

Chapter I

Historical Analysis of *Limbu* Culture

The *Limbus*, one of the principal of Mongoloid origins in Nepal are rich in their own tradition, culture and language. The etymological study shows that the term *Limbu* was derived from the *Limbu* which has two morphemes i.e Li means 'bow' and 'Pu' means 'bird'. The *Limbus* were renowned archer and they might have called themselves as Limpu and later changed into *Limbu*. I.S. Chemjong retraces the history of *Limbus* "They won this land with the help of bow and arrow that's why they kept land of *Limbuwan*" (19). Li means 'bow' and 'Aabu' means 'hit and 'Wan' means "to keep name" *Limbu* fought bravely with bow and arrow. The *Limbus* themselves take pride on saying Yakthuba, a *Limbu* term that is formatted with two morphemes 'Yak' means fort and thumba means very brave. The *Limbus* won the fort very bravely so they were called Yakthumba. In *The Culture and Religion of Limbus*, Chaitanya Subba claims that *The Cultural and Religion of Limbus*, "some believe that Yakthumba is a derivative of Yaksa and some interpret its literal meaning as the yaksa winner. In *Limbu* language, it denotes 'heroes of the hills' which bears the connotation of 'Kirat'" (20). Nowadays, *Limbus* write Subba instead of writing *Limbu*, the title given by Prithvi Narayan Shah. Dor Bahadur Bista, in his book, people of Nepal, says, "The title 'Subba' was given to *Limbu* headmen at the time when the territory of the Kirati was annexed to the kingdom of Nepal by the Shah King some hundred and ninety years ago" (40).

Limbus are indigenous people of the mongoloid race living in far eastern part of Nepal at the lap of Kumbhakarna and Kanchanjanga Himal. They live in *Limbuwan*, the land of the *Limbus*, spreading from the Arun river in the west to the

Mechi river in the east, Tibet in the north and Jhapa, Sunsari and Morang in the South. *Brihat Nepali Shabdakosh* defines *Limbuwan* as "the hilly area of Mechi and Koshi zones where *Limbus* live permanently since very beginning" (113). Regarding the territory of *Limbus* Shiva Kumar Shrestha states, "The southern border of *Limbuwan* was Bhunde Simal of Harainchha, Morang extended as far as pharvisgunj in India, at the beginning" (34). It includes nine districts of eastern Nepal: Jhapa, Morang, Ilam, Sunsari, Panchthar, Taplejung, Dhankuta, Terhathum and Sankhuwasava. Subba states about the territory of *Limbuwan* by the following ways:

Historically known as *Limbuwan* where the *Limbus* live, the area lies between Arun river in the west, the border with Sikkim and west Bengal district of India in the west, the northern part of plains of Morang, Sunsari and Jhapa in the south and the border with Tibet, China is the north almost covering in the areas of 11655 sq. kilometer.

(IV)

Limbus are not only limited to the above mentioned territory, they are spread as far as Sikkim, Darjeeling, Nagaland, Manipur, Assam, Bhutan, Myanmar, Hong Kong and Singapore.

The *Limbus* are living in the eastern Terai with traditionally handed custom, convention and ritual. They are living in Dudhkoshi river in the west and Mechi river in the east. The occupied districts in Terai especially are Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari. Here their activities are more and participate in all activities with great excitement. In course of defining *Limbu* state, Durrant will argues:

The *Limbu* form a large portion of the inhabitants in the mountainous country lying between Dudhkoshi and the Kankai rivers in Nepal, and

found in smaller numbers eastwards to the Mechi river, which forms the boundary of Nepal and Sikkim. (112).

They are said to be original dwellers of Darjeeling and Sikkim of India. Subba states in the following ways:

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 Gorkha (Nepal) administration after 1774 [. . .]. (12)

As the *Limbus* mentioned in history, *Limbus* are Kirat with the Mongoloid origin.

They ruled in the eastern part of Nepal until they were defeated by the Shah dynasty.

There were thirty two Kirat kings who ruled in Nepal. The first Kirat King was Yalamber who defeated the Mahispal dynasty and ruled over Kathmandu valley (Nepal). The last king of Kirat dynasty was Gasti who was defeated by Lichchhavi dynasty and their rule ended. Finally, they migrated towards the east of Kathmandu valley.

Shiva Kumar Shrestha, in *Historical Study of Limbuwan* argues that similar to other people of Nepal, *Limbu* people also have their own gods and goddesses. The popular among them is *Tagera Ningwaphuma*, the creator of the whole universe, planets, man and society as well as every living and non-living objects (100).

Opposite to the popular Hindus believe in hundreds and thousands of god and goddess, the Kirat believes in one supreme power, which they call as *Tagera Ningwaphuma*. That is why ritualistically and culturally rich *Limbu*, while performing or observing their cultural rituals, takes the help of *Limbu* priests or *Mundum* experts

who recite or sing *Mundum*, a holy book of *Limbu*. Phedangba is the main priest who recites *Mundum*. Samba, Yeba and Mangdemba are also the priests who can recite *Mundum* which is a collection of legends, folklores, prehistoric accounts, sermons and moral or philosophical exhortations in poetic language. According to Imansing Chemjong, "The word *Mundum* means the power of great strength and Kirat people of eastern Nepal take it as a true, holy and powerful scripture" (18). Pande claims in his book *Nepalka Janjatihar*, "as the Hindus have the Vedas as a holy text, Kirats have *Mundum* which is used in both religion and spell" (109).

According to Chemjong the *Mudhum* is a collection of legends, folklores, prehistoric accounts, sermons and moral a philosophical exhortations in poetic language. According to Imansing Chemjong, his book *Kirat Itihas ra Sanskrit*, "the word *Mundum* means the power of great strength and Kirat people of eastern Nepal take it as a true, holy and powerful scripture" (18).

According to Chemjong, The *Limbu Mundum* is divided in two parts: the *Thungsap Mundum* is the original and orally transmitted one, consisting of "an epic recited in song"; the *Peysap Mundum* is the written form. As Chemjong further states, the latter consists of four parts; the *Soksok Mundum* (Myths of creation, the origin of mankind and evil spirits); the *Yehang Mundum* (about the culture hero who introduced social customs), the *Sapji Mundum* (On the various superhuman beings); and the "*Sap Mundum*".

Limbus are 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* have been

observing traditionally handed down divergent forms of culture from birth rite to death. The cultural performance is the unique feature of *Limbu* oral text. Chaitanya Subba, in his *The Culture and Religion of Limbus* states about the origin of the *Limbu* culture as:

Mundum 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 Yethan 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 in different names. They have typical culture in birth and death rites and others like marriage naming ceremony etc., *Yalang* and *Palam* (Dhannanch), Sapokchomen, Kelang (Dhananch), Chokphung, Chasok-Tisok, Samyok Lung and so on. 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 Rai religion in that it has a number of local deities of mountains and rivers to worship" (45).

Among cultures *Yalang* (Dhannach) and Kelang (Chyabrungh Nach) are quite popular in *Limbu* community. The writer, Rajesh Gautam and Asok K. Thapa Magar describe about *Yalang* and *Palam* that "the Dhan Nach (*Yalang* and *Palam*) is famous dance among the *Limbu* people and is called *Yarakma* or *Yalagma*. This dance is composed of a long line of girls and boys holding hand and placed alternatively"

(130). Kelang is also performed in different occasion of the context like marriage ceremony, feast and festivals and so on. On the other hand the *Limbu* 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 phedngma is given rupee with which he is supposed to purchase the grave from the spirits of the place" (105).

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 final rite of death ceremonies. It should be performed within a year. For *Khuma* 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 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 Ashok K. Thapa Magar describe *Khauma* as:

Death pollution is observed for a period of 4 days for a man and 5 day 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 Samdakhung and all those who had attended the funeral are invited this feast where they all sat parallely and facing the group which has been under observance of the pollution. (10)

Furthermore, Imansing Chemjong says in the book *History and Culture of Kirat People* "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 salet, oil,

gingeer and chilly within the mourning period" (28). In the ceremony time all the family and relatives of deceased person, Phedangma, *Mundumian* experts, Tumyanghang, Tumyanghangma and others present in west side from the very house. Since the ceremony of Khuma day the *Limbus* believe that family and relatives of deceased person get ride up from death pollution. They build 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 and three tiers for a female (Bista, 46).

Culturally rich *Limbus* have a distinct way of celebrating marriage ceremony. In modern times, two forms of marriage (Metkhim/Mekkhim) are prevalent in *Limbu* communities: arranged marriage and chosen marriage by free choice (Namuna Khemma Mekkhim). In an arranged marriage, initiation of preliminary negotiation for betrothal is taken by the bridegroom's family through a team of matchmakers. Chaitanya Subba in, *The Culture and Religion of Limbus*, illustrates procedures to choose a bride for a prospective bridegroom.

Bridegroom is always present in the team and the members of the match makers ask him indirectly whether he would like the particular girl as his bride. The leader of the matchmakers of bridegroom's family (Ingmiba) should be experienced in the oblique use of imagery to conduct negotiation with bride parents or guardians. The responsible member in representative of the family either accepts the request after due consideration or avoids by a skillful parry. (119)

The another or second way of marriage is chosen marriage which occurs in two ways:
(i) elopement of couple (woor and wooed) without prior knowledge or consent of

parents and (ii) running away with paramour (Khumna Mekhim)" (199) states Subba. There is also another way of marriage too in which the abduction of a maiden from hat bazaars, places of congregation on some occasions or while visiting relatives in far-off places. But this practices are gradually withering away since the last decades. While talking about the arrange marriage, the girl can ask for anything and an unlimited amount of gold and silver. This confirms to the girl's family that the boy is financially secure enough to keep their daughter happy. Few days after the wedding, the boy's family members have to visit the girl's house with a piglet and some alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks depending upon his financial standards. The key ceremonies of a *Limbu* wedding take place in the groom's house rather than that of the bride's because girl has a story with her husband.

Fedangwa declares the day to go to female house by seeing the horoscope and holy book. After this with the help of middleman, they seek appropriate candidate for him. When they go for asking the hand of daughter they must know the maternal uncle and caste of female. Not only that, they must be aware about their 5 tiers of father and forefather. After knowing all these, the middleman proceeds ahead for the arrangement work with the candidate and friends. In this process, they must carry two bottles of wine. If the father of girls accepts the proposal, he asks for *Sunauli*, token money from bridegroom for marriage. Bride respect all the family members by Namaste and bowing her head in front of them.

