

Socio-Cultural Reflection in the Yakthung Limbu Mundhum Performance

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This article attempts to examine how *Mundhum* performance holds widespread social and cultural significance in Limbu community. Utilizing the perspective of performance culture as theoretical approach, the article illustrates how the narratives and ritual performances of the *Mundhum* set the ideas to meet wider cultural and religious necessities of the Limbu community - providing them with an insight into understanding the common spirit of the community, and creating an occasion of social solidarity, reconciliation, moral and psychological purification and also an occasion for correcting themselves from any deviation.

Abstract

Yakthung Limbu have, from time immemorial, a tradition of narrating or reciting Mundhums and performing rituals and ceremonies in their own distinctive ways. The Mundhum is an ancient religious scripture and folk literature of the Limbu. This article attempts to examine how Mundhum performance holds widespread social and cultural significance in Limbu community. Utilizing the perspective of performance culture as theoretical approach, the article illustrates how the narratives and ritual performances of the Mundhum set the ideas to meet wider cultural and religious necessities of the Limbu community -- providing them with an insight into understanding the common spirit of the community, and creating

an occasion of social solidarity, reconciliation, moral and psychological purification and also an occasion for correcting themselves from any deviation.

Keywords: *chotlung*, indigenous knowledge, Mundhum performance, *Tongsing*, Yakthung Limbu.

Background

Cultural performances can be many things at once. They can be both tangible and intangible and help situate and encapsulate a great deal of information about the culture that gave rise to them. The Yakthung Limbu, who are the historic Sawayehang lineage mostly inhabiting the major part of eastern Nepal now, have their own distinct language, culture, tradition, religion and oral literature called Mundhum. The Mundhum is a common religious oral narrative of all Limbu, the one who designate themselves as “Yakthungba,” they call their language “Yakthungbapan” and their script “Srijanga”. They have a long tradition of narrating or reciting Mundhums and performing rituals and ceremonies in their own distinctive ways. The Mundhum occupies great value in Limbu performance culture that consists of legends, folklores, sermons, prehistoric accounts and moral or philosophical exhortations in poetic language and lies generically into a narrative oral poetry. The Mundhum is an ancient religious scripture and folk literature of the Limbu.

The Mundhum contains narratives of mythical stories including mythologies, genesis of the universe and living beings, which is communicated in oral poetic language in every ritual observance. In all Mundhums, Tagera Ningwahphumang is described as omniscient or ultimate source to infinite knowledge and omnipresent or present everywhere at the same time, that is, all-pervading. There are several Mundhums as sources of inspiration, information and enlightenment which considerably help shape the way of life, customs, rites and rituals from pre-

birth rites to after death, knowledge of everyday activities to the Universe, and so on. Rituals, Chaitanya Subba says (1995, p. 41), often regarded as sacred performances, provide the clue for the correct exegesis of the Mundhum and demonstrate their symbolic values, functional importance and social sequences. The Mundhum has a wide impact in the Yakthung Limbu community as one of the prominent writers and Limbu scholars Bairagi Kainla relates Tongsing Mundhum of Limbu to Purana of Hindus that “Tongsing Mundhum has the same importance for the Limbus as the eighteen purans have for the Brahmins” (1992, p. 33). Even though Limbu culture and rituals are so effervescent and efficacious from the time immemorial, we find by the time very fewer scholastic works have been done on the Mundhum. This paper, at this juncture, strives to focus on some of the important sections of the Mundhum performances and observes its socio-cultural as well as historical significance, and examines how it sustained over the years despite the adverse socio-political milieu of the country.

Methodology

Informed by the performance theory, the study attempts to investigate how the narratives and ritual performances of the Mundhum become significant on socio-cultural life of Yakthung Limbu community. A qualitative research method of inquiry is employed to gather an understanding of the Durkheimian perception of “ritual” as an efficacious socio-religious phenomenon serving to transfer individuals/groups from the “profane” to the “sacred,” and Turner's perception of symbols, ritual, and religion. Apart from related reference materials, the major sources of data analysis of this work center on written Mundhums and oral texts.

