu community, too. In some places, Limbus carry the corpse over to the crematorium for cremation and male members of death family, shave their hairs take bath and wear white clothes like Hindu religion. Likewise, the government has prohibited to fire gun in any cultural performance so, its affect goes to the cultural performance of Limbu. Now, they don't

use gun in their cultural performance. "The indigenous society has a vertical structure; this defense of their cultural heritage is further strengthened by the colonial power's interest in protecting and backing the cultural influence of the ruling classes" (Amilcar, 57). Aboriginal cultures survive facing all these challenges and through the struggle it comes forth again for liberation. John Mcleod states that "the imagining of a sense of simultaneous national identity for often heterogeneous groups of people in the colonies always had to face several challenges" (76). Facing more challenges aboriginal groups struggle for national liberation and independence being conscious with the nation.

After the death of person, the pollution period should be observe four days for male and three days for female. As mentioned by Eden Vansittart, the period of mourning lasts, in the case of grown-up people, for seven days, and in the case of boys for four days and of girls for three days from (*The Gurkhas*, 224). Further, Bista states about the mourning period as, "mourning is observed for seven days by the nearest relatives except the death of small children" (46). In the context of Hindu's death ceremonial performance, after the death of person, they perform the death pollution twelfth or thirteenth days. Like that, in many places the Limbus have started observing pollution nine days for male and eight days for female as well as in same places Limbus perform all death ceremonial performance within ninth or eleventh days. According to Mudrooroo, all cultures and societies change and adapt, and it is in a dynamic and shifting environment of adaptation that the political claims of indigenous people are situated from (214). Willingly or unwillingly aboriginal people have to adopt dynamic and shifting environment and its effects goes to their cultural performance.

In the period of observing of mourning, the members of dead person should have simple items of food and fruits. Plates, pots and glass are used besides made up copper for this purpose. Salt, ginger, garlic oil, meat, chilly, eggs, pepper are prohibited to take mourning period. Even they should not talk to those whose mother tongues or ethnicity differs. They should not play, entertain, worship or bow down to senior relatives. In national or Hindu culture, members of the dead persons have to take simple items of food and fruits as well as leaves are used as plates and pots. They don't use of metal plates for this purpose. In this period, they wear white clothes and save their head, beard and moustache. In the same way, Limbus perform this observing period like cultural performance of Hindu. They also take simple food items in leaves instead of metal plates wearing white clothes and saving hair, beard and moustache.

Gradually, and smoothly, the state or government interferes upon the cultural performance of internal colonized people. "cultural imperialism is once more seen as an ideological property of the text itself. It is seen as inhering in the images of dazzling skyscrapers, expensive clothes and automobiles" (Tomlinson, 308). The government uses its ideologies as good property to the people making puzzle them. Further, Trinh Minhha says that "a geographical myth the centre/ margin binarism leads by logical extension to such absurdities as the idea that all people in colonies are marginalised" (213). Marginalized and colonized people are ruled in the name of new ideology or cultural system by the colonizers. About cultural imperialism Tomlinson says as:

Replacing breast- feeding by bottle feeding has had disastrous effects in many third world countries. An effective, adequate, and cheap method has been exchanged for an expensive, inadequate and

dangerous product [...]. Many illiterate mothers, unable to prepare the milk power correctly, have not only used it improperly but have also inadvertently transformed the baby food into a lethal product by using it in unhygienic conditions. (314)

Cultural imperialism always takes capitalism as its target and makes the colonized people as slaves. The government or colonizer creates the ambivalent performance by imposing different types of cultural performance upon the aboriginal cultures. The aboriginal cultural performance is obliged to accept the diversity as well as culturalization. Gradually, the indigenous people are diverting towards new cultural performance being far from their own cultural performance. Even the colonizers get advantages from the puzzled situation of colonized people to rule them as far as long:

The Limbus just buried the dead body on a hill, common burial around in the past. They put flat stone upon the grave to mark it, on the other hand the Buddhists bury the dead body on the ground and they erect a stone monument to mark the grave. Further, the grave is cemented and *Chautara* is built as well as trees are planted with it in the name of the dead person. Likewise, in these days most of the Limbus erect a stone monument for the dead body and the grave is cemented *Chautara* is built and trees are planted in the name of dead person as Buddhist burial culture. According to John Mcleod, the state gives some sense of the internal divisions and struggles between ethnic groups who feel that their interests are being threatened by others from (113). As far as possible the state creates the internal divisions between ethnic groups that make them struggle to each other and this situation gives more opportunities to impose the new ideology of state upon them.

