

Yongya Manggena Mundhum: Orality, Lineage, and Yakthung Identity

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Abstract

This study explores the lineage, oral traditions, and historical narratives of the Yongya clan through the Orality Text embedded in Manggena Mundhum. The Yongya clan traces its ancestry to the Sawa Yehang Dynasty, a foundational lineage of Yakthung (Limbu) society, and holds ancestral titles such as Khambongba Sa and Lungbongba Sa, reflecting their socio-spiritual roles. Manggena Mundhum functions as a living historical archive and Indigenous knowledge system that connects spirituality, memory, and identity. Transmitted orally across generations, it offers an alternative to written historiography and preserves collective memory. Ritual specialists, Phedangba, Samba, Yeba, and Yema, serve as spiritual guides and custodians of ancestral knowledge. Grounded in an Indigenous research paradigm, the study recognizes oral tradition, relational knowledge, and ancestral memory as valid historical methods. Using qualitative Indigenous approaches, including oral histories, participant observation, and ethnographic fieldwork, the research engages elders and ritual practitioners to document embedded knowledge. The findings reveal strong historical continuity between the Yongya clan and the Sawa Yehang lineage, extending to the Neolithic period. The study challenges Eurocentric historiography and affirms the Mundhumic worldview as a legitimate historical and philosophical framework, emphasizing the central role of oral tradition in preserving Yakthung identity and cultural heritage.

Keywords: *Yongya clan Genealogy, Oral Tradition, Indigenous Knowledge Systems, Orality and Historiography, Sawa Yehang Lineage*

Introduction

The Yongya clan is a notable surname within the Yakthung Limbu community, originally part of the Thibong Yakthung lineage and residing in Onyem Yangwarak, Bharapa, and Simbuwa in Panchthar. Over time, they migrated to regions across Nepal, including Ilam, Dhankuta,

Taplejung, Jhapa, Morang, Sunsari, and the Kathmandu Valley, and later to places like Sikkim, Darjeeling, Mirik, Assam, Bhutan, and internationally to the UK, Hong Kong, and the United States. According to royal decrees and charters issued by the Sen, Namgyal, and Shah rulers, the territory of the Yongya clan was bordered by Sikkim to the east, Lungrakpa to the west, Phemekhola to the southwest, and Narangga Bhanjyang to the north. The Yongya clan's Kippat land extended from the banks of the Tamor River to Timbung Warak, encompassing a region situated at the tri-junction of Nepal, Sikkim, and China.

Although one of the smaller Yakthung clans, the Yongya hold a significant and influential place within the community, with the Onyem region in Panchthar serving as a central hub of their identity. The name "Yongya" is rooted in diverse oral traditions: some trace it to the descendants of Tellara Lahadanghan, while others link it to the Yangma Valley in Taplejung or the Yungwa Khola in Onyem. Regardless of its precise origin, the name is deeply embedded in the Mundhum, symbolizing the interconnection of ancestry, sacred geography, and cosmology. This relationship echoes Rappaport's (1968) observation that Indigenous rituals are not only cultural expressions but also mechanisms that sustain ecological balance and social order. In a similar way, the Yongya's identity reflects how ritual and belief systems are intimately tied to land, lineage, and the Yakthung way of life.

The Yongya Manggena Mundhum traces the descent of the Yongya clan to *Lahadangna* and *Suhangpheba*. According to oral traditions, their union—often described as incestuous, produced eighteen children. To determine their lineage, a sacred ritual was performed using *Yuppa Chilinge* and *Samayang Chhilinge* [A mythical sieve crafted from gold and copper], in which sesame seeds were sifted. The children assigned to Lahadangna became known as *Sawa Yethang*, while those of Suhangpheba were identified as *Peliphangsam*. Among Lahadangna's descendants, the Yongya, also known as *Yangya Hang*, were brought to *Sawa Yehang Pangve*, a pivotal event that gave rise to the phrase "*Ma-Yuru Ma-Yangya*", meaning "*brought to Sawa Yehang by the mother.*" Manggena Mundhum rituals, *Phedangma* priests must chant the *Mingsra* (clan names) of all *Yakthung Yongya* clans, helping to preserve and transmit these ancestral histories through oral recitation (B. Yongya, personal communication, October 10, 2024). This research explores the genealogical connections of the Yongya clan through Manggena Mundhum as a living oral history passed down for centuries. Serving as a vital historical source, Manggena Mundhum offers insights

into the clan's ancient migrations, ancestral ties, rituals, origins, survival struggles, and belief systems tied to land, nature, spirituality, and cosmology.