Literature Review

Performance culture consists of a vivid account of non-dramatic, non-theatrical, non-scripted, ceremonial, and everyday-life performances or rituals that “appear

to depart from the authority of texts” (W. B. Worthen, p. 1093). Rituals, Jeffrey C. Alexander says, “are episodes of repeated and simplified cultural communication” in which the direct partners to a social interaction, and those observing it, “share a mutual belief in the descriptive and prescriptive validity of the communication’s symbolic contents and accept the authenticity of one another’s intentions” (2009, p. 29). Culture and identity, Cohen P. Anthony observes, are “two frequently used and abused words” in which he prefers to include another mark of representation, that is, “symbol” rendered from everyday life (1993, p. 33). Such daily life performances give shape of those cultures and identities, and thereby ease to sketch cultural maps of history and the society. “Cultural maps”, as Dwight Conquergood (2002, p. 145) observes, “are stronger than physical maps [in which] performance culture questions the naturalized texts of other history”.

Essentially, the Mundhum is an oral literature that occupies much esteemed place to keep alive the spirit of rites and rituals. The credit to preserve this Mundhum obviously goes to the traditional Limbu shamans such as Phedangma, Samba, Yeba, Yema, Yumasam and other gentlemen (Tumyahang). They are Mundhum repositories, and thus living carriers or transmitters of Mundhum-based knowledge. They recite [oral] expert narratives, as in the words of performance culture critic Victor Turner, they do “reflexive storytelling and performance both in formal performances and in everyday life” (1969, p. 44). They recite the Mundhum that ranges various social and cultural life activities of the Limbu ethnic group and also give a superb expression of religious, moral and social beliefs and assumptions drawing from different mythological legends and folklores.

Collection and compilation of Mundhums began very lately by some of the cultural enthusiasts such as Iman Singh Chemjong (Kirat Mundhum 1961), Asman Subba (Kirat Samyo-nu- Yechchhamthim, 1990), Bairagi Kainla (Limbu

Jatima Kokh-Puja, 1993 and Sasik Mundhum, 1997), Randhwoj Shreng Chongbang (Sumsenwa Yagrasing Mundhum, 1994), Rishi Kumar Sambhahamphe, Kalempong, India (Yakthung Chokthim, 1994), Dr. Chaitanya Subba (The Culture and Religion of Limbu, 1995), Laxman Menyango (Yakthung Mundhum, 2005), etc. are some noteworthy efforts made in the field of Mundhum in written forms. Those texts basically focus on the part of structures how different rites and rituals are observed? What materials and arrangements are required to perform particular rites and rituals? Furthermore, they provide us with the knowledge of historical and mythological events and incidents taken place in the time of ancestors and prehistoric world that was/is being recited by the Yakthung Limbu people. Taking as references to some of the above written texts and also having personal observations and queries with Tummyahang, Yeba and Sambas, this write-up also briefly critiques the impact of Mundhum (performance) that prevails in the Limbu community.

Discussion and Result

Mundhum Performances

In the larger arena of studies about socio-cultural transformation, several scholars have admonished to go beyond the single and most often static examples of change to seek more reliable patterns of cultural/ritual continuity. For an instance, Fredrick Barth has argued for “the necessity to specify the nature of continuity in a sequence of change” and thereby “the importance of the study of institutionalization as an ongoing process” (1967, p. 661). Obviously, the Mundhum ritual is also found stimulated to have division as other religions. From the perspective of Mundhum performance, we see by this time, there are mainly two camps – mainstream tradition follower of Mundhum known as Yuma and Satyahangma group. The mainstream Mundhum followers are animists who use

specialists/ actants such as Phedangma, Samba, Yeba and Yema to perform the rituals reciting the Mundhum orally but Satyahangma group use their own priests (Sewasaba) reading out the written Mundhum scripture. One of the social critics, Jeffrey D. Webster (2001, p. 53), in his article “A sociolinguistic Study of Limbu” quotes to B. B. Subba that the Phalgunanda’s teachings “were strongly influenced by an ascetic Hindu jasmani branch of Hinduism, [which] are today promoted by a small but active sect of Kirati religion known as Satyahangma.” However, the followers of Satyahangma sect strongly demur to this opinion for they claim that their way of Mundhum performances were originated early in the primitive age and not a copy of Hinduism. This sect was initiated by Mahaguru Phalgunanda and now Mahaguru Atmananda is leading it and considered to be reincarnation of Mahaguru Himself. Whatever be the case, this kind of Mundhum performance is led now by Kirat Religion and Literature Upliftment Association.