The marriage ceremony occurs in bridegrooms house. In this ceremony bride is brought in bridegroom village a day before marriage and kept in others house. The bride friends also join in this work and give full accompany to her in the new place. These girls who are there called *Lokanthi* and they are known as "Mekesama" in their

language. They organize feast in which wine and meat are served to all the guests which continues for four days. During this period, they also sing and dance by playing *Chabrung*. *Mekesama* decorate bride with costumes and ornaments given by bridegroom. This work is done just before she is brought in the house of bridegroom for the marriage. Right after this, playing *Naumat* and *Chabrung* along with firing gun, bridegroom and *janti* (people who participate in marriage_ reach to the house where bride is kept. Bridegroom and *Janti* returns with bride and her friends in bridegrooms house. Before entering in the room, the doors are decorated with two pots on either side of door full of water. The pots are decorated with colors and flowers. While cloths is kept from courtyard to three place where bride and bridegroom live. When they arrive on threshold they wash their feet and they walk on the white cloth. When they arrive at courtyard all people welcome them by sprinkling rice. Then bride and bridegroom are served milk which is thought as good symptom for good happenings. All the relatives of bridegroom put on tika for bride accepting her as a member of family. he also pays respect to all. After that the feast is served to *janti*.

In the evening, *Phedangma* reads *Mudhum* to accomplish marriage. The exciting part of marriage is *Lagan* (the very important part of marriage). In this part, a couple of cock and hen should be hit on back of male ad female and the blood should be poured on banana leaf. They have to keep on killing cock, if the first cock doesn't spell the blood after the strike on back of bride and bridegroom. Similar is the case of hen to if hen doesn't spell the blood after it is hit on back. They have to kill another hen. Then after millet beer (*Thi Tongba*) and *Samulla* (eight pieces of meat) are served to bride and bridegroom. Promising to live forever as being bride and

bridegroom, a knot is made in bride's scarf in which a rupee coin is kept. It is called *Yupparung Yang*. It has great significance because if male marries again, the first wife hit him with the coin and she moves away then it is regarded as divorce.

The bridegroom puts vermilion on the head after the instruction of Phedangba. Phedangma tells to have oath to both of them by saying, we promise, we will live together and die together. They also promise not to quarrel. *Phedangba* makes her to promise that she should regard her husband as head and to follow his instruction. Then after all, playing Chabrun they move around three times and dance. They shout '*TIYAHA*' and the whole ceremony ends. Next day, they prepare a pig to carry in bride's house. More than this, they prepare eighteen rupees and fifty paise, wine, food and fruits to take in female's house (bride's house).

According to *Mundum*, Yehang is the first person who teaches and commences the rites and civilization to the people. The *Limbus* observes and performs rituals and ceremonies in their own typical and distinctive ways. They observe traditionally handed down divergent forms of cultures from birth-rite and other numerous form of culture as chashaktangam, chokphung, samyok lung, sobu, phudong, Dungdunge, *Sappok Chomen*, Tongoing Takma as well as minor feast and festivals. They culturally worship Hagsam, Thebas among and suvending sugu yumasamang and also worship the earth, the sky, the hills, the rivers, the moon, the air, the fire etc.

During the pregnancy the pregnant woman is compelled to follow some of the ancisteral rules and regulation. This has to be followed by all the members of *Limbu* community. In this stage, all the members of her family protects and cares for her,

especially husband, father-in-law and mother-in-law. Chaitanya Subba further elaborates:

Traditionally, several restrictions are imposed upon an expectant mother. She should not cross over a rope tied to cattle, shouldn't eat unripe fruits, slaughter animals or order for slaughter or see slaughter, should not see the melting of gold and silver, should not cross the river and should not quarrel. The popular belief is that whatever the pregnant woman sees or gets the impression, it will have a bearing on the baby in the womb. It is the duty of the husband to take good care of his pregnant wife and also the responsibility of father-in-law and mother-in-law to protect and take care of their pregnant daughter-in-law. The rite of "*Sappok Chomen*" has a great significance in this context. (94)

The most important part of the *Sappok Chomen* is: they sacrifice various animals to different divinities. They believe that if the divinities are not happy, it is thought that they can harm the baby remain in womb. This festival is regarded as one of the medium to be safest from evil spirits. *Limbus* believe that the divinity - *Labhakcha Pakcana, Nambhakcha Pakchana* (Apchara Pakcana) makes the pregnant women unable to give birth and causes illness, and birth defects to the baby in the womb. So, they do *Sappok Chomen* for making divinity happy. The ritual of *Sappok Chomen* is long one and it takes three days to complete. The rituals of two days are conducted outside the home and the rest of the rituals of one day inside the home. The altar is prepared specially and decorated with various things by skilled or experienced

persons in the rituals. To make divinities happy lots of chickens, ducks, eggs, pigs, fishes, pigeons, etc. are kept ready for scarify to different divinities.

Another dominant form of culture of *Limbus* is womb worship of pregnant woman. This culture is hardly found in another caste in Nepal. In the culture and religion of *Limbus*, Chaitanya Subbs has glorified this tradition: "*Limbus* has the ritual *Sappok Chumen*, which is the rite of womb worship for the protection of a child in the uterus. This is probably the best form of worship by any cultural group of people in Nepal" (93). It is the pray to gods for the good health of mother and baby in the womb as well as successful delivery of the study.

Limbu community believes in supernatural powers and spirituality, according to their ancisteral belief handed from the past to upto now. They have unpredictable fathern of trust on such belief and passing it every generation since time immemorial. The *Limbus* are hardcore follower Mundhum and the every preeching is completely obeyed by them. Relating such belief, Chaitanya Subba in his book, *The Culture and Relgion of Limbus*, writes:

According to Mudhum there are three categories of supernatural powers; they are (i) *Mang* (gods, goddesses or deities), (ii) *Sammang* (divinities), and (iii) *Samang Chyang* cretinue of divinities). *Mang* is incorporeal, eternal, unstained, almighty and attributeles. However, they are called or prayed for specific purpose and they too discharge their responsibilities in specific time. They are imagined as supreme power, ultimate sources of existence as well as extinction of both celestial and terrestrial beings, formless and beyond imagination but often imagined in any form suitable to their specific roles in specific

time and they are beyond sensory perception and are "indefinable absolute". *Sammang* are often called *Thakali Sammang* which means a supernatural power (god like power) in various physical forms. They are divinities imagined or described in various forms with certain roles. *Sammangs* also have their own retinues which are known as *Sammang Chyang*. Most of the laymen believe that sires are also the *Sammang Chyang*. (236)

Houses, Occupation and Food Consumption of *Limbus* in Brief

Limbu settlements are found between the attitudes of 2,500 and 4,000 feet above sea level. There are one-storey houses made up of stones with thatched roofs. They are smeared with a red and white earth. There are windows and doors at the black of the houses. Houses of a few rich people are generally larger than the average houses which are generally roofed with slate have wooden balconies around them at the first floor. But at present due to the influence of western culture and advanced technology they are constructing modern cemented multistory buildings.

Their main profession is farming. They depend upon agriculture and in ancient time also they were agriculture. Some of the *Limbus* are joined in British and Indian regiments. Now a days, few conscious *Limbu* people are in governmental department as officers.

Tongba is a favorite social drink. In *Tangba* - hot millet beer served in a wooden barrel-shaped vessel with a lid, filled roughly halfway with fermented red millet (pitching) running through the centre of the lid and finely slit at the bottom to prevent the songa from entering the straw; the boiling water may be replenished several times; when served, the pitching is offered separately in a phogena (bronze vase-shaped wate vessel) filled with water and a small dish of meat or yumlakpa (pickle) is offered as a side-dish (George Van Driem: *A Grammar of Limbu*, 256). It is

also called sejoingwa, Sejongba - liquor distilled in traditional way from fermented grains. It is used for greeting guest. Without *sijongba*, ritual rites become incomplete. *Limbu* were born with this *sejongba* and also died with. Thus, *Limbu* people believes that they are very much liked and divine it each and every ritual rites; either good of bad happening. Hence, the *Limbu* seem very rich in the culture.

***Limbu* Culture as Ritual Performance**

Generally "Performance" means artistic presentation or manner of functioning. It means it includes overall activities of body and engagement of all members of society in group where group members, physically, mentally and socially are enmeshed in a flesh nail relation. *Microsoft Encarta Dictionary* 2008 defines performance as "a presentation of an artistic work such as a play or piece of music to an audience". Similarly, the *Oxford Dictionary* defines it as "the carrying out of a command duty, purpose, promise, etc. It is something performed, action, act deed or operation". Performance art has its origin in the work of several avant-grade artists of the late 1950s. Avant - grade draws its inspiration from the invention and application of new unconventional techniques and is therefore on the vanguard or cutting edge of new styles. Participants in the creative process can be considered members of the avant-grade, which is a sector of art that draws its inspiration from the invention and application of new or unconventional techniques and is therefore on the vanguard or cutting edge of new styles. In the same way, it views the ritual; performance as those activity which are part of formal religious occasions.

It emphasizes the sameness of those activities which are always performed in a same way. Ritual in a broader sense includes rites ceremonies, service, formal procedure, custom, habit, practice, convention and tradition. It is a repetition of

certain set of actions and behavior in a certain occasion. *Collins Cobuild English*

Dictionary defines ritual as:

A ritual in a religious service or other ceremony which involves series of actions performed in a fixed order. A ritual is a way of behaving or a series of actions which people regularly carry out in a particular situation, because it is their custom to do so. You can describe something as a ritual action when it is done in exactly the same way whenever a particular situation arises. (1438)

Thus, all rituals are the performances that involve actions or behaviours which follow the similar pattern every time they are used. Ritual performances are the fixed symbolic parts of a religious service and ceremony. They are carried out in fixed, structured way rather than being spontaneous. All rituals are prescribed order of performing rites and procedure that are regularly followed.

The performance is also related to the performativity which is an action related act, which is conducted in mass, for performing some rituals and celebrations. It is speech associated with some types of action. Schechner terms performativity with magnitude of performance and argues, "Performance magnitude means not only size and duration but extension across cultural boundaries and penetration to the deepest state of historical, personal and neurological experience" (45). Though it is difficult to say the universally accepted meaning of performativity, it determines the whole human action from theoretical arch to social drama and performance which generally is supposed to have granted for the theatrical events. It is everywhere, in rituals, celebration and feast, and in many such places. It is an art, associated with our way of living. It is naturally associated with our culture, politics and day to day actions. It

crosses the alley of theater and enters into the broad content of human actions. In the same regard of performance, Elin Diamond writes,

[. . .] since 1960s performativity has floated free of theatre precincts activity. It came after popular activity like speech, folklore, political demonstrations, conference behaviour ritual, medical and religious healing and aspects of human life. (qut. in Bell 66)

The cultural performance is the unique feature of *Limbu* community. The *Limbus* observe traditionally handed down divergent forms of culture from birth to death and other numerous forms of cultures as *Yalang* or Dhannach, Dhunglunge, Sappokchpmen, Tangsing Takma, Ke lang feasts and festivals. The performance of these rites and rituals are distinctively different from other culture and ritual. *Limbus* culture is such a culture that constitutes the aggregate of oral tradition, recited orally from time immemorial and the essence of tribal teachings. The performance of culture involves a set of ideas, understandings, references of oral art in its own typical tradition, method, diction, versification and melody of singing and reciting. In this sense, *Limbu* socio-cultural observance and its performance have been embedded in a correlative system with the oral text. Thus, the *Limbu* observe their distinct culture with the observance of literature.