In *Khaum* ceremony all the relatives and participants of the funeral processions are invited. Usually invites come with enough liquor things and

*Chummyang*. *Khauma* ceremony is performed to purify the death family from the pollution period. When the time occurs for the assembly, the invited guests, *Phedangma*, *Yeba*, *Yema*, *Tumyahang*, *Tumyahangma*, relatives and neighbours start assembling there. The assembly is usually done in western and at the lower side of the house. The invited guests are sited in rows on paddy straws and mats. People from a distance places or respectable once are sited in rows on paddy straws and mats. People from a distance places or respectable once are sited separately in the field. Likewise, the mourners are made to stay in the middle facing the west. A cut-off head of a male buffalo fried meat in two plates of leaves, a bottle of liquor, a pitcher of fermented grain, tow leave- plates filled with fried red pepper and salt, one meter of folded white cloth are placed on a bamboo tray for performance. In some place, for performane, *Tok* (rice), *thi- tongba* (local beer), yams, cigarette, biscuits, sweets, *rakshi*, rum, *Achars* (pickle), flowers, coconuts, ginger, garlic, oil are placed on the bamboo tray (*Nanglo*). After providing the necessary things for performance *phedangma* or *yeba*( the priest) begins to perform enchanting the *Mundhum* by standing and holding stick with left hand in the field of assembled.

On the other hand, the priest plays pivotal role to perform of cultural performance of Hindus. The priest reads Vedh, a holly text of Hindu that is in written form or text, in performance of pollution period. To purify the things as well as polluted family, simple things like *Rotee* (bread), *Chiura* (beaten rice), peals (*dal*), vegetarian are prepared. For the dead person, bread, beaten rice and vegetarian things are offerred and polluted family members save their hairs, beard and moustache. Further, they change their clothes and wear white new clothes. In these days, in some community of Limbus, they follow the cultural performance like Hindu. The priest reads the *Mundhum* written text and *rotteee*, beaten rice, variety of vegetarian things

are prepared and those things are offered to the dead person. The polluted family save their beard, moustache and hair like Hindu performance even they change white clothes. Further, in some places, they grant metal things, money, clothes and things to the priest to save from the sin. Thus, because of national influence and dynamism, the cultural performance of death rite Khauma is turning towards the diversity.

Nowadays, mixed culture begins to appear in the cultural performance of Limbus' death rite Khauma. In this way, nationalist culture and dynamism are influencing to cultural performance of death rite Khauma and it is being as hybrid cultural performance.

Although, the culture, literature, language, religion, rites and rituals are never beyond the influence of global, national and dynamism. These are the prevalent elements in society and in culture. So, traditional, historical and aboriginal identity of any cultural performance should be protected as the property and existence of very people but idle and ostensible expenditure of money and time must be avoided from the cultural performance. The cultural preservation is inevitable avoiding cultural absurdities and adhering the 'truth, goodness and beauty' of culture. Thus, the Limbus perform their cultural performance in different way adhering heterogeneous cultures. Diversity and complexity in culture of Limbu appeared after the influence of nationalist cultures.

### **Effect of Conflict and Civil War in Limbu Culture**

Generally, war, civil war, cold war and any wars disturb on the ritualistic performance in cultures of any community. Conflict, war and civil war take place in the name of politics, culture, religion or race. In the name of ruling, the government prohibits the cultural performance in the terrified environment. After the unification of Nepal by Prithivi Narayan Shah, national identities and ethnic cultures had been

marginalized until revolution of 1990s. They had been ruled and marginalized in the name of ruling, politics, culture, religion and race. But beginning of 1990s multi-party democratic system the voice of national identity is raising rapidly in present situation. Further, after the declaration of federal republican county by constitutional assembly, nationalism, ethnic identities are rapidly raising as the voice of Nepali citizens. This task has become one of the most important and contentious issues for Nepali society. Eli Lewien writes in *The Kathmandu Post*, the national daily newspaper that "[...] Nepali citizens began to define their own national identity. Since 1990, this task has become one of the most important and contentious issues facing Nepali society" (5). Nationalism and ethnicity are being great challenging issues for the country in current situation.