The entire cultural and ritual performances observed through narrativity of Mundhum holds broad social, moral, religious and cultural significance in Limbu community. There are many branches of Mundhum and no text written till now incorporates all of them. Amongst them, this paper mainly concentrates on the Tongsing Mundhum and other few of the propitiatory sections. The word Tongsing, as Bairagi Kainla (1992) says, is the combination of two words – *tong* and *sing* where, *tong* is the root form of the verb *tongma* (to be like-minded/ to get along to compromise). *Tongsingma* means the act of meeting and performing together. Thus, Tongsing Mundhum can be called the social get-together held for the happiness and prosperity of all men, families and societies or the family rite of unity. Moreover, ritual performance and poetic narration of Tongsing underlies a classical concept of a whole: the beginning, the middle and the end.

As Mundhum is a religious scripture existing for centuries through oral practice which, we see, has been playing vital role to enhance the Yakthung Limbu

civilization and mores, and guiding their daily activities. The ritual performances altogether from *Tingding Nahen Ingma* (warding off envy/jealousy), *Phungwa changma* (revitalization of flowers), *Sendang lahi ingma* (propitiation of hostile planets), *Mang~hup wademma* (wash away swearing) to *Si: lam sa: kma* (block way of world of death), etc. are mandatory worships of Limbus, all concerned with *Tongsing tikma* (to follow/sing or narrate Tongsing); closely related to the way of daily activity. Tongsing comprises the action courses leading up to the *cholung*, a sacred place to obtain happiness and prosperity. *Cholung* is believed to be a meeting point of happiness and prosperity. *Cholung* (a land symbolizing dignity, accomplishment, completeness) is a much-acclaimed concept in all Mundhums. It is a visionary land glittering by the rays of the sun, a land shining by the light of the moon and a sacred land of beautiful scenery and infinite joy.

Social and Cultural Significances

Victor Turner (1969) develops his now-famous concept of "Communitas". According to him, *communitas* designates a feeling of immediate community, and may involve the sharing of special knowledge and understanding— "a flash of mutual understanding on the existential level, and a 'gut' understanding of synchronicity" (p. 96). Ritual performance has temporal and spatial importance wherein performances for salvation of both living and dead people take place. It is observed for progress, happiness and prosperity of living people, and for peaceful salvation of souls of the dead ones too. Tongsing, in the previous times, was performed by/within family circle in every three years and used to be more expensive but now it is preferred to be performed collectively. It is mainly of two types- *Teen-raate Tongsing* (three-night Tongsing) and *Ek-raate Tongsing* (one-night Tongsing). In the first night of *Teen-raate Tongsing*, the ritual of wiping out of the bad spirits¹ known as *Sogha-sugut nu Mukumsemi Sepma* (a ritual to

eliminate evil spirits caused by the death of pregnant women, due to accident and fire) is observed. *Tong-amba Thepma*, a ritual to prevent being evil spirit during one's youth, *Thakthamma*, a ritual of benevolence for victims of malnutrition, *Só-um-rung*, a ritual to ward off transgressors, *Thakchum Thakpe Tomma*, an observance for protecting women in their youth, and *Poklung Changma*, to save male youths are all observed in the second night of Tongsing. These rituals are for purification of the whole premises, and then the remaining last one night is indeed most significant as it is for observance of prosperity and protection of the entire living beings. In Tongsing performance, after revival of the flower *kalasha* (water-vessel filled with flowers and water) an act of soul reinvigoration for both alive and deceased people takes place and then Tongsing tour is symbolically ascended towards the *chotlung*.ⁱⁱ Tongsing of deceased ones is taken up to the world of the dead people (*khemaso khedukso pangbhe*) to hand over to the ancestors while Tongsing of living ones is carried over *chotlung* wherein filling up water and fish in the pond of *cholung* an emblematic return takes place after protecting the flower garden thereof. The ritual *Tingding Nahen Ingma* (warding off envy/jealousy), a major performance since all other ritual narratives are virtually concerned with it, holds the greatest significance in the Limbu Mundhum performance.