Priest and religious gurus perform rites and rituals based on Mudhum. The priests are called Phedangmas, Yebas and Sambas. They play pivotal role in shaping up the social and religious structure of the society. Almost all cultural performances are normally related or concern on them. To accomplish the rituals and to overcome the disturbances, such Mudhum experts and priests perform some specific religious rituals in the versified narratives and diction which is one of the noteworthy aspects of

the *Limbu* performing culture. Among these rituals and ceremonies, one of the distinct culture or rituals of *Limbus* is *Yalang* and *Palam*. While performing *Yalang* (Dhannach) the *Mundum* experts sing a song that is known as *Palam*. *Palam* is a combine form of rhyme and rhythm that is why, *Palam* itself is a genre of literature.

Another distinct feature of the *Limbus* is that they bury the dead body.

Relating to the issues, Dor Baahdur Bista, in *People of Nepal*, writes: "Once the bodies of the *Limbus* are buried, they erect a stone monument commemorating the dead ones. The pitch/hole for the dead is about five feet long and tree feet wide at the bottom with four tiers for male and three tiers for female" (46). In the same manner, they restrict themselves from eating four days for male and three days for female.

The last ceremony of death ritual is *phaje* in *Limbu* language. Similarly, *Limbus* bar themselves from any type of field work in the field on the day when the newly baby is born, for the respect of the newly born baby. *Limbus* also has the culture or custom of arranges and love marriage. There is the system of going lokanti (Marriage procession) in case of arrange marriage while tying the knot of the newly married bride and bridegroom, the *Limbus* priest (Phedangma) recites sacred mantras from the *Mundum*.

The next unique feature of *Limbu* is : They are the true worshiper of nature as they worship nature in different form of God. That's why they worship while showing or planting the crops and in the same manner at the time of harvesting. Moreover, a guests are taken as the incarnation of God so they pay high esteem to them.

Yalang and Palam as a Part of Performance Studies

The word performance refers to the act of doing something such as musical, dramatic, ritualistic ceremony and other entertainments. The word 'performance' has been derived from the French old word having two components "parfornir" "par" and "fournis" here "perfournir" - "par" means thoroughly and "fournis" means, 'to furnish or 'bringing to completion or 'accomplishing'. So, to perform is to complete a more or less involved process rather than to do a single deed or act. Theorists have been contemplating performance for centuries on the stage, in religion rites and rituals, in social and political arenas on the page and in the bodies of people who make these performances happen again and again. They utilize the basic questions of theory to ask, what is performance ? Why do people perform ? Performance is something performed or gone, an action, act deed or operation. American artist and prof. Allan Kaprow used the term "happenings" to define performance as, "An on-time event, generally held outdoors, in which people come together to execute instructions they had not seen before. Central to such happenings are the elements of discovery and surprise" (38).

Noam Chomsky defines performance in linguistic terms in his text, the Dictionary of Stylistics by the following ways, "Performance is usually discussed in opposition to competence" (124). Chomsky places linguistics at the core of studies of performance. He claims that linguistic theory must account for universal similarities between all languages and for the fact that children are able to learn language fluently at the early age in spite of insufficient data that has no systematic logic. His contribution to the cognitive science fields that seeks to understand how we think, learn, and perceive-emerges from this claim. He gives equal importance for serious

theory of mental process which should replace empiricism, the belief that experience is the source of knowledge, as the dominant model in American science.

Chomsky's main focus is on competence rather than performance, as competence enabled performance. For instance, he focuses on the act of speaking as the first and the activities followed after it as the secondary. From this concept, it is clear that it is not easy to define the very term. It is a composition of behaviour, an approach to experience; it is a play, sports, aesthetics, popular entertainment, experimental theatre and others. Performance is a theory that includes the different activities of the human being in whole society. According to Bauman, "all the performance involves a consciousness of doubleness, through which the actual execution of an action is placed in mental comparison with a potential, an ideal, or a remembered original model of that action" (50).

The activities passes from generation involves the people of the than society. Regarding such involvement, American critic, Victor Turner writes:

I regard the social drama as empirical unit of social process from which has been derived and is constantly derive the various genres of cultural performance [. . .] My condition is that the major genres of cultural performance, from ritual to theater and film and narration from myth to the novel not only originate in the social drama but also continue to draw meaning and force from the social drama. (93)

Marvin Carlson further writes about what is performance, is as "Performance is always performance for someone, some audience that recognizes and validates it as performance even when, as is occasionally the ceased, that audience is the self".

Another critic, Jill Dolan says in his, *Presence and Desire: Essays on Gender*,

Sexuality, and Performance, "performance happens all around us, if you look at it that way" (qtd. in Bell 27). Thus, performance is a social drama, and is a combination of various genres of actual performance. The social substratum is the constant formative factors which impregnates performance with womb of meaning. It also helps structure and restrictive of the performance. Hence, performance does it necessarily have the structuralize implication of manifesting form, but rather the procession scene of bringing to completion or accomplishing. Thus, to perform is to complete a more or less involved process rather than do a single deed or act. Elion Diamond says in his performance cultural politics:

Performance is always a doing and a thing done. On the one hand, performance describes certain embodied acts, in specific sites, witnessed by others. On the other hand, it is the thing done, the complete event framed in time and space and remembered, misremembered, interpretation, and passionately revisited action preexisting discursive field: introduction (qtd. Bell 16)

The above extract clearly states that performance is an action or a set of action which can be performed in a special occasion in a particular place. Ceremonies and rituals are the most effective means of performance, when it comes to mass display.

Ceremonies are the formal activity prescribed by custom, ritual, or religious belief.

Ceremonies serve to unite the members or a group, strengthen shared beliefs, celebrate achievements or milestones in the lives of individuals a groups music or dancing is often incorporated into the ceremonies of many societies. There are different voices relating performance to the human life. It is an occasion when one's energies are intensely focused, being set apart by various signals as distinct from

ordinary routines of living. But Turner relates the performance directly to the social life. He points out that;

[. . .] A performance is not necessarily more meaningful than other events in one's life, but it is more deliberately so; a performance is among other things a deliberately so; a performance is, among other things a deliberate effort to present, to say something about something.

(208)

There is also the point, often noted by Turner that mainstream society generates it's opposite (44). That opposite picture is then presented in performance frames in order to indicate both the possibility of change, and the importance of the basic structure of society.

Performance is subjective. Turner has used the 'notion of liminality' and the 'phenomenon of liminality' extensively in his discussions of ritual and performance. Liminal states dissolve all factual and common sense systems into their components and play with them in ways never found in nature or in custom, at least at the level of direct perception. Thus, performance can be considered as at least all activities carried out with a consciousness of itself in human life and in other words, our lives are structured according to repeated raises the possibility that all human activities could potentially be considered as performance. That's why' the definition of performance can not be limited in a single meaning and has different fields in different context. In literature, performance is not limited to its dramatic performance between spectators and performers. It calls for greater awareness and attention to formal elements of textual presentation and greater focus to its context. *Collins Cobuild's English Dictionary* defines performance in different ways:

A performance involves entertaining audiences by doing something such as singing, dancing or acting or someone's or something's performance is how successful they are or how well they do something or the performance of a task is the fact or action of doing it or you can describe something that is a looks complicated or difficult to do as performance. (1226)

If we analyze this dictionary meaning, it is clear that performance is an action which must be acted by the performers. But performers alone can not make a successful performance as there is always necessities of the presence of spectators are also as important as the performers in performance. The main objectives of the spectators in performance are entertainment in which sometimes they have to evaluate the performer's performance, too. As a result, there emerges a kind of communicative process between performers and spectators. In this regard, Ronald Pelias writes in his performance studies: *The Interpretation of Aesthetic Texts*, "Performance is communicative process. All performances are transactional communication events between speakers and listeners" (qtd. in Bell 16). Further more, Richard Bauman links performance with the broader sense of less communicative activities which establish one or more relation between the audience and performer. He says:

Performance is a mode of communicative behaviour and type of communication. While the term may be employed in an aesthetically neutral sense to designate the actual conduct of communicative performance usually suggest an aesthetically marked and heightened mode of communication, framed in a special way and put on display for an audience. (16)

In the performance activities, however, time is adopted to the event, and is therefore susceptible to numerous variations and creative distortions. The major activities of performance time are: Event time, set time and symbolic time. Richard Schener in *Performance Theory* highlights :

Event time, when the activity itself has a set sequence and all the steps of that sequence must be completed no matter how long the elapsed clock time. For example sought, such as rain dances, shamanic curses, revival meetings; scripted theatrical performances taken as a whole. Set time, where an arbitrary time pattern is imposed on events - they begin and end at certain moments whether or not they have been "completed". Here there is an agonistic contest between the activity and the clock. For example; . . . how many and how much can you do in x time. Symbolic time, when the span of the activity represents another span of clock time or where time is considered differently as rituals that re-actualize events of abolish time make-believe play and games. (8)

Ceremonies and rituals are the most effective means of performance, when it comes to mass display. Ceremonies are the formal activity described by custom, ritual, or religious belief. Ceremonies serve to unite the members of a group, strengthen shared beliefs, celebrate achievements or milestones in the lives of individuals or groups, or to facilitate discussions. Music or dancing is often incorporated into the ceremonies of many societies.

Similarly, rituals are formal activities described by custom, ritual, or religious beliefs. Rituals serve to unite the members of a group, strengthen shared beliefs,

celebrate achievements a milestones in the lives of individuals or groups, or to facilitate discussions. Music or dancing is often incorporated into the ritual activities followed in various societies all over the world.

At last, we can contrast the above categories of activity with human endeavours that embody few, or minimal performative skills. Although they are culturally patterned, these are largely activities that have minimal communicative or cultural transformational intent, and do not require observers for their execution.

The process of perfecting any performance skill involves three dimensions. Firstly, it is analytic - the performer must assess the task and what s/he needs to accomplish to achieve successful representation. Representation has an important role in analytic performance, which largely depends on capacity to communicate ideas, represented by the artist to the audience. Its success largely depends upon whether the subject of performance is trustworthy and convenient to the audience or not.

Secondly, performance on technical ground must develop the necessary motor skills to actually carry out the performative activities. It also gives practical knowledge on the subject matter of the culture and tradition. Thirdly, the interpretive performer must develop a method of making the performative activity uniquely their own an embodiment of their own skill.

Chapter II

Historical Analogy of *Yalang* and *Palam*

Yalang and *Palam*, the most popular cultural dance and song respectively of the *Limbus* have a long historical perspective. *Palam* is an improvised song accompanying *Yalang* (*Ya* means paddy and *lang* means dance or harvest dance). So, the song and dance have nail and flesh relation having a long historical background. Historian I.S. Chemjong in *History and Culture of Kirat People*, writes about the origin of the word *Yalang*, as: "Here, 'ya' means paddy and lang means dance, a term derived from *Limbu* dialect" (73). As has already mentioned without *Palam*, which is singing in verse, *Yalang* is meaningless, that is why there must be *Palam* while performing *Yalang*. Likewise, Sesemise Nalbo in his collection of *Palam Ingjum* argues, "*Palam* is a *Limbu* language which signifies to the way of speaking in Nepali language" (3).