Manggena is understood as the power or energy of the earth, often incarnated and revered as *Khambuling Picchamma*, an agile lightning goddess emerging from the earth (Subba, 1998). Subba asserts that the spark that flew towards the sky became *Ngegere Nahangma Sam*, while the spark that fell to the earth, *Khambuling Picchamma*, is *Manggena*, the sister of *Nahangma Sam*. In essence, *Manggena* embodies and symbolizes the power of the earth. Rooted in Indigenous epistemology, interpreting *Mangena Mundhum* through an Indigenous research paradigm is essential. By analysing oral texts, folklore, and ritual performances, this study illuminates the broader *Yakthung* lineage and cultural framework. The *Mangena* ritual, therefore, plays a significant role in connecting the *Yakthung* people to their ancestral roots, cultural identity, and cosmological worldview.

The following passage describes the origin story of the *Yakthung* people, emphasising kinship, social norms, and ritualistic decision-making. *Suhangpheba* and *Lahangdangna*, believed to be siblings, faced exile due to their forbidden relationship, highlighting the community's strict social taboos. Their separation and the division of their children through a ritual using a sieve and sesame seeds reflect a symbolic and culturally significant method of resolving lineage disputes. The ritual's outcome—where the fallen seeds determined *Lahangdangna*'s lineage and the remaining seeds defined *Suhangphekwa*'s suggests a belief in fate or divine intervention in familial organisation. This narrative underscores the role of mythology in shaping ethnic identities and social structures, as documented by *Kaila* (2008).

Yakthungs are believed to be descendants of siblings, with *Suhangpheba* and *Lahangdangna* (Ancestors of the *Yethang Yakthung Limbu*) having 18 children. *As per Tutu Tummyang, their forbidden relationship was considered socially unacceptable, leading to their exile from the community. Consequently, they decided to separate and divide their children. To determine the division, they performed a ritual using a sieve and sesame seeds. The seeds that fell through the sieve were assigned to Lahadangna, while those remaining on top belonged to Suhangphebas* (*Chemjong, 2003; Kaila, 2008*).

Yakthung leaders confer upon them the title of "Raya," signifying their authority. The term "Limbu" appears to be a relatively recent designation, with the indigenous term "Yakthung"

meaning "heroes of the hills" (Limbu, 2020). Genealogically, the Limbus trace their ancestry to three branches of earlier Kirats Lhasha Gotra from the north, Kashsi Gotra from the west-south, and Tangsnag Gotra from the east-south. As rulers of Yakthung Laje (Limbuwan), they resisted Gurkha expansion for twelve years before reaching an agreement through the Lal Mohar, which granted their chiefs administrative and economic privileges in exchange for peace (Limbu, 2010). This historical struggle and eventual compromise shaped their socio-political identity within Nepal.

Beyond historical records, Yakthung identity is deeply intertwined with the Mundhum, an oral tradition that has preserved their indigenous knowledge, philosophy, and cultural values over generations. Despite challenges, the Mundhum has remained central to their way of life, influencing their customs, social structures, and worldview (Subba, 2005). As a ritual and narrative tradition, the Mundhum plays a crucial role in the Kirati belief system, though scholarly research on its complexities remains limited (Allen, 1978; Gaenzle, 2002). While the Yakthung people have endured historical upheavals, their traditions and linguistic identity continue to thrive, reflecting their resilience and deep connection to their ancestral heritage.