According to Laxman Menyangbo (2005), the Mundhum, *Tingding Nahen* is believed to be rooted amid Limbus' primitive gods, their ancestors, and among women, youths, etc. Therefore, it is believed that such jealousies have still greater impact on their generations resulting in illness and misfortune among them. For instance, envy and jealousy between the two wives of Susuweng Lalaweng is subtly presented in the following when he asked some foodstuff to his wives on journey to meet his mother:

Ma-a-ho, thosulungme ga Oh [she] upward-living one

	<i>Phiyalungme re</i>	[that] Phiyalungma
<i>Ma~a-ho</i>	<i>yosumlungme ga</i>	Oh [she] downward-living one
	<i>Mukkumlungme</i>	[that] Mukkumlungma
<i>Ma~a-ho</i>	<i>chesak mebirun</i>	Oh not given food stuff
	<i>Chaffan mebirun</i>	not given edibles
<i>Ma~a-ho</i>	<i>tingdin mu yuktu</i>	Oh envy was incited
	<i>Nahen mu yuktu</i>	jealousy was incited

(Menyangboⁱⁱⁱ, 54)

Hence, Mundhum performance also provides the narrative ritual of warding-off evil spirits and deflecting the influences from hostile planets. According to the Mundhum, there were two types of Suns – Lasara Thenam-yamba (big Sun) and Chukchinamba (small Sun). Once, when its eyes were broken the big Sun procreated the inauspicious planets while the small Sun also set with a shock and fear, so most of the people who were considered having existence along creation of stone and soil also died thanks to flooding, drowning and sliding in the darkness, and thereby transformed into evil-spirits which cause sufferings even today. The ritual *Tingding Nahen Ingma* is also observed with a belief that people have to bear pain, anxiety, adversity and scarcity owing to various reasons, for instance, whether the mythical characters Sikera Ekthuknama, the daughter of Sodhungen Lepmuhan put curse on the herdsmen or Yaklabu's act of frightening herdsmen's cattle, or the curse of ancestors who slain each-other as they happened unable to segregate the cattle among them.

The Mundhum is a religious scripture, not only of Limbus but of other all Kirat communities and is performed in a distinctive way. Numerous kinds of legends, hearsays, and opinions are found in the Mundhum. According to one of them, as Yeboko Yedhara (Yeba) Hem Bahadur Limbu (2009 May 24) narrates, in the ancient times, after the creation of the world, one male and one female were

created in the high mountain. Their generations increased day by day and began to live in the different places but slowly, they turned out to be unruly, decadent and irreligious. So, Tagera Ningwaphumang^{iv} involved herself to settle such situation by bringing about the birth of a wise man called Sawa Yehang who formulated the Mundhum scriptures as Byasa did in Hinduism. While reciting Tongsing Mundhum, the Sambas and Yebas narrate the myth of the creation of universe, man, family and society as said or disseminated by Yehang. Tongsing Mundhum is therefore a conglomeration of these myths recited orally from time immemorial and sung, narrated and performed ritually.

Cosmologic Mundhum Performance

The Mundhum has various forms of knowledge including cosmological, spiritual, genealogical, philosophical, sociological and cultural deliberations, speculations and rationalizations. For Turner (1969, p. 201), society is the product of the dialectical historical relationship between "structure" (society's status and role differentiation, behavioural norms and cognitive rules) and "antistructure" (those regions of experience in culture). Consolidation of Yakthung indigenous knowledge has a long journey of maturation, as in other indigenous societies. *Samjik Mundhum* (metaphysics/ ontology) interacts the nature of the world and makes no distinction between animate and inanimate beings, all including gods and goddesses, human beings and plants and animals, rocks, mountains and rivers, having spirits or souls and interconnecting to each other. It also highlights the Yakthung spirituality enlivened by Yumaism and its geography is primarily Yakthung Laze, the country of Yakthung. Axiologically, Yakthung *Mundhums* also help shape the cosmological and social order.

Tongsing Mundhum takes on a voyage or a travel (pilgrimage) to the land or abode of the forefathers. Thus, it gives a feeling that only the coordination

between the past and the present, the liveliness and continuity of tradition, and association with geo-cultural space can make the wholeness of life. The Mundhum is recited poetically during ritual performances which deserves a sense of intimacy. It can be further illustrated from the lines of Abhi Subedi who observes it as a “sense of immediacy” [that] “leads to the creation of myth and thereby the rituals. So, the rituals in Limbu are poetic sagas, stories of human victory, loss, love, agony and happiness” (2000, p. 24). Similarly, the Mundhum performance is also a rite of peace for ancestors’ souls or a rite of unison with them by retaining ancestral grace or as a rite of tradition and ritual continuity of the events and chronology from the creation to the present. To perform such rituals, the actants have to prepare required materials and also get prepared themselves for “The transformation of the human actant into a god figure (the basis of many rituals) necessitates perhaps more preparations than the transformation of an actor into a role of a theatrical character” (Gilbert et al., 1996, p. 61). The Mundhum ritual performance also necessitates preparations for immediacy of ritual bearers such as phedangma, samba, yebe/yemas who conduct as ritual actants.