The *Yalang* and *Palam* is rooted in the agricultural age. So, for the acknowledgement of *Yalang* and *Palam*, it must be known when the paddy was discovered. In the documented history of agriculture, the seed of paddy was first found around 7500 B.C. in China. It was initially cultivated in Burma and Thailand by 1000 B.C. It is stated that this is the first commencing period of farming of paddy. After that only the farming of paddy was spread and all over the world. Sesemi Se Nalbo, *Palam Ingjum*, documents the origin of paddy:

Scientifically, it is said that the paddy was originated before seven thousands and five hundred years ago and in this regard the farming of paddy was also started before six thousand and five hundred years ago. That's why it can be said that the performance of the *Yalang* and *Palam*

was also originated before six/seven thousand years ago. Because the history of *Limbu* shows that before 7th century they had come to Nepal.

(4-5)

When we go back to history, we may find that paddy was originated about eight thousand years ago. *Yalang* and *Palam* might have been originated during the era, because *Yalang* and *Palam* are linked with the paddy plantation and harvesting. About the origin of the *Yalang*, Subba states:

According to some scholars, this dance was originated to thrash the grains from the dried paddy plants in the past. It is said that there was no custom of using oxen to thrash rice grains as it done today and young men and women from the villages around had to gather and through the grains by trampling the dried paddy plants. It was hard job and they had to spend the whole day and night. So, they used to sing the whole night while trampling the plants with the grains and their way of Trampling turned into a dance with singing. Eventually it developed into a present form of *Yalang* or paddy dance. (57)

While performing *Yalang* both teenagers to late adults of both sexes participate enthusiastically without any hesitation. It is organized at night and danced following the rhythm of *Palam*. The preservation of the old culture itself shows that *Limbus* people are very much dedicated to their rituals. Likewise, the performance of *Yalang* is related with the day to day life activities of the *Limbus*. This is action oriented ritual of *Limbu* which attaches male and female physically, psychologically and socially.

In the same regard, Lawati Yeang in his book *Aadibasi Limbu Jati Ko Samchhipta Parichaya* further writes:

Yalakma (Dhannach) is performed in fair, marriage etc. welcoming the guest. It is a group performance at least of 2 to 10-15 members by catching their hands in a circular form. The dance is performed going to and fro with uplifting the first and second leg in a sequence along with body movement. The well-known performer in the front part and the followers take similar steps to make dance alike, such person is called Ke-Ungba, means drawer or puller attractor. The song which is sang during this Dhannach is called *Palam*. *Palam* varies according to situation and tone as the dance varies. Mainly *Palams* are of two types: High pitch long vocal and short pitch vocal. While singing long vocal, are shouldn't add anything but for short; one should add ha, . . . ha . . . ha . . ., that is a convention. If male visits female's village in marriage, mela etc. in such occasion, female should start *Palam*. Similarly, if female go to male's village, male should start *Palam*, is a convention. It seems as a duet song. (69)

The above expression clearly states how do they engage in such work. They very often participate either in market place, fair, festivals and other cultural activities. Their performance includes the male partner along with the female and both group start *Palam* in rivalry form. The song and dance commences with a group leader, according to his instruction they should start their performance either physical (Dance) or oral act.

Regarding it, Chandra Kumar Sherma relates the story of *Yalang* with a tale.

He states:

[. . .] The bird 'Phelyere Phempun' brought the seeds of paddy for human beings to cultivate [. . .] when paddy became ready for harvest, the bird came to eat that's why to drive away it and to thrash the grains from the paddy plants, all the villagers gathered in the yard, holding the hands of each other started to treat over it producing the sound chhuiya ha . . ha . . , those activities turned into the *Yalang* and *Palam*.

(3)

The above extracted lines clearly expose the historical background of Dhannach. From the ancestral time upto now, they have been able to preserve their culture. It is obvious that there is no disagreement among the scholars or historians to state Dhannach commenced with the Agricultural society. The version of story may be slight different from one another but their thematic aspect is same. Chaitanya Subba in book, *The Culture and Religion of Limbu* describes:

This dance was originated to thrash the grains from paddy plants in the past. It is said that there was no custom of using oxen to thrash rice grains as is done today and young men and woman from the villages around had to gather and thrash the grains by trampling the dried paddy plants. It was a hard job and they had to spend the whole day and night. So they used to sing the whole night while trampling the plants with grains and their way of trampling turned into a dance while singing. Eventually it developed into present form of *Yalang* or Paddy-dance. (58)

By the fact, we can purely say that *Yalang* and *Palam* is the agricultural activities of the *Limbus* which later improvised and turned into one of the most famous and

important rites and rituals of them. Dhannach is an inevitable culture of *Limbus* in a form of contest on the theme of love, which requires improptly imagination for repartee. Likewise, Imansing Chemjong in *History and Culture of Kirat People*, states about the origin of the *Yalang* and *Palam*; in such ways;

In the ancient period, people cultivated land and sowed crops and when the crops became ready for harvesting, they cut them down into bundles and thresh the bundle of paddy with their arms [. . .]. There was still remained some amount of paddy with hay so people assembled and started to hold their hands side by side and tread over hay three times and raise their left feet together. In such way, they threshed all the hays by feet and later on that very rite of threshing the hey by feet became the famous *Yalang*. (73-74)

As to thrash, in the primitive age, *Yalang* was performed inviting the people of communities, Chemjong, further writes:

When the crops would become ready for harvest, the land owner would invite the young men and women from his community to work or help him to thresh the crops. In whatever way, it was carried out, but the boring and monotonous activities of threshing the paddy turned into an easy and entertaining process of stepping the foot. (74)

Regarding traditional *Yalang* Laoti (1988) has classified in three categories:

Charkaow (with fast stepping), yangsingchang (with slow motion) and Tamarange (with long stepping). But, today only two types of *Yalang* can be observed: 1. Kemba Lang (2) Kushrakpa (Kasarakpa). Chaitanya Subba further explains the dances as:

Kemba Lang is a slow motion dance and it is danced in a straight row clasping the hands of each other arranged in an order of male and female and thus demonstrating unities. This type of dance is also known as Tamrange *Palam*, the very dance is also slow in Tempo, but the melodic movement makes it alluring. This dance, by its techniques of stepping and moving, symbolically represents the thrashing grains from paddy plants and making a heap from scattered grains. (58)

Kemba Lang, slow motion dance is also slow in tempo or beat. They form a straight lines of male and female catching their hands of each other. Their movement along with the movement of hands and legs seems pretty helpful to thrash the grains in easy maner and at the sometime they collect the heap of scattered grains. The movement of dance either fast or slow depends on the *Palam*, *Tamrange Palam* is the song sing in *Kemba Lang*. As he writes further, he goes on explaining the varieties of dances by the following ways:

The other form of dance is Kusrakpa. It is based on the *Palam* of fast rhythm and tune. The style of dancing also differs from place to place but it is not so complex to follow. A person at one end leads the row in proper stepping and three steps forward in the left corner and three steps backward in the former position and the rests follow it. This style of dance is known as Lambang Ungma Lang. It is done three times and is called sumtuppa. There is another way of dancing also just making a circle Its stepping style indicates the heap making procedure of rice gains through sweeping or pushing by foot. (58)

Yalang and *Palam*, as a culture, now, it is performed in any festival occasion such as marriage, fairs, market places and even in the villages if there is the arrival of the guest for the sake of entertainment to them. In order to sustain love, life and good future relation too, this activities is performed. It is performed by making a circle or line, wearing the traditional costumes and holding the hands in hands between *Limbu* male and female participants who belong to different blood relation. In this regard, people can not participate belonging to the same clan and surname rather they should not have any relationship from before three generation to now. It is regarded as pious as their god which is distinct from other culture too. Rajesh Gautam/Ashok K. Thapa Magar, in their, *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal*, writes:

While the dance is in progress and if two dancers touch each other's toes, they have to leave the circle and only join it later when they have performed excuse ceremony. It is they who have to put out their right hands, touch each other's knees, perform the folded hands (Namaste) gestures ask each other for pardon and once more join the group. (14).

While performing *Yalang* and *Palam*, any prejudices is not made between male and female, boys and girls etc. Boys and girls of ten-twelve years start to take part in *Yalang* and they are guided by senior participants. Age difference is not taken much care as novice dancers want to dance with a senior or experienced dancer who are well versed in *Palam* to expedite their learning process. Unmarried woman or women married at the latter age, widows usually became well versed in this dance. It has been found that most of the girls become active in participating the *Yalang* after marriage as they come of age. The obvious reasons were; the foreboding of prosaic life of a housewife and intense desire of exploiting every opportunities of enjoyment during

short period of staying at natal home after marriage, and the other is; to find another home a husband if the first husband is not suitable for her. Chaitanya Subba, in his book, *The Culture and Religion of Limbu*, says, "When a grown up daughter come out of the house late at night and goes somewhere to dance (especially Dhan), none of the family members mind it" (43). *Limbu* female are given equal freedom to take part in the performance of *Yalang* and *Palam* so without any hesitation they can have participation. Through the performance of *Yalang* and *Palam*, we know that *Limbu* is not that much narrow minded rather they give excessive freedom to the female which can be taken as the unique cultural aspect of *Limbu*. They never intervene about the females rights and dignity. When we compare the freedom given female in other caste, we never get such immense freedom. They are even found participating in such activities for entire week. Also without any hesitation and even married women too part take like this. This is a real freedom of the *Limbu* women and also the strange.

The *Palam*, etymologically, seems to be originated from the two words pa ? and Lam where pa ? means "to speak" or "make speech and Lam means "the way" or "course": That is why *Palam* is a way or course of holding talks or speech. "On the other hand, the words like pa ? me (papa, mama) are the first uttered meaningful words by a child. In this context, to regard Ishwor Chandra Ijam, "*Palam* comes first and only then comes culture" (5).

Since *Palams* a *Yalang* songs are created, formed or composed orally and therefore should not necessarily be thought of as a fixed text. It's a duet song sung a expressed by mala and female sides in turn until he/she completes one full part of a long stanza or a chapter bearing a complete theme. There is no exactly similar type of folksongs in Nepal and therefore, it's a unique one. *Palam* is not only a song to be

sung but it is to be expressed, to be created and recreated human feelings and expressions.