The oral traditions of the Central Himalayas, including Nepal and Uttarakhand, encompass two major genres: epic oral poetry and shamanic ritual chants, each evolving in distinct cultural settings (Lecomte-Tilouine, 2016). Oral history differs from oral traditions in that it comprises firsthand accounts of contemporary events, whereas oral traditions are passed down through generations, often transforming over time (Vansina, 1985). Despite not being part of conventional historical records, oral history plays a crucial role in preserving local knowledge and engaging non-academic participants in the process of "making history" (Bhattarai, 2020). Among the Yakthung (Limbu) people, oral traditions and ritualistic practices are vital in maintaining their historical consciousness and cultural identity. These narratives and ceremonies, such as Manggena, reinforce their connection to ancestral heritage, blending history, mythology, and spirituality.

Manggena is a central ritual in Yakthung culture, symbolising dignity, success, and personal achievement while serving as a means of reinforcing lineage, prosperity, and spiritual ties (Wanem, 2016). This annual family ceremony, led by Limbu priests such as Phedangba, incorporates religious rites, life-cycle ceremonies, and the recitation of Mundhum—an ancient oral

scripture that shapes Yakthung cosmology (Kaila, 2059). The ritual seeks to promote peace, harmony, and well-being, particularly for women, emphasising balanced relationships and community well-being. Rooted in creation myths like "Nahang Maggena Mundhum" and "Tangsing Mundhum," Manggena is deeply intertwined with the spiritual realm, "Chōlùng," reflecting the Yakthung people's connection to their ancestral land (Yangya, 2025). While fragments of historical truth within these traditions align with broader Himalayan narratives, much remains unexplored due to a lack of systematic scholarly inquiry. Consequently, the preservation and study of Yakthung oral traditions are crucial for understanding their historical and cultural legacy.

The Yongya clan's Manggena Mundhum serves as a sacred ritual journey, mapping the ancestral migration and spiritual landscape of the Yakthung people. This journey traces a vast expanse from Sin:Yuk Muden to Chyangdangbo Mangena Lungdhung, passing through key historical and cultural sites across the Himalayan region, including Taplejung, the Brahmaputra region, Jhapa, Ilam, Phidim and Chayangthapu Gadi (P. Yongya, Personal communication, Sep 21, 2024). These locations mark the clan's deep-rooted settlement and spiritual connection to the land, culminating in the worship of Mangena Lungdhung, a sacred site symbolising their ancestral presence. The Yongya surname is believed to descend from the Sawa Yethang Sa, a lineage associated with the ancient Hang culture and ruling traditions along the Nepal-Tibet border.

The ritualistic recitation of Mangena Mundhum encodes historical movement, governance, and cosmology, reinforcing the Yakthung people's sense of identity and continuity within the broader *Sawa Yethang* tradition. The sacrifice affirms the household head's spiritual power. At the ritual's conclusion, it is said that the household head's "soul has risen" (*sām phungma*) and his "head is held high again," serving as powerful metaphors for restored dignity, authority, and possibly political legitimacy (Sagant, 1981). Sagant (1981) interprets that the household head also inherits weapons identical to Nahangma's—a bow, sword, and shield—symbolising the warrior role and the authority conferred upon him through the ritual.

Beyond its function as a genealogical record, the Mangena Mundhum serves as a living historical and cosmological narrative, embodying centuries of ancestral wisdom and cultural consciousness. The concept of Yak, meaning permanent settlement, is linked to Anyem "Yungwa,"

Khola, now known as Inngwa or IndrawatiKhola Oyam, reflecting the Yongya clan's intimate connection to their land and water sources. The etymological derivation of Yangya from Yungwa underscores this deep relationship with nature and migration patterns. Rooted in Indigenous Knowledge Theory, Orality and Memory Studies, and Yakthung Ontology and Axiology, the study of Manggena Mundhum validates oral tradition as a credible historical source. By employing Indigenous epistemology and methodology, it challenges Eurocentric historiography, affirming the Mundhum's role in preserving Yakthung civilisation, lineage, and cultural consciousness. Through its ritual chants, spiritual symbolism, and encoded history, the Manggena Mundhum stands as a profound testament to the resilience and heritage of the Yakthung people.