While conflict, war civil war begin in the country, the culture, rites and rituals are itself affected and the people are prohibited to perform their ritualistic performance in terrified place. On the other hand, the government rules cruelly by disturbing the rights of people to perform the cultural ceremony. In Limbu community, they celebrate and perform their typical and distinct culture, feast, rite and ritual in different ways than others. The cultural and ritualistic performance of Limbus have been seized in different time of regime and system like *Rana* regime and *Panchayat* system. Although, in Maoist's twelve years civil war period, the culture of Limbus could not be beyond by its effects. In the *Panchayat* system, the government was run throughout the philosophy of Hinduism, and other national and ethnic cultures were nullified. People were strictly prohibited to assemble and they could not assemble in any cultural performance. Likewise, Limbus could not perform their cultural performance having terrified situation. On the other hand, in the period of civil war, the culture, language, custom, rite and ritual of Limbus have been heavily

disturbed. In the period of civil war between Maoist and government of Nepal, most of the parts were terrified place and those places were seized by the government. The Limbus could not perform their cultural performance openly because they were suffered by terrified situation as well as sensor from the government. Most of the days passed in curfew. They could not obtain opportunity to perform their culture, rites and rituals as the philosophy of *Mundhum*.

There was no permission to gather and perform the cultural performance. They were being compelled to leave their culture, literature, rites and rituals for performing. Further, the political parties only tried to spread their political ideology. The political parties itself ran through the perspective of Hinduism and their slogans were only equal between higher and lower, Hindu religion and other religions, developed and marginal group, national or ethnic group just in principle but in behavior or reality, there were vast different between them. The equal was just in slogan of the parties. In this way, the national and ethnic groups were accustomed to follow the main stream culture or they were obliged to leave their own cultural performance and identity.

Thus, since long time the ritual and cultural performance of Limbus have been affected in the name of ruling, politics, culture, religion, race and so on. It could not be beyond effects of the civil war. Indeed they were compelled to leave their cultural performance and traditional way of life. They had to follow the tyrannical rule and regulation of insurgence period. The economical, social and cultural conditions were so damaged in insurgency. It was the most serious problem of Limbu community so, along with the raising voice of nationalism and ethnicity it will be raised simultaneously.

#### IV. Conclusion

The research on cultural performance of death rite *Khauma* of Limbu does not only explore how the death rite *Khauma* is performed in different ways within Limbu communities, but also how it is changing towards hybrid cultural performance because of the gradual influence of the nationalist cultures.

The Limbus perform and celebrate their cultures, custom, religions, rites and rituals as mentioned in *Mundhum*, a Limbu text. The life standard and way of living of the Limbus are affected by their cultural performance. Especially, they perform the death rite *Khauma* as to drive deceased person away to heaven and purify the polluted family and relatives from the death pollution. But in the process of performing the death rite *Khauma* as the time changes, the performance of *Khauma* also changes by affecting of nationalist cultures. The *Phedangma* enchants the *Mundhum* orally holding the stick '*Yeseba Lauri*' in presence of *Tumyahang*, *Tumyahangma*, relatives and family to drive deceased person away to heaven and purify the polluted family and relatives offering the variety of things to dead person. Fried rice, the head of he buffalo, the head of he goat, alcohol, local beer, cigarettes, meat, sweets, oil, ginger, garlic, chilly., salt are placed of the bamboo tray (*Nanglo*) for the dead person.

The process of purifying the polluted family in Hindu cultural performance, the priest reads the *Ved* a Hindu text, and simple things like *Rottee* (bread), *Chiura* (beaten rice), vegetable items are prepared for the dead person. The members of dead person shave the beard, moustache, hair and wear new white clothes. Likewise, in these days in some Limbu communities, the priest reads the written text *Mundhum* playing *Ek- tare* (one string musical instrument) and the simple things like beaten rice

(*chiura*), *Rottee* (bread), fruits and vegetable dishes are prepared for the dead person. They also save their beards, moustaches and hairs as well as wear new white clothes.

In the funeral procession, the dead body or corpse is carried over to the burial grounds. The women also participate in the funeral procession but they don't help to carry the corpse. The procession is led by the *Phedangba* holding a naked *Khukuri*, chanting and simultaneously shouting and jumping to the burial ground. In case of Hindu funeral procession, the corpse is carried over to the crematorium, and the procession is led by the priest blowing conch shell. Now, some people of Limbu communities, they carry the corpse to the burial ground and the procession is led by priests blowing conch shell, playing drums, *Jhyamta* and *Damaru*. Further, some Limbu people take away the corpse of dead body to the crematorium to burn the corpse and bring the ashes from there like Hindu performance.

Thus, the Limbus perform their death funeral in different ways within Limbu community. However the nationalists and others cultural performances have affected to such communal performance of death rite *Khauma* of Limbu community. So, traditional, historical and aboriginal identity based on the cultural performance of Limbus should be preserved as their unique property, ornaments and source of identity.

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