Palam is arranged mainly into three parts - the first is an introduction part which is known as *Khyali: Seema* or finding out the blood relations and find out whether they are allowed to hold their hands and danced together or not. This oral poetic song (*Palam*) is both narrative as well as creative one which can be composed a sung in different ways. The following lines are presented just for an example how a male youth sings for *Khyali: Semma*:

The dance which is performed along with a song is called *Palam*. *Palam* is an oral literature of *Limbus*. There are numerous variations in tunes, melodic range, tempo and rhythms but it is not still found in written form rather it is orally sung. On the other hand, very few literature are available on such a wide prevalent culture of east Nepal. *Nepali Jana Sahitya (Kandangwa, 1963)* and *Yalak-Palam (Chongbang, 1993)* are some of the books that provide the glimpse of *Palam*. The tune or vocalization styles of *Palam* also depends upon the type of Dance. Chaitanya Subba further explains:

If the dance is *Kemba Lang*, the emphasis of the music is on the style of the intonation, pitch finesse and thus on melody. It is usually Sung in slow tempo with a long regular gliding tune, difficult to measure with a metronome. If *Yalang* is a *Kushrakpa lang*, *Palam* is rendered in medium and fast tempo and is dominated by rhythm, though percussion instruments are not used in the natural setting. It is a Serenade in the form of competitive duet between a young man and woman. It takes about ten minutes to one hour to propose something from one side.

Then another side has to reply it one, who proposes or answers, has to sing a passage and others have to follow it and thus it takes a form of choral music. (52)

Palam is a means of expression of feelings of two young hearts. Sometimes preliminary negotiation for dance is done through Khyali (Panthang) in which participants may introduce each other and later on if they have no relation, start to sing a *Palam*. Khali manifesto 2063, describes that, "before to the *Yalang* the relation is made clear between the male and female participants in a very rhythmic and tunic ways through the dialogue and that very dialogue is called Khyali" (15). Exchange of views and expression of romantic feelings is done through Khyali. It is a conversation with poetic expression, full of alternative language, strophic references and use of metaphor. Eventually, it leads to the *Yalang*, Khyali is in fact dialogue. J.R. Subba, in his book, *The Limbus of the Eastern Himalayas*, says:

Khyali is in fact a dialogue but spoken by the young boys and girls in poetic expression with beautiful tunes. Through the Khyali the boys and girls negotiate *Yalang* [. . .]. Exchange of views and expression of romantic feelings is expressed through Khyali. It is conversation with poetic expression, full of alterative language, atrophic references and use of metaphor. Eventually, it leads to the *Yalang*. (209)

Khyali is performed especially in a time before performing *Yalang* and *Palam*, dividing two groups, men and women sitting face to face. It will be started from group expressing his/her all the relations about forefathers and it will be given to turn or chance to the next group. This group also express in the same manner and form that expression of the both sides may lead out the conclusion that whether they can

participate or not in the performance of *Yalang* and *Palam*. That's why: Khyali also plays a vital role in the performance of the *Yalang* and *Palam*. After being assured that they don't belong to the same clan, they participate in the performance of *Yalang* and *Palam*. While performing *Palam*, there is a rule that if a woman has gone to the village of the men, the men should start the performance of *Palam* and vice-versa. Seesemi Se Nalbo, in his collection of *Palam*, Ingjum, says, "While singing or composing a *Palam* there must be nine letters in one line and second line should be the same. After the combination of first and second line only it stops. These two lines have eighteen letters which leads to the one stanza" (6). There should be well combination of every line.

Here, an excerpt of a *Palam* is presented below:

Aanjima Aanji Aandeng - SE,
 Aanjima Aanji Aandeng - Se ! HA - HA - Ha
 SHAKEMURI FUNG GA SEGERO,
 SHAKEMURI FUNG GA SEGERO ! HA=HA=HA
 YA-RAKMA AALLO PEGERO,
 YA-RAKMA AALLO PEGIRO ! HA-HA-HA !
 NA-FOYANGI HOYOUNG NISUMLO,
 NA-FOYANGI YOYOUNG NISUMLO,
 NA-FOYANGI HOYOUNG NISUMLO ! HA-HA-HA !
 KAN HEAKKA AALA CHOGUMLO,
 KAN HEAKKA AALA CHOGUMLO ! HA-HA-HA !
 SETLOSANG HACHEEA SEREA RO,
 SETLOSANG HATCHHEA SEREA RO ! HA-HA-HA !

YA-RAKMA KEREKA KERE ROK,

YA-RAKMA KEREKA KERE RO ! HA-HA-HA !

SERA ? GA THANG LA PHERI RO,

SERA ? GA THANG A PHERI RO ! HA-HA-HA !

Translation:

We both are friends. Now let's pick the Shakami flower for paddy dance. Dance like the young fish as it dances in flowing river, let's do together as it dances in shol. Let dance in a circle like seflosang flower in a bundle.

How many lines of the *Palam* should be written or sung depends upon the *Palam* singer or composer. The first line of *Palam* is called 'Phekwa' and second is 'Kaphekwa' or both combination of 'Phekwa' and 'Kaphekwa' is called 'Kaphungphekwa'. Every 'Phekwa' has added the intermediary part of a song known as 'Phungphewa'. 'Phungphekwa' has made of six letters for instance: Ha-ha, ha-ha-ma-ha. Phungphekwa determines the tone of the *Palam*.

The subject matter of the *Palam* are predominantly the love affairs, fictitious romantic relationships, aspirations and frustrations, feelings of melancholy or separation and unsettled longing of life. The young people curiously with the blend their tradition with their great zeal (zeal). *Palam* is the key to open the lock of love hidden intense desire of beloved. In this regard, Chaitanya Subba in his book, "The culture and religion of *Limbus* writes:

Palam starts from introductory inquiries as it is against the custom to sing a love song or to dance between or among relatives [. . .]. The discussion encompasses the way of life of early people, the origin of love, relation of love and life, love affairs and marriage union and many other areas of inner human world. Sometimes, love is compared with various kinds of

flowers. Quite typically, various kinds of flowers are named as flowers of life, death, love, youthfulness, separation, sorrow and so on according to *Limbu* belief system. (62)

Yalang and *Palam* has a flesh and nail relation and the pure blend of them is impossible to separate. Sher Bahadur Ingnam in his book, *Kirant Eitihasis Ra Sanskruti* writes about the history of *Dhannanch* by the following ways:

In the beginning, they involve in agriculture. They cultivated the land and planted the rice. In the harvesting time, they collected the paddy in small bundle for the threshing. The difficult task lead them to call the young people to thrash and keeping the bundle of rice with hay up for thrashing rasing their legs up and down with music made their task easy and could accomplish in easy way. The men who encouraged to act was an old Sarakpa, accompanying with song which ultimately assisted to accomplish the task in ease ways. (66)

Yalang is performed in spring season, during the harvesting time. The paddy field in a circular is churned for the paddy dance then after cowdung is used for purifying the land where they plan to perform *Yalang*. The paddy is collected in a corner keeping the straw and rice side by side for thrashing. The performers are invited for dancing. The dancers taking the bundle of hay thrash it on the ground on the rhym and the rhythm of *Palam* separate rice from hay. Chaitanya Subba, in his book, the culture and religion of *Limbus*, states:

Palam is an improvisational song accompanying *Yalang* ('Ya' means paddy and 'Lang' means device or harvest dance). When the young men and women participate in *Yalang*, they sing a song almost in a form of contrast on the them of love, which requires important imagination of repartee.

Though there may be a lot of person participating in *Yalang* by holding the hands in hands by men and women in circle or line, one man or woman has to choose one of his/her counterpart among them and thus each has to approach each of them sometimes some friends come to assist somebody in his/her under taking and thus *Palam* becomes a choral music without accompaniment of musical instrument. (51)

As has already mentioned in the above excerpt that it is a kind of improvised song which is sung while performing the *Yalang*. Now in a changing context, *Limbus* slowly and gradually are using musical instrument to make it more convenient.

Before *Dhannach*, *Khyali* is performed which can be taken as a best verbal consent between male and female and it is stated as prerequisite for paddy dance. Lawati Yehang in his book, *Aadibasi Limbu Jaat ko Samchhipta Parichaya* writes an example of a Khyali:

AA . . TUTUDINGAR TUMYAHANG SAAYA !

YAKLAGANGAR SUHANGMA SAAYA !

AA . . NANG SE : KWA THA: AALEA THEAJOEYA SEAMISAA,
MANGSAMAI KUSING KHEANEA ? NU PEMBA

AA . . EKSAGEN KHEMBE: KA MEDHONGNGANA SANGGA
LARSING NU KHEMSING MEBO: NGA NGA ? NA
SANKHYA

AA . . SEA : NGA GHAYOGARA MUTZAMAI PHANGA THEAKE ?
O SEAKHA KANGUPA SANGAGA

AA . . CHA ? SENGNGAN SEKHA FUNGTAPLA PHEEX,
TAKMERE TAGANG SE: NUGUKPEN HEAKEE

AA . . PHOLOBA HUKKU ? PHU: CHHINGANGA SANGNGA
 KANGUKPEN MENGO TO: NINGDHAGNGA ? SANGNGA

AA . . YAKTHUNGLEA THE: MMA SEREKLEA TENLO,
 SEKHENGMA MELLO YA: KALIEA ? MANG MEUO

The translation of above Khyali become like this: 'The high esteemed girl whose height and purity is like mountain. You look like a tea garden. Though you look like or not but we respect and regard you. You are not nearest to my heart either our pair match or not. The cost of it is not so chief, it goes like elephant in front of a rat. If the days are counted, the person becomes the eldest one but physically he is nimble and small. The man is not in human form although I proceed towards him. I intend to have you if I have hurt you, forgive me.

This translation is clear to have satire among the youths who are involved in a group either side. Their involvement comprises the physical, social, mental and emotional attachment among the participants. The coordination of it really can provide the real existence of *Lumbu* culture from the time immemorial. The history has abide them in a strict chain of discipline. The subject matter of the *Palam* is basically the love affairs. That's why, the performers may express their feelings of love taking the help of *Limbu* religious text, *Mundum*. Furthermore, they sing the subject matter like philosophy of life, creation nature of the Universe. Chaitanya Subba, in his book, *The Culture and Religion of Limbu* says, "The subject matter of the *Palam* are predominantly the love affairs, fictitious romantic relationships, aspiration and frustrations, feelings of melancholy or separation or unsettled longing of life" (52). From it, we know that *Palam* becomes the means of communicating and sharing of feelings between acquainted or unacquainted young man and woman and enhancing understanding and cordiality.