Methodology

This study employs a qualitative research methodology grounded in Indigenous paradigms to explore the genealogy, historical narratives, and cultural consciousness of the Yongya clan through the lens of *Manggena Mundhum*. By challenging Eurocentric historiography, which has historically marginalised oral traditions, this research highlights oral histories, lived experiences, and ritual performances as essential sources of historical knowledge. Drawing from Smith's (1999) decolonising framework, the study critiques the appropriation and misuse of Indigenous knowledge by Western methodologies, which have contributed to the dispossession and marginalisation of Indigenous communities (Battiste, 2008; Smith, 1999). Adopting a collaborative approach, the research integrates Yakthung cultural protocols, values, and worldviews, prioritising relational accountability, reciprocity, and mutual respect to honour the voices and traditions of the Yakthung people.

Methodologically, the study is rooted in an Indigenous paradigm that reveres relational ways of knowing, ancestral memory, and oral tradition as legitimate and enduring methodologies, grounded in spiritual continuity, embodied experience, and the sacred interconnection between land, lineage, and the spiritual realm. The research utilises oral history documentation, ethnographic fieldwork, participant observation, and ritual analysis to engage with Yakthung heritage comprehensively. Interviews with elders, ritual specialists, and clan members offer direct engagement with knowledge holders, while fieldwork immerses the researcher in the daily practices of the Yakthung people across Nepal, Sikkim, Darjeeling, and Bhutan. Participant

observation in *Manggena Mundhum* rituals reveals the performative aspects of these traditions, which serve as living historical records encoding the clan's origins, migration, spiritual beliefs, and social structures.

This study reaffirms *Manggena Mundhum* as a legitimate historical source while supporting efforts to preserve and revitalise Yakthung cultural consciousness. In addition to oral traditions and rituals, the research incorporates written records, such as the Lal Mohar issued by the Sikkim Tenchho Namgyal Dynasty and the Shah Kings of Nepal, a nearly 400-year-old document detailing the Yongya clan's genealogy. The integration of oral and written sources emphasises a holistic approach to history, challenging Western historiographical traditions that prioritise written records over oral traditions. This study underscores the value of Indigenous epistemology, which sees history, spirituality, and land as inherently interconnected. Through *Manggena Mundhum*, the Yakthung people preserve not only their historical narratives but also their cultural values and spiritual beliefs, affirming oral traditions as both historical records and spiritual connections to their ancestors.

The study further challenges Eurocentric notions of objectivity in historical research by drawing from Shawn Wilson's concept of "Research is Ceremony", which emphasises a relational model of knowledge. Within this framework, knowledge is dynamic, shaped through relationships between people, ancestors, land, and the cosmos. This approach moves beyond the extraction of Indigenous knowledge for academic purposes and instead engages in active participation within the community, ensuring that cultural heritage continues to be transmitted. Ultimately, the study affirms the legitimacy of oral traditions as a valid historiographical method, positioning *Manggena Mundhum* as a credible epistemological system. By recognising oral tradition as a vital source of historical knowledge, this research contributes to the broader movement of decolonising historical scholarship and preserving Indigenous knowledge systems, ensuring that Yakthung cultural consciousness remains vibrant and resilient for future generations.

Result and Discussion

The connection of the Yongya lineage to the Lasabansi has been firmly established through a wealth of oral traditions, a living form of historical transmission, as well as various written records. The Lasaha bansi are recognised as the direct progeny of Sawa Yehang, a

