

Tribhuvan University

Nexus between Thulung Death Ritual and Ecological Consciousness

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By

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Abstract

This thesis is an analysis of the Thulung Death Rituals of the inhabitants of Ilam district in eastern Nepal. The death ritual of this community is eco-friendly and it shows the direct link with ecology. The way they show the reverence towards nature gives a special place and distinct identity to Thulung community. This ritual in Thulung ethnicity is primarily dependent on nature. While decaying the dead body inside the ground, it promotes the nature rather than polluting it, and hence death ritual in 'Thulung' is eco-friendly. This thesis also explains the relation between human and nature. It also shows how Kirati people are conscious in preserving nature and its importance. For this purpose, the research has used some insights from ecocritical criticism and some ideas related to performance studies.

Key Words: - death ritual, ecocriticism, cultural artifacts, ecosystem, Thulung ethnicity

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Abstract

This thesis is an analysis of the Thulung Death Rituals of the inhabitants of Ilam district in eastern Nepal. The death ritual of this community is eco-friendly and it shows the direct link with ecology. The way they show the reverence towards nature gives a special place and distinct identity to Thulung community. This ritual in Thulung ethnicity is primarily dependent on nature. While decaying the dead body inside the ground, it promotes the nature rather than polluting it, and hence death ritual in 'Thulung' is eco-friendly. This thesis also explains the relation between human and nature. It also shows how Kirati people are conscious in preserving nature and its importance. For this purpose the research has used some insights from ecocritical criticism and some ideas related to performance studies.

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Thulung is one of the large ethnic Kirat communities within the Rai group. The umbrella term 'Kirat' refers to the main four ethnic groups, Khambu or Rai¹, Limbu or Subba, Sunuwar or Mukhiya and Yakkha or Dewan. It is assumed that the term Thulung is derived from the two independent native words *thumu* and *lung*. The literary meanings of these words are *thumu* 'establishing' and *lung* 'stone'. So, the common word Thulung implies the core meaning 'establishing a home or residence made up of stones'. In other words, the literary meaning of the word Thulung signifies the dwelling made up of the stones, or to shelter in a cave (which is made up of a huge flat stone). Historically, it is convincing fact that the Thulung ancestral used to live in

¹ The ethnic group *Rai* is also known with the terms *Jimindar*, *Jimdar*, *Jimi*, etc.

