

Rigvedic Fire Symbolism in Panchasee Mountain: Exploring Spiritual Ecology in Western Nepal

Damodar Tripathi*, Uday Thing, and Tika Raj Kaini

Tri-Chandra Multiple Campus, T.U.

Corresponding Email: damodarpokhara@gmail.com

Abstract

Fire (Agni in Sanskrit) is one of the central symbols in the Rigveda, the most ancient and the holiest scripture for Hindus. In the Rigvedic constitution, fire symbolism intricately mediates every plane of human existence: from the expansive realms of earth, atmosphere, and sky to the subtle nuances of the corporeal body, breath, and mind. This paper tackles the constitution of fire symbolism in different planes of Panchasee ecology. It argues that the identification of fire as a key symbol in each three planes by Panchasee people is the 'material manifestation' of the ideological construction of the Rigvedic fire symbolism living in the rituals and traditions of Panchasee since time immemorial. A fieldwork was conducted between 2020-2022 to get primary details utilized for this study. By situating the cultural practices within the broader anthropological discourse on religion and spirituality, this study enriches our understanding of the interplay between cultural symbolism, ecological dynamics, and human consciousness in the Himalayan context.

Keywords: *Fire symbolism, Rigveda, spiritual ecology, ethnography, Panchasee mountain*

Introduction

Fire has played an integral role in the evolution of Homo sapiens, dating back to the emergence of early hominoids in eastern Africa around 2.5 million years ago (Pausas & Keeley, 2009). The utilization of fire, particularly for cooking, is believed to have propelled the ascent of Homo erectus from its more primitive ancestors (Ember et al., 2015). The implications of fire adoption by humans extended far beyond mere sustenance. It catalysed the development of larger brains and bodies, altered dental morphology, and shaped modern human traits, including complex social behaviours (Pausas & Keeley, 2009). By softening food and facilitating easier consumption, fire potentially contributed to extending the human lifespan, thereby influencing social organization and the emergence of caregiving roles, as

proposed by the “grandmother” hypothesis (Kallif, 2005). Moreover, the domestication of fire not only enabled survival in diverse environments but also revolutionized human culture. The art of making fire transformed the culinary landscape, intertwined with the ritualistic and symbolic significance of fire, and laid the groundwork for shaping human conceptual worlds and cultural identities (Pausas & Keeley, 2009).

Fire has an enduring influence on Indo-European cosmology and cultural traditions from the 2nd millennia BCE to the present day (Kallif, 2005). Fire rituals -which were associated with wood fire- were widely in practice in the pre-Vedic world such as in ancient Iran, Greece, Rome, Northern Europe, and other parts of the world. But the expansion of monotheistic belief systems such as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam in Europe and Western Asia, the wide range of the Vedic world lost its genuine tradition of fire ritual (Kallif, 2005). In the post-Vedic world, the tradition was limited only to Hindus, with the exception of small Zoroastrian communities in Iran (Dareini, 2010).

This transition of fire ritual in the Vedic and post-Vedic worlds raises a number of questions about the various aspects of the tradition of this ritual itself and its historical and political dynamics. Extensive research is required to understand the significance of fire rituals in the pre-Vedic world, the political and historical reasons that ended these rituals in the Western world, and the factors that contributed to the continuation of this practice among Hindus which is not the scope of this study. Its limit is not going to answer any of these questions as it requires a wide range of research which is beyond the scope and aim of this study. Instead, this study aims to understand a very specific aspect of this ritual in relation to the mountain communities of Panchasee in western Nepal, in South Asia. While discussing various aspects of Rigvedic fire symbolism, it underscores the importance of fire rituals and its externalization in multiple planes of Himalayan ecology as the unique Rigvedic practices and major attracting factors for nature lovers, spiritual seekers or *Sadhus* throughout the history.