foundational figure in Yakthung history. However, misinterpretations of Mundhumic narratives have led to the widespread yet erroneous belief that the Lasahang arrived later in Yakthung Laje (Limbuwan) a claim that lacks historical accuracy and contradicts both oral and written sources. The Yakthung Mundhum, deeply rooted in the sacred Himalayan atmosphere, preserves the legacy of the Lasabansi Yakthung, affirming their continuous presence and cultural influence. Despite his pioneering efforts, Imaansing Chemjong's historical account in advertently distorted aspects of Lasabansi Yakthung's history by failing to engage deeply with oral traditions and indigenous knowledge systems. His reliance on limited sources overlooked critical oral testimonies that suggest the Lasabansi Yakthung were displaced by the Kasibansi Yakthung in Yangwarak, leading to surnames like Thindolung Khoyahang. Khoyahang was also displaced by Yonghang Thegimbansi from the emerging western and southern regions into Yakthung Laje. This shift is not merely speculative but is strongly validated by local folklore, oral traditions, and the enduring historical consciousness of the Yakthung people. The intricate web of oral traditions, indigenous narratives, and community-held beliefs stands as an undeniable testament to the authenticity of the Lasabansi Yakthung lineage, ensuring that their historical and cultural identity remains intact despite distortions and external misinterpretations.

The Yongya Mangena Mundhum continues to be chanted verbally during Mangena ritual performances conducted by Phedangba. The following excerpt from the Mundhum reflects its ancient form of living standards. For instance:

Sinyuk muden kunu, munatembe kunu; lasa tembe kunu kumbalung ga Chanjanglung ; Kummalunga ga Phepelung Khetho nuga Thingdanso kelande; Hang yukupung keyungnge Kethonu yammo muna tembe, khamna tembe Lasa tembe kegere pukyung hansoding keyungnge. khetthonu Wajik kedhansing : langthong kedhansin Yo yusu tapma, warak tapma kegere, khetthonu yo yusu tamdan wa;ma wahoplung keger, naphenchhu yangya (yangma) tembe, yongphu tembe ke;gere, yongya hang ga minso kewanching Namphenchu taplejung waya hangsoding keyungnge keyonu hampang lamnu, pokl bang yakko kegere kheyonu yo yusu jallarabillara temen warak kashi pangve kelaande, Kheyonu Jhapa, Ilam charkol pheden yak tangwa lam nu Kangwa sumlamdo kegere, Kheyonu tho yungwa (Ingwa) wahang k doruang yongya minsra kewanching Yongyarenga Mangena lungdung Chayangdanbo lung kuboksing ke; joguro. Onyem panve ga yukupung panve ingdo keyukhuro (Yongya Bansawali, 1997, p. 2).

This Mundhum chanting reveals that the *Yangya name* was first mentioned in the ancient oral tradition, specifically in connection with the *Phaktalung* and *Yangma regions*, which remain

significant in the Yakthung cultural landscape. According to Mundhum narratives, the origins of human beings trace back to Sin-Yuk, Muden, and Munaphen Tembe, where both Mundhum and Sawa Yehang originated. Over time, their descendants migrated to the Phaktanlung region of Taplejung, marking the foundation of Yakthung civilisation based on Mundhum traditions. The Yakthung people regard Phaktanlung as a sacred site, believing it to be the place of their origin, and continue to worship it as such. The Mangena of the Yongya clan also narrates the story of Poklabang Yak, located in Phedap, a tradition that continues to be upheld. This Mangena further substantiates the historical continuity of Yakthung's beliefs and practices.

Oral texts from Yakthung Mundhum suggest that the present-day Yakthung community emerged following the displacement of the Sawa Yethang from Thibong Yakthung, also known as Dash Limbu. Historian Krishna Bikram Nembang supports this view in his book *Limbuharuko Itihas*, stating that Yakthung civilisation likely emerged in the 7th century, evolving through the integration of Tringal elements, which later adapted into Kasithangba and Lasayuwa traditions. Additionally, eastern influences contributed to the formation of the Taisanbansi lineage (Nembang, 2023). Mundhum expert Bairangi Kaila (2015) expands on this in his work *Tansing Takma Mundhum (Rituals ceremony of 1/3 Days)*, explaining that lineage was traditionally determined through the sifting of sesame seeds, a practice used to identify the descendants of Lahadangna. Among the 18 children, eight were recognised as direct descendants, including Yonglingkum Yongyahang, reaffirming the ancestral link between Yongya and Lahadangna. This reinforces the belief that the Yongya lineage is deeply connected to the Sawa Yethang lineage, maintaining continuity within Yakthung civilisation.