Chapter III

Sublime State in Performing *Yalang* and *Palam*

The performance of *Yalang* and *Palam* in *Limbu* culture helps to fill the rift between haves and have nots, high and low, black and white, strong and weak by bringing them together with the thread of culture. It connects them with cultural identity blurring, the disharmony by bring them in a liminal norm. Relating the idea of performance Richard Schechner states, "Performance studies: the broad spectrum approach" calls for a "Wholesale reconstruction of curricula" to include the study of performance in ritual and social contexts" (5). The *Limbus* have their own specific performativity through which they expose their unique cultural state by bringing all of them in a liminal state. A ritual is a strong base which unites people of any community therefore it should be observed time to time. Sunita Subba in *Sanskritik Paribeshma Dhannanch Ko Sthan*, further argues:

Dhannanch is of one of the primitive, cultural festival or ceremonies of *Limbu* society which expresses their happier feelings. It displays the unity and co-ordination of *Limbus*. *Yalang* is one of the strong bases to identify the *Limbus* communities. We know that through the means of culture also people are United. So, *Yalang* is a strong cultural pillar for the *Limbus* which unites them and makes them one. (36)

Here too, unmarked situation of liminal is created itself while performing their culture. As every caste and tribe has an existence with in religion, culture and language, so is in the case of the *Limbus*, which is largely expressed from Dhannanch. More than this Jon Mckenzie elaborates; "Performance studies as an academic enterprise as it is self-consciously positioned as "Liminal" - between two states of

being and belonging to neither (5). *Limbus*, the aborigines of the eastern Nepal is one of the richest tribes, as far as culture, history and tradition are concerned. Several performances in different cultural rituals are the evidences to prove that they are able to safeguard their cultural identity. J.R. Subba is of the opinion that "the *Limbus* culture itself is a performative ritual" (qtd. Subba 38). Dhannach popularly known as *Yalang* in *Limbu* language is celebrated during the plantation and harvesting seasons of paddy. Paddy has a great significance in the entire *Limbu* community as it is the staple food. Now a days, the Dhannach is observed even during the day time in seasonally organized market places or fairs. The preliminary negotiation is done between male and female before the participation and they become ready for Dhannach. The dancers are abide by the following laws:

- (a) The brothers and sisters of own family, maternal uncle's sons and daughters are not allowed to catch their hands for dancing purpose.
- (b) During dancing period no one is allowed to touch their toe. If touched both dancers must stop dancing for excuse and bowing down their heads both must show the *Namaste* posture for the sin.
- (c) In the circular line male and female one after another should stand in row by catching their hands.
- (d) A leader is chosen who commences the dance from the right and make a circle.
- (e) In each thirteen steps whole row from the right hand side all should do about turn and dance as before (Five steps right, five steps left and three steps at the same place).

- (f) No need of using musical instruments while dancing and theme of such song is generally love affair.

The above mentioned rules are extracted from Imansing Chemjong's *Kirant Itihas Ra Sanskriti*, translated by Sher Bahadur Papo Limbu (67).

The *Limbus* are conscious about the discipline that has to be obeyed by participants. The male performer must know about relation with whom they are going to dance with before catching the girl's hands. Otherwise, it is taken as a heinous crime. To deprive from such sin, *Khayli* is performed and know the relation of one another. Similarly, the dancers must not touch the toe of others during dance, if it happens, they must stop dancing and should go for apology. They must apologize for the misdeed by bowing their heads in *namaste* posture. The chosen leader leads the whole process and rest participants act according to his instruction. Male and female catching their hands of one another move five steps right, five steps left and three steps at the same place in *Palam* tune dance together. At that time there is no convention to use musical instrument. This principle is still followed by every participant.

The acknowledgement of this assists the performer to perform it in fantastic way.

Yalang and *Palam* is a kind of ritual or cultural performance so while performance, it should be taken care about the basic norms as well. J.R. Suba in *The Limbus of The Eastern Himalayas* describes this condition as:

Yalang, also known as *Yalakma* is the most popular dance among the *Limbus* teenagers, to late adults of both sexes. They participate enthusiastically in this dance without any hesitation, but at the same

time, there is a great respect to the senior, who in turn make sure the youngster is following the right way of ritual. They take special care in dancing with the people of same blood, and in stepping with the music, they don't step over others foot. footsteps and the way of traversing are taken care in the dance. (216)

Through the dancing period if someone touches the foot of anyone both of them should comment from the performance and should apologize to each other. This is the fundamental principle of dancing and everyone is chained or abide by the basic norm of this dance. In this way, the ritual is followed with great enthusiasm, endeavor and respect in terms of religious sanctity.

Yalang and *Palam* are performed in an open place at night, at special religious occasions. Whoever wants to participate can participate without interruption either young or old, high caste or low caste, rich or poor doesn't make any difference. They equally participate with great enthusiasm and zeal. It in a sense helps to forget their pains, sufferings and sorrows rather ties them with the cultural thread of unity. They become the rainbow when they are found performing *Yalang* and *Palam* despite their past grievances. The performance at night time is itself a symbol of harmony which reedems the dichotomy. In this regard, *Yalang* and *Palam* are performed in an open place calling or self presence in a specific place and time. In the context, Subba narrates:

The dance is usually organized at night or even day time in any festive occasion such as marriage, Maguey fair, Market days of significance etc. and dance following the rhythm of a song, known as *Palang* which has been dealt in a detail under the folk songs of *Limbus*. Musical

instruments are not used as it not possible in the real life situation.

(217)

As it has been stated that *Limbu* are nature lover. So, they perform several acts naturally the absence of musical instruments in the *Yalang* and *Palam* is an evidence of it. They believe lack of music in *Yalang* and *Palam* makes the performance nearer to nature and more sacred.

Sunita further cites, in her "Working Paper", *Sanskritik Paribesma Yalang - Dhannacho Sthan*, says, "While performing the *Palam* the boys or girls have to address very respectfully to each other such as Subba Saheb, hajur, Lunga (respectful words for non-relative), using these words have to address them" (5). It is prohibited to call them by their names. Everyone must not understand that there should be only subject matter of love affairs rather. It can be matter of creation of the world, philosophy of life etc. Mayapi is the climax and classical discussion of love relationships and semmui is the profound expression of pathos of separation and tragic feelings. Chaitanya Subba argues "From the introductory discussion, the themes of the *Palam* are directed towards love and Life" (52). Sometime *Yalang* and *Palam* continue for several nights in which the discussion almost take a form of epic. The discussion encompasses the way of life of early people, the origin of love, relationship of love and life, love affairs and marriage union and many other various kinds of flowers. Quite typically, various kinds of flowers are named as flowers of life, death, love, youthfulness, separation, and sorrow and so on according to *Limbu* belief system. This forecast their love towards nature and their stronghold belief in natural phenomenon.

Chapter IV

Yalang and Palam as a cultural Heritage and Conservation in a Changing Context

Yalang and *Palam* belong to *Limbu* community and it can be taken as communal culture of *Limbu*. People living and sharing common understanding and the way of living, within a social group, with distinct language, norms and ethics and tradition makes the communal culture. So as, *Yalang* and *Palam* is associated to communal culture has become heritage for *Limbu* community. Communal societies have long existed as reactions against the prevailing social order, meaning in opposition to the national culture. However, *Yalang* and *Palam* has carried the basic cultural identity of *Limbus*. Among several cultures and rituals, *Yalang* and *Palam* is unique culture of the *Limbus* which exhibits the *Limbus* communal way of life. Everyone knows that Dhannach is a cultural dance of *Limbus* and *Palam* is a kind of song which is sung while performing the *Yalang*. From this unique culture of *Limbus*, *Yalang* and *Palam* which itself preserves the cultural identity of *Limbus*. The cultures, tradition, religious places, wildlife reserves, important places, mountains, dances are heritage or property of nation because this is the heritage of our nation in the globe and it spreads name and fame. Many tourists who visit to the eastern part of country, they love see the cultural dance. While performing this cultural dance the performers wear traditional costumes which itself shows the uniqueness of the *Limbus*. Surya Sambehamphe in one of his news articles, "Purwanchalko Chabrung Ra Dhannach" in *Annapurna Post*, claims;

Yalang is one of the fundamental cultures of *Limbus*. They are preserving it. Most of the old cultures are going to disappear in *Limbu*

communities, but however, they are following or preserving the *Yalang* and some of the other cultures. Indeed, *Yalang* is one of the inevitable cultures of *Limbus* [. . .]it is taken as the living folk dancer performance of *Limbus*. (12)

Limbus are rich in their distinct folklore and because of their distinct folklore they have their own identity among ethnic and racial diverse groups of people in Nepal. *Yalang*, a folk dance of *Limbus* distinct from other dances is the real living culture of *Limbus*. As the *Yalang*, Chhetri or some other caste have the ritual 'Rateuli' or like that which carries the identity of Chhetri caste. Most of the *Limbus* believe that frequent participation in *Yalang*, and becoming well-versed in *Palam*, or to gain mastery in Hakpare Samlo and other aesthetic aspects of culture is, a way of preserving their old culture. There are several tribes and castes of people living in this world. Most of them have their own cultural and ritual uniqueness and identity. Due to this cultural uniqueness they possess a separate identity. That's why culture or ritual is such strong base which can identify the people. It becomes the heritage to a particular country. J.R. Subba, in *The Limbus of Eastern Himalayas* narrates as:

Basically it is performed during any happy occasions and celebration of *Limbu* people. It is marked by the family reunion and sharing of woes and happiness. During the ceremonies like marriage, enjoyment and entertainment *Yalang* and *Palam* are performed in a locality or even in the market place. (217)

As every caste and tribe has an existence within religion, culture and language, so is in case of the *Limbus*, which is largely expressed through Dhannach. It is a unique way of sharing happiness among people. Paddy dance has become itself a history for

Limbus and it has become a matter of glory for them from which they retain their past glory. To praise the history is to preserve their culture too.

Thus, long tradition with unique custom and lifestyles, typical values and belief system mythology, folklore and various demerits of oral literature are the evidence that *Limbus* have distinct cultural heritage. The spiritual concept, philosophical explanation, traditional system and living way of life are embodied in *Mundum*. Culture, religion and language separate one caste from the other. These factors provide every race a unique fame, distinct from others. *Yalang* and *Palam* are two most popular cultural tools of the *Limbus* that has maintained their identity and to some extent help them from extinction of such cultural heritage.

The *Limbus* culture and tradition is changing grammatically in course of time. Their cultural and traditional treasures of folk tales, legendary episodes, lyrics, myths, fables and folklore, are properly documented, compiled and rearranged, it will be of several volumes. But quite amazingly such efflorescent literature not in written form. Though they had that system but it was abandoned by the followers latter on. Chaitanya Subba in his text, *The Culture and Religion of Limbu* writes:

There are some indication in the *Mundum* that there was a system of writing and compilation or collection of scriptures in ancient scripts among the progeny of sewa Yethangs (Kiratas). The Buddhist text Lalitavistara also mentions about the writings of Yakshas, Asuras (Kirata?) while dealing on paleography providing the list of 64 scripts. But in course of time it passed into oblivion, the reasons of which are unknown. (293)

From the above indication, we come to know that they had the system of writing and collection system but it was ceased later. A written tradition begins only at the latter years of first millennium A.D. with *Sirijanga* Script. Only a few materials have been claimed as the works of *Sirijanga* which also throw light on some aspect of *Limbu* culture and still *Mundums* were not through compiled and written down. Very little is known about literary status of the *Limbu* Kirates prior to this period, but the works attributed to *Sirijanga* divulge that the *Limbu* might have already reached the phase of standard written language and their religious practices were already well established.

Limbus have faced several ups and down and they migrated to several places which forced them to adopt cultures of other caste too. The reign of *Sirijanga*, the philosopher king, thinker and social reformer was the period of renaissance in the cultural history of *Limbu*, Kirates. J.R. Subba explains, "The script was introduced, calligraphers were produced and a system of writing was initiated during this period. There are also some indication that the infusion of Sanskrit elements in *Limbu* literature began with the introduction of script and writing tradition" (294). Thus, it is likely that the influences of "great tradition" have caused disturbances or even cessation in the evolution or progression of the culture and traditional religion of *Limbus*.