Methods and Materials

This study was driven following the first meeting of one of the authors of this paper with a Canadian Vedic *Sadhaka* living in Panchasee Mountain in 2020. The *Sadhaka* was living in Panchasee for about 2 decades. Before he arrived in Panchasee, he had already lived in a Vedic Ashram in Puducherry in South India for four decades. The series of following discussions and meetings between the author/s and the *Sadhaka* revealed that he had a close observation of various fire symbols in different planes of Panchasee ecology. This study approaches the *Sadhaka*'s observations and experiences of the fire rituals/symbols living in Panchasee communities as the material extension of the specific construction of Rigvedic fire symbolism (Kerestetzi, 2018) that he had acquired as a long-time member of the Vedic Ashram in India.

Conceptually, this study brings the relationship of nature symbols, cultural practices, and Himalayan ecology in relation. It is noteworthy that within anthropology, there exists a well-established tradition of studying the relationship between religion and nature, primarily based on a systematic approach. Sponsel (2010) provides a historical overview of various approaches anthropologists have employed throughout history in this line of thinking. Starting with the late 19th-century anthropologist E.B. Tylor, who defined religion as “belief in spiritual beings” and viewed animism as its most elementary form, classical anthropological contributions in the 20th century followed a systematic approach. Influential anthropologists such as Roy Rapport, Reimer Schefold, Marvin Harris, Richard Nelson, and others contributed to the study of this relationship (Sponsel, 2010). However, contemporary contributions in the relation between religion/spirituality and nature diverge from their predecessors by emphasizing an interactive approach over systematic thinking.

Sponsel (2010) conceptualizes this interactive approach within the broader framework of spiritual ecology following the disciplinary practice of anthropology. He defines it as a diverse and complex arena of intellectual and practical activities at the interface of religions and spiritualities on the one hand and ecologies, environments, and environmentalisms on the other. In this framework, it is not just the physical objects; flora and fauna and other natural processes make a system but also the people’s cultural practices and their psychological, imaginative, and intuitive dimensions form the ‘material’ parts of the system (Sponsel, 2010). Within this framework, Panchasee ecology is viewed as ‘a coherent religious setting in which objects, bodies, actions, and ideas form a system.’ In this sense, this research aligns with the long-standing tradition of examining the relationship between religion and the natural environment in anthropology. Simultaneously, it introduces a novel dimension by incorporating communal rituals and individual ‘spiritual experiences’ into the purview of modern sciences, particularly within the framework of spiritual ecology in the contemporary interactive approach to human-environment relations (Brito, 2020).

Analytically, E. T. Hall’s theory of ‘proxemics,’ as outlined by Kerestetzi (2018), is employed, offering methodological tools for analyzing religious experiences in their physical context. This theory asserts that our physical environments are the material manifestations of ideological construct (which is termed as ‘sensory pattern’) shaped by cultural influences. Based on this theoretical assertion, this paper examines the material manifestations of fire symbolism in different ecological planes of Panchasee as the influence of the Rigvedic traditions living in the Himalayas.

To understand the cultural construct of fire symbolism, it has adopted Jamison & Brereton (2014) and Aurobindo (2013) translations of the Rigveda and the interpretation of fire symbolism. Aurobindo (2013) takes Rigvedic fire as a ‘mystic symbol’ which hides ‘secret meanings about Truths, a Reality behind the outward aspects of the universe’. He rejects the idea that the Rigveda is just a liturgical text. For Aurobindo, each of the Rigvedic

symbols has its unique meaning and purpose. So, it requires a rigorous interpretation of the Rigvedic symbols in a given context to understand their ‘true meanings’ and purpose (Aurobindo, 2013).

A field study - better termed as fursad ethnography (Rai, 2022) - was conducted between 2020 and 2022 in Panchasee to understand various communal cultural practices in relation to fire symbolism and the Vedic *Sadhaka*’s spiritual experiences. Major tools and techniques employed to generate primary data were observations and informal discussions with the informants of the both Aryan and Mongol communities and a series of in-depth interviews with the *Sadhaka*. The fieldwork strategy involved utilizing researchers’ social capital to establish a network in the study area, managing the time of periodic breaks and holidays without extended pauses, and also managing financial resources independently without any external funding or support (Rai, 2022).