Historically, the surname "Yongya" is linked to the original form of "Hang," with the title "Hang" gradually being dropped to simplify the name. However, older records still mention "Yangyahang," confirming its historical authenticity. Over time, "Yonghang" emerged as another prominent surname, while "Yongya" became less common. Despite their phonetic similarities, Yongya (Yangyahang) and Yonghang are distinct clans within the Limbu (Yakthung) community, each with separate historical roots and lineage. The Yonghang clan traces its ancestry to Yakpandenma, also known as Inuhangma. The Yongya clan, however, believes that Yakpandenma was the wife of a Yongya ancestor named Inuhang, who, after separating from her husband, lived with her daughter in the Yangwarak region (C.Yongya, Personal Communication, 25 Oct.

2024). The name Yonghang originates from Muyenhang, an ancestor of the Yangwarak Yonghang lineage. When Muyenhang arrived in Yangwarak in the 13th century, he adopted the name Yonghang. He was the youngest brother of Thegimhang (Yonghang Bansawali, 2023). These historical records also support the idea that the Yongya clan had already settled in Yangwarak before Muyenhang's arrival, marking them as the region's earliest inhabitants.

The Yongya clan has substantial genealogical evidence supporting the claim that Inuhang, one of their notable ancestors, was closely linked to the Yongya lineage. Inuhangma, his wife, belonged to the Yakpangden clan, and their union is said to have given rise to the Yonghang lineage. This connection is further reinforced through folklore and family traditions, which assert that the Yongya are the original descendants of Lahadangna, preserving their ancestral legacy over generations. As a result, the Yongya clan often identifies itself as Sawa Yehang Yakthung Sa, signifying their deep-rooted connection to the ancient Sawa Yethang lineage. The Mangena ritual, which incorporates symbolic materials such as banana leaves, a knife, a rooster, and yeast, embodies elements of the ancient Yakthung civilisation and reflects the spiritual and historical continuity of the community. These ritual practices trace their origins back to the agrarian era, maintaining ancestral traditions through ceremonial offerings and symbolic enactments.

The Mangena ritual also incorporates a mythological story involving a hen and a rooster, symbolising siblings who unknowingly engaged in incestuous relations and later separated upon realising their kinship. This story highlights the strict prohibition of incest within the community, originating from the separation between Sawa Yethang and Peliphangsam, known as Yenhangsema (Separated story of Yakthung's ancestors). The prohibition underscores cultural values that have been preserved through oral traditions. During field visits in Bhutan, Sikkim, and Darjeeling, informants shared their ancestral origins, tracing them back to Cyangthapu Mangena Yak and Anyem Yangwarak, places they believe their ancestors migrated from around 300 years ago. Although they have not returned to these regions, the memory has been preserved through oral accounts passed down by elders. This continuity raises the question of how the Mangena Mundhum can be validated as a historical narrative, prompting the exploration of oral traditions as legitimate historical evidence.

Manggena Yak is venerated as the ancestral homeland, while Manggena Lungdhung is a sacred site that honours ancestral legacies. The Manggena Mundhum, chanted as an invocation, embodies the spiritual essence that protects the Yakthung people. Manggena Lungdhung, as a symbolic medium, reveals divine signs, both good and bad, reinforcing the connection between nature, land, ancestral spirits, and the people. The structure of Manggena Lungdhung, formed from the largest stone, symbolizes the ancestral homeland within a complex landscape, while rituals like Tella Lasso Nemma Den signify the sacred site of Mountain establishing a direct spiritual link to Yehang Sa and the ancestral ties of the Yongya clans.

The Manggena Mundhum highlights the matriarchal system of the Yakthung society, where women held an unshakable role in both social and spiritual realms. The presence of siblings is considered sacred during the Manggena ritual, with a symbolic representation called Mainam invoked if they are not physically present. This ritual follows a sacred lineage, from Sangwaba (Brother) to Mangenama (Sister), emphasising the central role of women in maintaining the continuity of tradition. Mangenama, as the sister in the Manggena tradition, reflects the deep matriarchal foundation that shapes both the ritual and Yakthung society, embodying ancestral wisdom and a reverence for the feminine principle.