This process of 'Sanskritization', a process by which people of low caste or tribe or other group change their customs, ideology and way of life in the direction of a higher or twice born caste become common phenomena for upward mobility in the Hinduized hierarchical society. In the process of living together, they also gradually adopt some culture and left a bit in their culture. Those days, many *Limbus* have

abandoned some of their traditional customs and instead have adopted Hindu practices.

Language is means of expressing any feelings, thoughts, beliefs, ideas etc. which is one of the best reward of human beings have obtained as gift by god can be taken as human heritage. *Limbus* are using their language in their community during festive occasion and family gathering etc. But now a days, slowly and gradually they are leaving their culture because of the mixed community and preference to Nepali language. In this context, 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 form. In this case, one of the contributors to the *Limbu* language and literature, Govinda Angbung expresses, "the domination of Nepali language has brought the crisis in *Limbu* language" (interview). On the other hand, in the course of preserving *Limbu* have organized Kirat yakthung Chumlung which means assembly. Under this organization many chumlung are working in different aspects of *Limbus* language, culture, script, ritual rites and socio-economy. In this context, J.R. Subba writes in his text, *The Limbu of the Eastern Himalayas* from Sikkim about *Limbu* language:

Limbu language is one of the official languages out of the eleven languages out of the eleven languages recognized by the government of Sikkim on 31st March 1981. It is widely spoken by about two lakhs people of India mostly in the state of Sikkim hill areas of west Bengal, Assam and other north eastern states. About six lakhs *Limbu* people speak this language in the world scattered throughout Nepal, India,

Bhutan, Hong Kong, Myanmar, Brunei, Canada, U.K. and other part of the world. (1)

The enthusiasts of *Limbu* language are always suffering in Nepal since long. *Limbu* language was prohibited by the ruling elites. So such attitude of state left the *Limbus* of Nepal far behind in social awakening and cultural development. Subba expresses his opinion by the following ways:

The enthusiasts of *Limbu* language and literature are always suffering in Nepal since the last 18th century. The cultural identity of any community was taken as treat to the national unification by ruling elites until the recent years. The state mechanism, left the *Limbu* of Nepal far behind in social awakening, cultural development and economic progress. (36)

The written literature of *Limbu* language is still in its fancy. But the hidden treasure of oral literature is vast and dispersed and very little is documented so far. What has been tried in this direction so far is only a tiny fraction of the enormous resources, much more needs to be done in time to preserve the vast vanishing cultural wealth with the emerging new culture. The political movement of late seventies created a relatively lax situation which made the institution for cultural development feasible. As a result, Kirat Dharma Tatha Sahitya Utthan Sangh was started in the early eighties and Kirat Yakthung Chumlung was organized in late eighties and some attempts were made to mobilize local resources for the development of *Limbu* language, literature and culture. In this context, Chaitanya Subba appreciates the work of two orginations; Kirat Dharma Tatha Sahitya Utthan Sangh and Kirat yakthung Chumlung in such way:

Kirat Dharma Tatha Sahitya Utthan Sangh was started in the early eighties and Kirat Yakthung Chumlung was organized in late eighties and some attempts were made to mobilize local resources for the development of *Limbu* language, literature and culture, Kirat yakthung Chumlung is playing [. . .]. Today, 72 schools of Taplejung, Panthar, and Terhathum districts have started to teach language in grade one and two as an optional subject under the initiation of local management committee. (37)

Except this, a small number of *Limbus* also came in cultural contact with the western countries, particularly with Great Britain through the service in the British Gurkha Army. This influenced them to adopt the western culture and some of them adopted the Christianity too. When they converted, they have brought some small change in their habitual and other activities. The belief in casteism, monopoly of some section of Bahun, Kshetris on state mechanism, colonial, attitudes of traditionally privileged ruling elites towards the indigenous ethnic inhabitants, political treatment of the central authority towards indigenous ethnic and tribal people has worsened the situation of *Limbus* and has become identical threat to them.

Yalang and *Palam*, cultural heritage of *Limbu* is being destroyed due to the influence of other culture or cultural adulteration. Now a days *Limbus* are aware about the importance of education and they are enrolling their children in school. This process has made them aware about Hindu belief and value system and modify the way of life of local people by interpreting it in the changing context and thus accelerated the pace of acculturation.

Limbu dances, both recreational and cultural ritual kinds, significantly designate a cultural property.

Although the tradition of *Yalang* has been transmitted from forefathers, one generation to next, seems to be as an age-old and static, rather a dynamic phenomenon. The steadiness and dynamism of *Yalang* tradition has made it a vibrant and a part of living culture. Not only *Palam* and ways of *Yalang* which has been transformed over time and space but also ideas, skills and performances that are constantly being adopted for the modern life style. The performances of such an oral tradition may slightly vary from time to time and from place to place because the nature of oral context is often multi-leveled, fluid and flexing; however, it provides the knowledge of the past history and relates it to the stories of the universe and origin of their people. *Palam* folksongs are the true medium of expression of human emotions and sentiments. They help to convey those feelings and emotions, ideas and information from generation to generation. Through the medium of song and dance, *Yalang* has been a source of those expressions and reflections of human aspirations. It has become a Vibrant historical and cultural inheritance in the community. It also exposes the cultural rights that are implicated through traditional knowledge of *Yalang* and reflects the human aspiration how the youths while singing such contesting *Palam* filled with queries and its responses exchange wide-ranging modes of ideas and knowledge, life experiences, creations of cosmos, nature and living beings, day to day activities, love and faith, and the surrounding.

In the same way, elderly men and women do forgetting their past caring days and nights watch *Yalang* and listen *Palam*, tranquil melodic song. There can be a direct dialogue between a lover and beloved. Sometime they openly express their

inner feelings to their lovers and vice-versa through the medium of *Palam*. Therefore, *Palam* is an authentic means of expression, a way to express pain and pleasure, love and loss, life and world and so on. In Rana Dayal Rakesh's word (1990), "Folksongs (like *Palam*) play a vital role in healing the wounds of separation. We get an excellent insight into the human heart in some of these folksongs" (33).

Moreover, *Palam* is a concoction of oral narrative poetry and creative song, and then it is not something of a far away and a long ago; there is the sense of immediacy. To refer Finnegan Ruth, "[It] is not just a survival of past ages and stages; it is a normal part of our modern life as well as that of more distant peoples" (6). *Yalang*, as a fusion of past and present lives, invests in the subject of love and affection, world genesis, past and present experiences, plus future perspectives incorporated together through the medium of *Palam*. The *Palam* has both the characteristics specified above as it gives a lot of past information as a narrative song, and also creatively concretizes human feelings and expressions. It is a melange of collection of the past knowledge and folk poetry furnishing with a cultural identity rooted in the past times to the present socio-cultural circumstances. Therefore, *Palam* can be taken as medium of narrative song of creation myth, the origin of the universe and the living beings, a song of the past, the present and the future. As Joseph Kizerbo, "Oral tradition as a historical source" notes that "oral tradition is by far the most intimate and the richest of historical source, the one which is most filled with the soap of authenticity" (1). This oral poetry that being implied in *Palam* for conveying merit of actual life and the sense of Urgency is, therefore, problematized by Abhi Subedi that, "*Limbu* oral poetry, *Palam* should be looked at as a unique genre of folk poetic culture."

While participating in *Yalang*, certain norms are followed automatically there. As *Palam* is both oral narrative and creative song, a source of information ranging from the vast realm of world activities and knowledge, helps rendering an environment of equitable society. *Palam* sometimes overwhelmingly and overtly creates aesthetic feelings in youths and sometimes also exchanges the feeling of irreversible human destiny. Therefore, the thematic essence of *Palam* moves between the performance of aesthetic experience and fundamental human experience as by observing world as performance. David E. R. George avers that "Aesthetic experience belongs to the core of man's being; it is more fundamental than any intellectual experience" (41). One's being in *Yalang* assures one's cultural right and representation, and in aestheticism of *Palam* we find both strands of experiences working mutually.

Limbu culture is going to disappear due to invasion of foreign culture and from the national policies level too any attention is not paid for its conservation and promotion. The *Limbus*, though, trying to preserve them by celebrating the festivals and culture time to time but also it seems that their work is merely the bubble of water. To make this culture alive and vibrant necessary steps should be taken by state and concerned parties too. In this context, I have got an opportunity to have an interview with a scholar of *Limbu* community, Dil Bahadur Lawati, resident of Pathar Sanischare-1, who is the politbureo member of Aadibasi Janajat Mahasang and president of Pathari Sanischare municipality help to quench curiosity. How and when does the Dhannach begun ? He replies that it has been celebrating generation to generation since it (rice) was discovered by human beings. To thrash the rice from hay, all the people except brothers and sisters, gather together in a place where rice is collected for thrashing and people catching their hands with one another in a tune of

Palam lifting their legs up and down, to and fro moves around to separate rice from straw. The *Limbus* use the very popular word *soltini* (non of their near relatives) and express their feelings of joys and sorrows through *Palam*. In the mean time, I have inquired him about the changes in Dhannach and song, in the past and present. He responds immediately saying that due to changing context lots of change can be noticed.

The English education system, T.V. Channels, Hindi movies, English movies are the factors affecting the cultural performance. They love to adopt such culture abandoning their own in the name of being modern. Furthermore, he says *Mundhum* (the sacred book of *Limbu*) is complex in language and youths can not understand its charm so they follow other instead of their own. Similarly, my next quarry was: Is their any change on the costume they wear during the performance ? In its response, he illustrates: In the past, male used to wear *Daura Suruwal*, Dhaka Topi (Nepali cap, shoes with socks and tie *patuki* (a type of cloth belt) and hang *Khukuri* (a type of weapon) but now a days, male are seen dancing Dhannach wearing Jeans pants and T-shirt, which is not their traditional attire. Similarly, female used to wear *chaubandhi cholo*, *patuki*, sari having 11 metre with ornaments like bangles, *sheerful* (moon made up with gold worn on the hair), *Sheer bandhi* (a special ornament worn on forehead), *Kalli* (worn on leg made of silver), *Naau Gedti* (Gold balls) *Dhungri* (worn on ears and nose), *Bulaki* (worn on nose) and rings on fingers. But now a days, they dance in different dresses in various songs including film songs. Few youths who want to preserve their culture are seen in traditional attire and songs. Relating my question's the culture and custom of *Limbu* is degrading slowly he replies that of course, the culture and traditions of *Limbus* are degrading but still some male and female are found celebrating festivals and other rituals in traditional way. He further argues that

forming an organization, Kirant Yakthung Chumlung they have been organizing various programmes for its preservice. Replying my question, what are the activities this organization has been doing ? He argues that from the central office to local level Kirant Yakthum Chumlung has been doing several activities. Central level activities are not enough to convey the message to local level. According to him, day by day the number of exports in Mundhum has been decreasing so to retain it from the central level, the number of them must be recorded and the new generation should be trained in Mundhum and it should be spread all over Nepal as well as other parts of the world. For protection in local level, they have set temple Hangsam Shewa Manghim (Shiva Temple) in pahtari - 1 where they have brought phedangmas after getting education from Larambha (a place name where people interested are taught by experts and converted into priest). Similarly, in Sanischare- 5, they have set up Yuma Manghim (Temple of Parwati) where priest teach young generation about the all the ritual activities from birth to death. More than this, he seems worried about the *Limbu* convert into Christianity, according to him this is because of unfair act of state to *Limbu* and the racial dominance and caste system.