Agni: A Rigvedic Fire Symbolism

The Rigveda is one of the oldest texts of human civilization and is also the holiest for Hindus. The fire (*Agni* or *Agnidev*) also known as the fire god, is the most important and prominent nature symbol presented in the Rigveda (Jamison & Brereton, 2014). The very first poem (hymn) of the first Mandala, the first book, of the Rigveda is dedicated to the Agnidev (see below in the given Hymns from the Rigveda). The symbol is so pervasive in the Rigveda that 8 books out of 10 start with the mantra dedicated to Agnidev (fire). While in the total 10 books of the Rigveda which contain more than 1000 hymns, more than 200 poems are dedicated to Agnidev second after Indra. The Vedic symbols including *Agni*, *Indra*, *Soma*, *Surya*, *Vayu*, and many more others are constructed and embodied with their specific physical and spiritual meanings and articulated as their significance to human society (Werner, 1977). The first two hymns of the first book of the Rigveda are;

1. Agni do I invoke—the one place to the fore, god and priest of the sacrifice, the Hotar, most richly conferring treasure.
2. Agni, to be invoked by ancient sages and by the present ones—he will carry the gods here to this place.

- (Jamison & Brereton, 2014)

Scholars from the different fields of expertise accept that the importance of the fire symbol in the Rigveda, but they hardly agree on the meaning of the symbol. For materialists, fire is just a form of energy that remains either in the manifest or in the latent form in the matters of our universe. While the Vedic scholars conceptualize the symbol of fire much more differently. In the Vedic interpretation, the whole material world is the composition of 5 major *bhutas* (elements); *earth*, *water*, *fire*, *air*, and *space*. Among these five, fire is the most important symbol (Regmi, 2023). So it is important to understand how

the fire symbolism has been externalized in the various cosmic and ecological planes that we are surrounded.

A Rigvedic interpretation of fire symbolism suggests that a single fire, Agni, manifests in various forms throughout the universe and within the human body. According to Agrawala (1960), Vedic cosmology consists of three planes: the terrestrial (earth), the atmosphere, and the Aditya (sky). Correspondingly, the human body comprises three planes: *bhuta* (body), *prana* (breath), and *mana* (mind). It is argued that each plane of the universe has a parallel in the human body, as they all embody a similar form of fire (Agrawala, 1960). In this framework, the terrestrial fire is linked with the fire of *bhuta*, the atmospheric fire with *prana*, and the celestial fire with *mana*. This association underscores that fire symbolism is common to all five *bhutas* and the different ecological planes. Fire mediates across all cosmic and ecological realms, signified by the term ‘...*tadekam*...’, which emphasizes its grand functional role as an operator of the universe and all its living and non-living entities (Bryant, 2001). From this broader fire-centered perspective, fire symbolism emerges as the singular truth underlying all existence.

There is also a tradition that Vedic scholars also relate the fire symbol with the Vedic conception of the ultimate ‘truth’. Hindus follow the theory of divine revelation of the Rigveda as the highest form of knowledge and ‘truths’ of existence (Talageri, 2000). They believe that the Vedic Rishis and Prophets had ‘attempted to transform those truths’ through the medium of words in the form of Vedic hymns. Transforming such revelations into words was not an easy task, so they invented hymns with full of symbols, rituals, and images with multiple meanings (Aurobindo, 2013). In this sense, the fire symbol, or *Agni* is the most fundamental, yet mystic nature symbol as well, invented to express such truths in the Rigveda.

Therefore, the Vedic Scholars argue that understanding the true nature of Agni is a way to understand the very secret of existence that might lead to a ‘higher level of spiritual consciousness’ (Yatsenko, 2023). Every natural symbol in Rigveda such as rain, air, earth, horse and so on has its own significance with its unique meaning but the constitution of fire symbol has even greater significance. The special divine qualities of this fire symbol are expressed as; the ‘immortal principle amongst mortals, the deathless light amongst those who are bound to die, the ever-lasting protector of the Law amongst those who are prone to perish’ in the hymns (Werner, 1977). One of the meanings of this symbolic expression is that the gross material body is mortal and perishable and the divine principle that resides within the body is *Agni* or ‘Fire of Life’ which is eternal (Agrawala, 1960).