The Mundhum texts form a large corpus of poetical oral narration which has been transmitted from generation to generation. Hence, the Mundhum performance has been a cultural representation of Yakthung Limbu people from the time immemorial through observances like various rites and rituals, festivals and ceremonies. Such ritual performances help everyone to get rid of greed, adultery, evil souls, evil stars, anger and jealousy that were generated in the process of structuring and developing society. Earlier part of Tongsing performance ends at afternoon of the third day following the second night by observing the rites over a nearby stream with a promise to purge one’s enmity and ill-will, and cleanse one’s mind and heart. This is known as festival or rites of community or family goodwill.

During every Mundhum performances flower and various other earthly objects hold great meaning. Flowers have very lofty value in the life of Limbu people because their way of life and honor are thought to be closely related to various kinds of flowers. As the flowers contain various colours and fragrant similarly all human beings have a life, that's why flower should be revived afresh if someone has got intense despair as a result of some kinds of adversity in life. For them a flower is the sign of vivacity and energy. During the rite of *Phungwa Changma*, flower is revived that signifies to revitalization of life. The description of flowers, trees or vegetation, insects, animals, rivers, topography, etc. made during a long voyage in the *Tongsing Tokma* section of Tongsing Mundhum proves the intimacy of Limbus and nature.

They placed flowers like life
Over where there was a loom
Let's fill life with vital energy
Let's do the welfare, let's protect
Let's pray, let's call!

(From *Kokh-puja*, translated by Abhi Subedi)

Many requirements of Tongsing Mundhum ritual are similar to those of drama: actor(s), audience, costume, space, language(s), and specified amount of time. It has various goals and objectives such as to get relief from diseases and easy living; desire for having children, longevity and health; desire for achieving food, drink and wealth; growth of cattle and affluence of grains; obliteration of enemies and safety from those causing resentments. Besides, this Mundhum is also recited and performed to receive blessings of one's ancestors, avoid mishaps affecting the family or individual members, shake off the wrath of the ghosts or dead souls and to locate the dead souls in the land of the dead or to salvage by detaching them from the living ones.

Obviously, a man faces evil days or misfortunes or pains and sorrows owing to many reasons in his life. According to the Limbu oral tradition and literature, the blood-drops flicked away from the burst eyes of the Lasara Thenamyamba (big Sun) pervaded human lives as the Gods and Goddesses that bringing them with safety and power or the evil stars prompting distresses and pains. Similarly, the scattered bits of stones thrown by Porokmi Yamphami also gave birth to different evil deities and stars afflicting human life with misfortunes and disasters.

Whatever be the case, as Mundhum narrates, misfortune means movement of planets on man is supposed to control or affect the man's fate. The custom of cleansing or propitiating evil stars, performing rites to prevent misfortunes and disasters along with destructive results of such planets, and to avoid or prevent the wrath of those so as to pacify them during the disasters are also common objectives of observations in the Limbu community as in others.

Beside cultural, ritual and religious knowledge, Mundhum provides various kinds of empirical and historical information as well. Among them, *Manggenmayak* in Manggenna Mundhum (worshiping God for one's safeguard) documents the genealogy of Limbus. Yok is a ford or the place where an ancestor of particular clan of Limbu was first inhabited. According to Prasad Thebe, Manggenna Mundhum describes the first origin of Kirats was at Munatembe of Asian Himalaya from where they shifted to western part and inhabited in Mediya of Persia and then in Babylon. Later, coming to the East they populated in Gokul, Chitaugad and the plain area of Ganges and Yamuna respectively. After inhabiting Sukhi Kangi for long time they entered into Nepal along the way to Bagmati River (2000, p. 39). The description of such information of Mundhum concurs with accounts of other historians, for example, in *The Kirat History and Culture*, Iman Singh Chemjong too presents similar versions bringing references to many other historians. According to Chemjong, Kirats were originated on the

river bank of Tigris and when they set up an empire in Asyria were known by Asuras who gradually extended their empire to Mediya, Persia, Babylon, Mesopotamia, Palestine, Egypt, India and other eastern vicinities. They established Babylon or Babel as capital city from where they ruled all over the regions.