Manggena Yak is revered as the first settlement of the Yakthung people, where their ancestors founded clans and shaped their identity and civilisation. This place, along with Manggena Lungdhung, symbolises the birth of Yakthung heritage and cultural development. Among the Yakthung clans, the Yongya clan traces its origins to Onyem Yangrok, now Oyam Yangwarak in Panchthar. The name Onyem carries significant historical and mythological importance, passed down through generations in the collective memory of the people. This legend remains deeply embedded in local oral traditions, affirming the lasting legacy of the Yakthung civilisation.

According to the Onyem legend, an ancestor named Shreejitahang, known for his bravery, was a royal guard at the Namgyal Palace in Sikkim. After falling in love with the king's daughter, they fled to Oyam to escape the king's wrath. The location where they secured their horse became known as Onyem, derived from the Yakthung language words meaning "horse" and "fastened." In Manggena Mundhum, the Phedangma invokes the Minsra clan by its original name, reinforcing

the clan's deep ancestral ties and historical lineage. The term Minsra of Mayuruk Ma yonggya, meaning "descent of the mother," highlights the importance of maternal lineage, further connecting the Yonggya clan to Tellarra Lahadangna and emphasising the role of maternal heritage in Yakthung ancestry.

Conclusion

In the 1970s, historians began exploring the use of oral history but faced criticism for relying on human memory. While some of this criticism was valid, decades of scholarly experience have refined methods to interpret oral sources. Despite this, many historians still prioritise documentary evidence over oral accounts, even though historical documents often derive from oral traditions. Mangena Mundhum, as a collection of memories passed down through centuries, serves as a valid piece of oral history, demonstrating that Nepali historiography would be incomplete without such sources. As an oral-based historical record, Mangena Mundhum is crucial in understanding the prehistory of Nepali society.

The mother language, culture, and rituals carry the deepest history of living societies. In the Himalayan societies of Nepal, verbal traditions trace histories spanning thousands of years. Mangena Mundhum, with its frequent references to tools, fruits, seeds, and landscapes from the agrarian era, aligns with the Neolithic period, offering a scientifically supported glimpse into the past. Studies on the indigenous Limbu community, also known as Yakthungpan, highlight a profound historical presence in the region. Limbu is recognised as one of the oldest Tibeto-Burman languages, with Professor Dr. George Van Driem identifying it as the most ancient based on its verb morphology.

Mangena Mundhum, oral tradition, and the ancestors of the Yonggya clan are intricately interconnected, forming an unbroken continuum that encompasses nature, culture, tradition, cosmology, and the Yakthung people's worldview. These elements are not simply historical fragments but living epistemologies that sustain the community's identity and spiritual essence. The cosmological role of Mangena Mundhum in Limbu spiritual practices highlights its function as a spiritual guide, reinforcing the harmony between the natural and spiritual worlds while shaping

Limbu cultural identity. Through ritual, it upholds moral and social laws, preserving essential aspects of the Limbu worldview.

In this context, Conventional philosophical frameworks falter in grasping the profound spiritual bond between nature and ancestors, rendering the Indigenous paradigm and methodology uniquely justifiable. The Mangena Mundhum transcends mere historical recounting, unveiling deep ancestral memory, cosmology, and sacred oral knowledge spanning millennia. As a legitimate oral-textual historical record, it undeniably evidences a civilisation rooted in rituals, landscapes, and oral heritage, tracing the Yongya clan's prehistory, migrations, rituals, and ancestor worship back to the Sawa yethang. These traditions form the undeniable, irreplaceable, and supreme foundation of historical understanding—living memories vibrantly carried through generations, embodying history within the landscape and a cosmology of inseparable human-nature connection. Affirming Indigenous oral traditions honours ancient knowledge and offers a powerful framework for filling Himalayan historical gaps through living memory and Indigenous worldviews.

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