Panchasee Mountain is a well-known site for Rigvedic pilgrimage from ancient times. There are several holy sites where fire worshipping takes place. There are also spots of meditation scattered all over the Mountain. Panchasee communities consider that

ancient *Rishis*, *Sadhus*, and prophets had identified the locations and established fire pits. The worshipping of wood fire is also a common practice in every Panchasee household as an everyday practice. There are other various individual and communal occasions when the fire rituals take place in Panchasee. The following part of the paper examines the externalization of the ideological fire symbolism in the physical environments of Panchasee ecology by examining experiences and practices living in the Himalayan cultures.

Distribution of Rigvedic Fire Symbol in Panchasee Ecology

In local world views, people identify the ecology of Panchasee in three different planes; terrestrial, atmospheric and celestial. The terrestrial plane represents the physical surroundings of the Panchasee communities around the Panchasee mountain. It includes households, neighborhoods/communities, farmlands, trails and forests they visit for their daily requirements. In these surroundings, Panchasee communities undertake various kinds of fire rituals almost every day. In contrast to the surroundings of Panchasee communities, the top of the Panchasee Mountain represents the atmospheric plane of the ecology. The main character of this plane is that it is not beyond the access of the people but not on a regular basis as it is with the terrestrial. It is only on a few occasions they visit the top and conduct fire rituals; the most famous annual fire ritual on top is on the day of Balachaturdasi.

The celestial plane of Panchasee ecology is the outline of the physical boundaries visible from Panchasee. This ecological plane is beyond human access for the people of Panchasee and only to see and engage on them, particularly on the northern side which is the extended white shining Mount. Annapurna. They do not have physical fire on Mount Annapurna as such, but they do have enough understanding of the visual manifestation of fire symbolism on it which is a higher level of material manifestation of Rigvedic fire symbolism. The following part of this paper examines how the fire symbol is materially manifested in each of the ecological planes. The analysis shows that Panchasee ecology provides a unique opportunity where different forms of fire symbols are externalized coherently by the Himalayan cultures and opens a new possibility of experiencing the 'truth' and going ahead to the entrance of 'spiritual awakening' (Millar, 2019).

Terrestrial Fire Symbol: Wood Fire for Cooking in Panchasee Household

In Vedic literature, the terrestrial fire symbolizes the presence of fire within each of the five basic elements, known as *pancha-bhutas*, as described in the Rigveda. These elements include soil, water, light, wind, and space, and the experience of fire in these elements is accessible through the human senses. This symbolic fire is closely linked to the physical body and is a readily available and common form of fire for every spiritually inclined individual. Beyond its physical manifestation, the wood fire is understood as a representation of 'truth,' signifying the inherent nature of all matter. The Rigveda's *Sukta* 5 in the third Mandala emphasizes by stating, "Agni is the Son of Waters". This revelation

of the fire symbol in relation to water is a specific example of the externalization of fire symbolism at the physical level of human existence (Millar, 2019).

In the context of Panchasee families, the symbolism of wood fire for cooking is an ideal example of the externalization of the Rigvedic fire symbol in the physical level of human experiences. They consider the wood fire as a divine fire including other forms of fire in and around their households. Each Panchasee household has a fire pit, typically located in the centre of the ground floor, where food is cooked twice daily. Additionally, lamp fires or fire sticks are burned in the mornings and evenings in both Hindu and Buddhist families. These communities also establish a sacred space in front of their homes and set up a fire altar once or twice a year for various Pujas. Notably, Panchasee families don't merely consider wood fire as an energy source, as there are alternative options like LP Gas, electricity, biogas, or solar stoves. Instead, they hold deep respect for and worship fire as a divine manifestation. For example, mothers in Panchasee families offer a portion of food to the wood fire before serving it to the family, considering it a sacred practice passed down as indigenous knowledge.