As most of the human culture is shaped through the guidance of religious thoughts (at least in preindustrial stage) the Mundhum has also provided tradition of socio-cultural liberty in Yakthung Limbu community which is applicable in Limbu caste adoption system in which any non-Limbu could join the Yakthung Limbu community by fulfilling some ritualistic performances popularly known by *Chokphung Thim*. Because, the Mundhum says, “It is better to gain rather than lose, better to be many rather than a few and better to increase the member of family than decrease” (Chemjong, 1994, p. 63). Thus, culture as identity becomes a mode of action and of representation, it refers to a decision people make to depict themselves or others symbolically as the bearers of a certain cultural identity.

Despite the fact that various types of coercion and intrusion made from the side of Hindu ruling classes over the socio-cultural rights of Limbu, Mundhum ritual performance has been successful to survive. For an instance, Nepal was declared as only a Hindu kingdom (in the past) and the nationalities like Limbu, Rai, Sunuwar, Yakkha, Magar, Gurung, etc. were forced to be Hindu and consequently they were deprived of their religion, their culture and even their language; that is, their identity. But the Limbu ethnic nationality has been safeguarding its traditional norms and values, as Dr. Durga Prasad Aryal notes, “although some feebleness in Limbu religious activities seemed after the fall of Kirat kingdom it is not found there complete obstruction [sic]” (2003, p. 11). The people, who learnt and involved in spreading Srijanga script, were severely prosecuted by the then authorities. Ashok Nembang, one of the Limbu cultural enthusiasts, mentions:

When I was carrying some Limbu Sirijanga script books brought from Darjeeling and Sikkim, on 5th of Kartik, 2027, A.S.I. of Ilam inquired and apprehended me blaming as a reactionary activist. He first threatened and then stroked me. As a result, my jaws and cheeks were swollen for four days. Both ears deafened for long. The scars of wounds caused by hitting of *ghangaru* stick and nails of boot are still there as indicator of despotic conducts of that time (2003, p. 3).

Through the Mundhum performance, ritual and cultural identity of Yakthung Limbu can be identified. Their way of their life is shaped through ritual performances. A unified system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things and beliefs and practices unite them into one single moral community. Their myths and rituals are expressions of both the sacred and the profane in culture that provide unity for people. This kind of socio-cultural performances, as Emile Durkheim maintains, "is a social creation whose function is to preserve the welfare of a society" (1995, p. 115). The narratives and ritual performances of the Mundhum accomplish the ideas to meet wider cultural and religious necessities of the Limbu community. Various functional divinities are invoked or communicated to "bestow a good harvest, better opportunities and prosperity and to ward off illness, difficulties and natural calamities" (Subba, 1995, p. 156). And these ideas provide us with an insight into understanding the common spirit of the community; valuing the rites and rituals about birth, life and death; and knowing the concept about the creation of the universe, origin of creatures and human beings, geo-spiritual history and lineage of the Limbus, correlation with people of other faiths, and so on.

Conclusion

The Mundhums are distinct indigenous knowledge of Yakthung (Limbu) communities. Yakthung Limbu ways of life, customs, cultures, social systems and structures, and social relations are guided by the philosophical themes of the Mundhums and their norms, values and worldviews are rooted in the Mundhums. Tongsing Mundhum, the most important cultural and religious ceremony of the Limbus, incorporates various myths, legends, narratives and oracles that are closely related to the daily activities of Limbus, which guide every social, ethical and religious concept by shaping up their behaviours and attitudes in a distinctive way. Furthermore, major objectives of ritual performance are found to bring peace, progress, prosperity and happiness in all human beings and the creatures, to create an occasion of social solidarity, reconciliation, moral and psychological purification and also an occasion for correcting themselves from any deviation. It is also a ritual to appease supernatural agents, to avoid befalling distresses, disasters and other probable misfortunes. Various divinities are invoked to grant a good harvest, better opportunities and prosperity and to ward off illness, difficulties and natural calamities. It is also perpetuity of socio-cultural properties, tradition and identities initiated by the ancestors.

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ⁱ A ritual in which bamboo-strip baskets filled in with soil are used to hold up pote (string threaded beads worn by married women), garlands, cutting tools, flower-kalasha, etc.

ⁱⁱ A holy place where happiness and prosperity are believed to be attained

ⁱⁱⁱ Writer/compiler of Yakthung Mundhum, 2005

^{iv} Supreme creator/Goddess of the world in the Mundhum