

Kirat Tradition Culture and Festival

Our ancestors said that culture is the way of life of a group of people; it is the foundation of their existence and their identity. They said, "If you want to know who a person is, look at their culture." Therefore, culture is the sum of the learned behaviors of a group of people, generally considered to be their traditions, which are transmitted from generation to generation. And the Kirat community has its own traditions and culture, with unique ways of celebrating, including birth and marriage ceremonies, performing funeral rites, singing and dancing, playing musical instruments, and observing their festivals.

Mubekwa Chasok Tangnam (Udhauli Sewa) (མཇུ་ཇའི་ཚུགས་སྐྱོད)

The Kirat scriptures describe Mubekwa Chasok Tangnam (Udhauli Sewa), celebrated from mid-July to mid-January, as a time-honored tradition practiced by the Kirat people since time immemorial. During this ritual, ripe crops are set aside in the names of God and the Goddess before consumption, as a token of gratitude to Mother Earth for providing a bountiful harvest and protecting the people of the world. The first portion of the newly harvested fruits, crops, and grains is offered to the Almighty God through flowers, fruits, roots, crops, grains, and holy water, offering divine fire smoke symbolizing our gratitude and respect.

During this religious ceremony, prayers are also offered to the gods of nature for blessings, so that we may enjoy a healthy, wealthy, and long life, be wise, and may they always be helpful, loving, and caring toward humanity and all living beings.

Khibekwa Yakwa Sewa (Ubhauri puja) (ཡམ་ཇའི་ཚུགས་སྐྱོད)

As our ancestors did, this sewa is especially performed for Mother Earth. Before sowing the crops, during the rainy season, to protect against landslides, natural disasters, to obtain favorable weather for good crop production and a disaster-free climate, to avoid diseases, pandemic viruses etc., to seek blessings from the gods for the welfare of the Earth, people and the nation, In this belief they offer the divine fire smoke to the gods and goddesses of the Mother Earth, praying for world peace, human welfare, and the safety of all living beings. Sewa will be performed once a year from mid-January to mid-July at their respective place.

Kokfewa Tangnam (Festival)

Kokfewa Tangnam is a festival. During ancient times, as per Kirat 'Samjik Mundhum,' it states that the Kirat people survived feeding only on wild roots and potatoes. They later discovered other foods like fruits and flowers, which were edible. Thus, they made it customary to observe Kokfewa Tangnam to honor the old age tradition of eating wild roots and potatoes and to seek blessings from the gods for continued peace and prosperity. It usually falls in the mid of January every year.

Shisekpa Tangnam (Festival)

It is one of the major festivals celebrated by the Kirat community to thank the gods for the successful completion of the agricultural season and the beginning of the harvest. They also

thank the gods for keeping them safe and secure from famine throughout the farming seasons. This festival also marks a time of joy for the farmers.

Especially from the time of sowing the crops, to the time of harvesting, every crop in the field is collected, and fruits and flowers are hung around the house, "while rejoicing that Mother Earth and the gods who saved us from every famine and hunger." It usually falls in mid-July every year.

Tradition Music:

Limbu is classified into various genres known as Samlo, with spiritual importance often derived from their oral scripture, the Mundhum. The main dance is the Ke Lang, also widely known as the Chyabrung dance, named after the sound of the main instrument used to accompany it.

Palam: Folk songs, often love ballads or concerned with ethnic and cultural issues, which can be fast-paced (Sakpa palam) or slow (Kemba Palam).

Hakpare: Spiritual songs sung exclusively by women.

Khayali : Conversational songs sung by young people with poetic expressions.

Hopma cham: conversational song, senior citizens.

Nisammang Sewa Samlo: Devotional songs performed during religious functions.

Agricultural Songs: Include Damke Akma (While working) and Tamkey (while cultivating fields).