Even destructive forms of fire are also externalized as the divine fire which is also a Rigvedic construction. In Rigvedic construction, the destructive fire is known as 'Raudra' which means anger (Regmi, 2023). In Panchasee cultures, this destructive construction of fire symbol is externalized in the form of wildfire or crematory fire and considered holy fire. As expressed in the Vedic construction, such fire symbols are viewed symbolically as the expression of divine anger. Panchasee families not only externalized these symbols to the fire of their everyday lives but also worshiped them as the multiple manifestations of single fire symbolism in their physical reality.

Worshipping terrestrial fire in Panchasee communities serves as a reminder, even for those with 'minimal spiritual awareness', of the presence of divinity in all forms of *bhuta*, whether wood, air, or water. In this context, the Rigvedic formation of Agni, or the fire symbol transcends the divisions of the physical world and produces a unique and single fire perspective that is more mystic than mere physical (Aurobindo, 2013).

Atmospheric Fire Symbol: Fire Worshipping in Panchasee Mela-day

The next plane of Panchasee ecology is atmospheric where the fire symbol is externalized culturally. Geographically, this atmospheric plane is situated at the summit of Panchasee Mountain, encompassing five distinct peaks that directly face the Annapurna range in the north, unobstructed by any barriers. The mountain's summit stands as one of the highest natural sanctuaries within the mid-hills of the region, hosting a collection of holiest sites such as temples, meditation areas, sacred lakes, water bodies, pristine trees, and natural forests. The Panchasee communities' cultural externalization of the Rigvedic

fire symbol within this atmospheric plane holds a profound significance intertwined with the summit of Panchasee Mountain.

In Rigvedic literature, the atmospheric fire symbol is intricately linked with the breadth (Prana) of the organic plane, representing the prana as a form of fire. This particular manifestation of fire is shared among all living entities on planet Earth. For a spiritual seeker, encountering this fire occurs on two levels in Panchasee ecology. At the cultural level, the seeker witnesses fire worship at the mountain's summit in various occasions. On a personal level, climbing the mountain provides an opportunity to comprehend the true nature of the breadth which is also a symbol of fire in the Rigvedic construction (Millar, 2019).

One of the most important cultural events of externalization of the atmospheric fire symbol in Panchasee is the celebration of the annual Mela-day on the top of Panchasee Mountain which is the day of Balachaturdasi (mid-November). The day is well-known for the ritual of sowing holy seeds in the Himalayan region. Pilgrims from surrounding districts flock to Panchasee on this day, engaging in puja with established fires. There are Sanskrit gurus to conduct the worshipping. People worship fire to achieve success, peace, security, and other positive merits in their lives.

Discussion with the Vedic Sadhaka reveals that ascending a high-altitude mountain like Panchasee provides a unique opportunity to sense the interconnectedness of one's breath with the shared breath among all living entities. He views the act of climbing as a special moment to understand this connection with the 'pool of breath', identified as a form of Agni in the Rigveda (Millar, 2019). For the *Sadhaka* it is the special cultural arrangement in Panchasee and also in other holy sites in the Himalayas that institutionalize the practice of being close to the atmospheric fire symbol. This is a very special form of externalization of the Rigvedic fire symbolism in the specific ecological context of Panchasee. Unlike territorial fire, this construction of fire is elusive, and not common to all people at all times.

Celestial Fire Symbol: Visual Manifestation of Annapurna

The common meaning of the celestial meant the heaven which is the highest level of the Vedic division of the world. In its bodily association celestial meant the mind, the higher level of consciousness (Agrawala, 1960). People in Panchasee and even in Pokhara Valley consider the Annapurna range that extends from the east to the west on the northern side as the celestial plane of its spiritual ecology. The range not just receives the first sun rays in the region but its view also turns as a fire blaze both at the time of sunrise and sunset transforming itself as a rare fire symbol. A myth was common among the people of the region before the advent of modernization in the country that there was a heaven above the Annapurna summit (Gurung, 2022). So it is quite obvious to consider the Annapurna range

as the celestial plane of the spiritual ecology of Panchasee and externalize the Rigvedic fire symbol in its association.