As my visit centered to the *Limbu* community, I got another opportunity to encounter next expert of *Yalang* and *Palam* who is ex-preseident of Kirant Yakthum Chumlung of Morang district, member of central committee and board member of management committee of Pathri Multiple Campus, Govinda Wonem has been questioned as follows:

(a) What are the changes have you found in the *Yalang* and *Palam* in the past and present ? In the past, male and female used to dance by catching their hands with the tune of *Palam* after making consent before dancing was the system prevalent. It was taken as a great source of entertainment in both happy and sorrowful state. Clarifying

the differences between the *Palam* in happy state shares the joyful movement between lovers and beloved by exchanging their deep love where as in sorrowful state, they sing *Palam* but there is no trace of love and conjugal life in which they pray almighty not to have reoccurrence of such misery in anyone's life. They worship the thirty three million God and Goddess of sky and unground as witness and help them to redeem such upcoming turmoil. Wonem articulates the dancing procedure of the past that was the male or female before dancing used to ask their name, surname and their material uncle and grand father's name to identify the relation. Taking the reference of his own, he further explains once he as a novice of *Palam* was questioned as preparation of Dhannach in such a way; Hajur Leana Pamphe. Aatang lagi. His responses to the question was SAFNA WA CHUWA TIN PEREAPHEMBAY DUKHI REA PAMPHE CHANGEA PEMBA. In such a way, they sing *Palam* in mutual understanding but he himself says that at present version of *Yalang* and *Palam* has been changed according to Wonem it becomes Sheakmang (Dream or Sapana) to him. He remembers the purity of *Yalang* and *Palam* and repents on the loss of verginity of the *Yalang* and *Palam*. Now a days the performer of Dhannach directly pull the hands of ladies and enforces them to dance without their consent. Moreover, he laments on the chastity of it that he relates it on his example of the *Palam* of recent time, i.e. *Betai koLaure Stick Ka Du: Kherea Tajang Mistake*, this short *Palam* clearly gives an example of linguistic adulteration. We find the combination of three languages i.e. Nepali, English, *Limbu*. From this he shows the perfect change in *Palam* and the forceful way for dance is good trace of degradation of Limus culture. To make his argument comprehensive he further says at present in some places they sing film songs instead of *Palam*. He adds that now a days, mixture of various musical

instrument to make it melodious is applied in each *Palam* which is totally against traditional way of singing *Palam*.

To have better knowledge, I kept on asking the factors affecting the purity of *Yalang* and *Palam* and he continued responding by the following ways; (a) Recruitment in army (b) Mixed habitat with other caste and culture (c) The compulsion of Khas language since 1831 B.S. discouraging to their own language. (d) The effect of mass media such as Radio, T.V., Film, Internet etc.

Mr. Wonem, he laid extra focus on the importance of above five factors for the degradation of *Limbu* language, caste, culture and tradition. He seemed quite worried when he was asked the ways to stop erosion of culture. Then after, I have added one extra question to him, it was; what is the role Kirant Yakthum Chumlung playing for the preservation of *Yalang* and *Palam* ? he tells that Mundhum as a text is recorded in tape so it can be studied and become more convenient to use and can be a good script. All the activities from birth to death rite are recorded in script in which Til Bikram Nambang (Bai Ragye Kaila) has played significant role on preparing it. The script of part is collected and computerized in Srijanga script. The newspaper like Tancho and so on in *Limbu* language is being published. He manifests the performance of *Yalang* and *Palam* in various places by *Limbus* are some of the events which has been running in several places in association with Kirant Yakthum Chumlung deserves to collect special thanks for the preservation of *Limbu* culture from the extinction.

To sum up, *Yalang* vividly represents *Limbu* culture and society, and hence, is one of the *Limbu* cultural heritages. *Yalang* is not static as such but a dynamic performing art, embodiment of cultural properties and representation, socio-cultural identity and creative expressions. It is a collective creation, an exclusive cultural performance seems decreasing by degrees as tradition of oral expression have been

facing great crisis because of modernization and changing life style of the world. Many of them are on the verge of extinction. "The traditional songs of some folk groups are increasingly influenced by mainstream Nepali songs on radio and Television" (Diwas and Bandhu 25). The problems remain here is that why those intellectuals of today still observe only from the angle of the some western rationality, why do they ignore the ground reality of the nation and its history. The traditional songs and dances are getting extinct not only due to the influence of so-called mainstream Nepali songs and dances on radio and television but due to their instructions and encroachments over traditional songs and dances. Therefore, conservation and promotion of such cultural heritages have been very crucial mission how. Tradition bearers of every community are to be encouraged to perform such heritages and make them more dynamic and vibrant in the days ahead. Thus, it has been crucial time which urgently requires for bring special kind of measures for the proper conservation and promotion of such heritages, for that, these must be taken significant measures and common efforts by the folk group itself the nation, social organization such as UNESCO and so on.

Chapter V

Conclusion

The research on *Yalang* and *Palam*, the cultural performance of *Limbus* explores the performative activities of *Limbus* before, after and during the festive Occasion. Not only this much their cultural activities from the time immemorial up to now is clearly stated through the reflection of expertise writing on the dancing and singing culture of *Limbus*. Furthermore, it has highlighted about the cultural identity and the challenge to conserve it in the changing context.

Yalang and *Palam* are performed in varieties of ways because of fluid and multi-levelled nature of oral tradition. It is also collective memory of the past and has no individual authorship, and therefore, it is living culture. The *Yalang* and *Palam* significantly helps for providing a distinctive identity and definition to the *Limbu* people how they are like and how they behave with other and each other in their community. It connects haves and have nots, high and low, black and white, strong and weak by bringing all the *Limbus* together with the thread of culture in a Liminal norm.

Yalang and *Palam* are performed in an open place at night. Oftenly which helps to forget their pains, sufferings and sorrows, and ties them in a garland with multiple colours like rainbow. This cultural performance is also popularly known as Dhannach carried out during the plantation and harvesting seasons of *Dhan* (paddy), which is staple food of the *Limbus*. This is really associated to myth of creation entertainment and the source of inspiration for *Limbus*. Most of the *Limbus* believes that frequent participation in *Yalang* and becoming well versed in *Palam* facilitates them to gain mastery over their woes and troubles.

Thus, *Yalang* and *Palam* vividly represent *Limbu* culture and society, and hence, is one of the *Limbu* culture heritages. It's an amalgam of oral tradition and creativity, a performing art, living culture a great source of cultural freedom and so on. But now, *Yalang* as well as *Palam* and other such historically and culturally valuable heritages have been gradually being extinct mainly due to external and internal ignorance. Thus, it has been very crucial time which urgently requires for bringing up some special kind of measures for the proper conservation and promotion of such heritages. That is why all of us not only *Limbus* should put strong step to conserve long live strange culture for handing it to the upcoming generation to retain their history and culture, their identity from every side. The core ideas must be understood on time to resolve it on time rather than to tell once upon a time there lived *Limbus* in the eastern hills of Nepal having unique cultures.

Works Cited

- Bista, Dor Bahadur. *Peole of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1967.
- Carlson, Marvin, "What in performance ?" Bial, Henry. Eds. *The Performance studies Reader*. New York: 2008: 70-75.
- Chemjong, Imansing. *History and Culture of Kirat People*. Lalitpur: Kirat yakthung Chumlung, 1967.
- Clifford, Greetz. *Interpretation of Cultures*.
- Diamond, Elin. *Performance and Cultural Politics*. New York: Routledge, 1996.
- Durrant, Will. 1935a. Reprint. *The Near East. Our Oriental Heritage*. New York: MJF Books.
- Gautam, Rajesh and Ashok K. Thapa Magar. *Tribal Ethnography of Nepal*. Azadur: Book Faith India, 1989.
- Ingam, Sher Bahadur. *Kirat Eitihās Ra Sanskriti*. Kathmandu: Prompt Printers Pvt. Ltd., 2063 B.S.
- Kainla, Bairagi. Sanglang Pegiro, *Tongsing Takma Mudhum*. Unpublished.
- Lawati, Dil Bahadur. *Personal Interview*. 28th August, 2014.
- Lawati, Yehang. *Aadibasi Limbu Jatiko Samchhipta Parichaya*. Kathmandu: Dill Bahadur Lawati, 2005.
- Nalbo, Seseni Se. *Palam Ingjum*. Damak: Limbu Sahitya Pratisthan, 2056 B.S.
- Pande, Madhusudhan. *Nepalka Janjatiharū*. Kathmandu: Pairavi Prakashan 2063 B.S.
- Sambahamphe, Surya. "Purwanchal Ko Chabrung Ra Dhannach". *Anapurna Post*. 5. Baishakh, 2063, p. 12.
- Schechner, Richard. "From Ritual to Theatre, and Back". *Performance Theory*. New York: Routledge, 1988, pp. 112-170.

Sherma, Chandra Kumar. *Yalakma Mundhum*. Damak: Bhupendra Thebe and Urmila Thebe, 2056.

---. et al. *Personal Interview*. 24 Dec. 2010.

Shrestha, Shiv Kumar. *Limbuwan Ko Aitihask Adhyan (Historical Study of Limbuwan)*. Lalitpur: Kirat Prakashan, 2042.

Shrestha, Shiva Kumar. *Limbuwan Ko Aitihask Adhyan (Historical Study of Limbuwan)*. Lalitpur: Kirat Prakashan, 2042.

Subba, Chaitanya. *The Culture and Religion of Limbus*. Kathmandu: K.B. Subba, 1995.

Subba, Chaitanya. *The Culture and Religion of Limbus*. Kathmandu: K. B. Subba, 1995.

Subba, J. R. *The Limbus of Eastern Himalays*. Ref. Sikkim, Gangtok: Sikkim Yakthung Mudhum Saplopa, 1999.

Subba, Sunita. *Sanskritik Paribesima Yalang-Dhannachko Sthan (Place of Paddy Dance in the Cultural Aspect)*. (Term Paper) Kathmandu: Nepal Academy, 2062.

Subedi, Abhi. "Power of Oral Poetry: *Limbu* Ritual Songs". *Across*, 2000, 4.1: 23-27.

Turner, Victor. *The Anthropology of Performance*. New York: Paj, 1988.

Wonem, Govinda. *Personal Interview*. 29th August 2014.