Furthermore, the study also revealed that the *Sadhaka's* encounter with the celestial plane of the Annapurna range is special. The *Sadhaka* externalizes this form of celestial fire symbol in the visual manifestation of the Annapurna range from the Panchasee Vanjyang that holds Machhapuchre at the centre (Millar, 2019). For him, there is a symbolic association between the visual manifestation and the fire symbol presented in the *Sukta* 19 of the Mandala 5 of the Rigveda.

The first and the last hymns of the *Sukta* 19 read as follows:

Hymn 1: State upon state is born, covering upon covering has become conscious and aware, and in the lap of the mother he sees.

Hymn 5: O Ray, mayst thou be with us and play with us, unifying thy knowledge with the shining of the breath of life; may those flames of him be for us violent and intense and keenly whetted, strong to carry and settled in the breast. -(Source: Sri Aurobindo, 2013)

The *Sadhaka* has developed a full-scale research monograph that presents the visual manifestation of the Annapurna. He interprets the entire Annapurna as the mother as it is presented in Hymn 1 above (Tripathi, et. al, 2023). And in the lap of the mother the son sits, i.e. Machhapuchre which looks like a fire blaze at the lap of the Annapurna massif. There is no doubt that the description of the fire symbol provided in these hymns is neither territorial, nor atmospheric but, it is celestial.

The *Sadhaka* externalizes this fire symbol of Annapurna in the form of a Rigvedic expression of the 'son' or 'lap of the mother' as a key to the spiritual awakening in the plane of human consciousness. In Vedic literature, human consciousness is associated with the concept of a single cosmic consciousness (Talageri, 2000). As the sun is the source of all rays and lights on Earth, the cosmic consciousness is the ultimate source/plane of every individual consciousness. The idea of an awakened mind in the Vedic discourse is to meet this ultimate plane of consciousness by individual *Sadhaka*. The fire symbol that is externalized by the *Sadhaka* in the visual manifestation of the Annapurna is a mystic symbol to awaken individual minds (Sri Aurobindo, 2013). The *Sadhaka* who lived in a Vedic ashram for about four decades of his early stage considers that the fire symbol visible in the Annapurna has nothing to do directly with our body or breath which is quite different from the terrestrial and atmospheric fire symbols. If we do not attend this fire symbol (the burning view of Machhapuchre) it will have no effect. The view will simply disappear after a while. But if a seeker attends it, it will affect his or her mind; on the level of spiritual consciousness. It is the reason that the spiritual seeker has to make a conscious

effort to have a ‘spiritual awakening’ on the plane of consciousness. At this juncture, the unique visual manifestation of Annapurna could be taken as a significant Rigvedic fire symbol, a symbol that hides the secret of the ‘Truth’ of the ‘spiritual awakening’.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study shows that the fire symbol, or *Agni* as mentioned in the Rigveda, is distributed across different planes of Panchasee ecology; particularly in its spiritual ecology in varying forms. At the terrestrial level, the fire symbol is modelled as household fire in Panchasee which is a form of the physical level of the fire symbol. On the atmospheric level, it takes the form of fire worship at the summit of Panchasee Mountain; as a fire on a mental/emotional level. On the celestial level, the fire symbol is manifested visually in the Annapurna range, with Machhapuchre at the centre, visible from Panchasee Vanjyang; the fire symbol of the spiritual level. These fire symbols of various planes are specific cultural constructs of the Rigveda and Rigvedic practices with a specific character of intelligence also known as fire intelligence. It is up to an individual *sadhaka* or a nature seeker who comes into contact and attends with which form of fire symbolism; physical, mental, or spiritual. However, each of the symbols has the potential of specific cultural implications of ‘spiritual awakening’ or elevating one’s consciousness to a ‘higher level’ as it is assumed in various Vedic literatures including in the Rigveda.

References

- Agrawala, V. S. (1960). Fire in the Rigveda. *East and West*, 11(1), 28-32. <https://doi.org/10.2307/29754201>
- Aurobindo, S. (2013). *Hymns to the mystic fire, Vol. 16*. Sri Aurobindo Ashram Publication Department. Pondicherry, India.
- Brito, L. G. (2020). Spirituality and ecology within the phenomenological realm of secularity. *Revista del CESLA. International Latin American Studies Review*, (26), 307-326. <https://doi.org/10.36551/2081-1160.2020.26.307-326>
- Bryant, E. (2001). *The quest for the origins of vedic cultures: The Indo-Aryan migration debate*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- Dareini, A. A. (2010). *Iranians celebrate ancient Persian fire fest*. The Associated Press.
- Ember, R. E., Ember, M. & Peregrine, P. N. (2015). *Anthropology* (14th ed.). Pearson.
- Gurung, J. (2022). Machhapuchre ko bandej bimarsha (A debate on banding to climb Mt. Machhapuchre). Himal Khabar.
- Jamison, S. W. & Brereton, J. P. Eds. (2014). *The Rigveda: The earliest religious poetry of India (Vol. I)*. Oxford University Press, New York.
- Kaliff, A (2005). The vedic agni and Scandinavian fire rituals: A possible connection. *Current Swedish Archaeology* 13, 77-97
- Kaliff, A., & Oestigaard, T. (2022). *Indo-European fire rituals: Cattle and cultivation, cremation and cosmogony* (1st ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003300915>
- Kerestetzi, K. (2018). The spirit of a place: materiality, spatiality, and feeling in Afro-American religions. *Journal de la Societe des americanistes*, ix-xxv. <https://doi.org/10.4000/jsa.15573>
- Kochhar, R. (2000). *The Vedic people: Their history and geography*. Orient Black Swan, Hyderabad, India.
- Millar, G. (2019). *Rigvedic Annapurna: A research monograph in visual anthropology*. Pokhara.
- Ostigaard, T. (2023). Vedic fire rituals: From the Indo-European heritage to the Himalaya. *ICRH-023, Conference Book*. Mukta Foundation, Pokhara
- Pausas, J. G. & Keeley, J. E. (2009). A burning story: The role of fire in the history of life. *BioScience*, 59 (7), 593–601, <https://doi.org/10.1525/bio.2009.59.7.10>

- Poudel, R. P. (2015). Yetihasik sthal ko rupma Panchasee (Panchasee as a historical place). In Bhattarai, D.B (Ed.), *Presidia Panchasee*, 7(5). MDO, Pokhara.
- Rai, J. (2022). Doing fur sad ethnography in Nepal: Reflections of a public university faculty. *Studies in Nepali History and Society*, 27 (1), 113-130.
- Regmi, R. R. (2023). *A speech presented on the 1st International Conference on Rigvedic Himalaya* [Paper Presentation]. ICRH-023, Conference Book. Mukta Foundation.
- Shrestha, S. R. (2001). The Vedic-Aryan entry into contemporary Nepal: A pre-historical analysis based on the study of Purina's. *Ancient Nepal* (147)1-8.
- Sponsel, L. E. (2010). Religion and environment: Exploring spiritual ecology. *Religion and Society* 1(1), 131-145, <https://doi.org/10.3167/arrs.2010.010109>
- Talageri, S. G. (2000). *The Rigveda: A historical analysis*. Aditya Prakashan.
- Tripathi, D., Millar, G., Kaini, T. R., & Gautam, S. (2023). Tourism, mountain, and 'mystic fire': A study on spiritual journey of a Vedic Sadhaka living in Panchasee Mountain in central Nepal. *Journal of Tourism and Himalayan Adventures*, 5 (01), 35-44. <http://doi.org/10.3126/jtha.v5i01.56183>
- Werner, K. (1977). Symbolism in the Vedas and its conceptualisation. *Numen*, XXIV(3), 223-240.