

## **MUNDHUM:**

Mundhum is the Kirat religious scripture. It narrates the creation of the universe, humankind on Earth, Kirat culture, traditions, habits, rituals, nature, and myths passed down by word of mouth and folklore from Kirat ancestors from generation to generation. Mundhum serves as the customary rule of law that guides Kirats in their daily lives. Mundhum has evolved through three distinct stages: Creation, Events, and Protection.

### **1. Creation:**

The narrative of the divine encompasses the creation of the universe, the creation of human beings, living and non-living entities, and the entirety of creation. The Samjik Mundhum describes that before the creation of the universe, there was only a "Musunne Khesunne" and "Muhonling Khehonling," which means there was nothing, emptiness, soundless, or silence. Above and below, there was only a dark hole. From that dark hole came a powerful sound, and later that sound was named Tagera-Ningwabhu-Mang. From that space, the powerful fireball rotated at high speed and exploded. From this fireball, the Supreme God Tagera-Ningwabhu-Mang manifests as Porok-Mee, Yamba-Mee-Mang, and in the form of Air Sodhungen-Lepmohang-Mang, creating the universe, the world, and all creations.

### **2. Events:**

The contributions of our ancestors, their civilization, and the significant events that transpired during their era—both positive and negative—illustrate the causes and effects of sin and the emergence of malevolent forces, such as the spirit of envy. For example, following the harvest, various diseases and epidemics arose, leading to widespread mortality. In response, our ancestors conducted investigations and concluded that to ensure survival, they needed to offer their newly harvested crops to the gods and goddesses and begin the worship of the Mubekwa Chasok Sewa.

Despite their efforts in constructing homes, these endeavors were often incomplete and were always destroyed by natural disasters, resulting in the devastation of entire families. Farmers encountered challenges in crop cultivation, as diseases and epidemics adversely impacted their yields. In their traditional manner, they engaged in investigations, research, and study, ultimately adopting the Khebekwa Yakwa Sewa (worship of Mother Earth) to promote good crops and honor the Akwanama, which enabled them to thrive in their newly constructed houses.

During a time when pregnant women faced significant peril, our ancestors provided salvation by performing the Sapok Chomen Sewa in the fifth or sixth month of pregnancy. Numerous such accounts are described in the Mundhum.

There is an interesting episode in the Mundhum related to worshipping Theba Sammang. There were two brothers named Chukkiba and Lakkiba who always used to go around the forest, setting traps to catch innocent birds and animals. However, the birds and animals never got caught in the traps. Wondering what was happening, the brothers planned to hide in the forest and watch. At that moment, they saw an old man come and break all the traps.

The brothers decided to catch and punish the old man, but he said, "I am not the kind of person you can catch. I have come to teach you not to kill innocent birds and animals. I am the manifestation of Hangsan Theba." The brothers took him home, killed a pig and a chicken, and treated him very well. However, the old man became angry; he took the form of Hangsan Theba (Lha Chen Wangchuk) and performed his angry tandava.

In reality, he wanted to advise them not to kill birds and animals, but because the brothers treated him by killing pigs and chickens, that custom has remained in our society. People do not realize why the old man became angry and performed the tandava.

### **3. Protection:**

The preservation of beneficial practices, methods for addressing adverse events and accidents, as well as the recitation of prayers and mantras—along with the veneration of ancestors such as Yuma Mang (grandmother as god), Theba Mang (grandfather as god), and Him Mang (deities of the house)—has been maintained in the Mundhum. Our ancestors worshipped Sapok Chomen during the fifth or sixth month of pregnancy to ensure the well-being of both mother and child, a practice that continues to this day. To combat air pollution, the phrase "*Kezong Surit Maang*" (God is in the air) is invoked. Similarly, "*Midhung Mirak Maang*" (God is in the fire) and "*Chabhat Thungwa Maang*" (God is in the water) are recited.

Furthermore, it is advised not to kill snakes; instead, "*Wasek Sammang*" (honor the snake as god) is emphasized. If not worshipped properly, it may cause paralysis and other serious diseases. The killing of monkeys is also discouraged; "*Saba Sammang*" (honor the monkey as god) should be observed to avoid illnesses that result in stiffness of the limbs. Additionally, "*Muya Sray*" (honor the eagle as god) is mentioned in the Samjik Mundhum and is strictly adhered to.

Similarly, within the Kirat Rai and Limbu community, there are groups such as the Khewa Limbu, who abstain from consuming chicken; the Songsongbo Limbu, who refrain from eating buffalo; and the Thegim and Nembang Limbu, who do not consume goat. Other groups within the community observe similar dietary practices. Ultimately, the teachings of this Mundhum emphasize the necessity of protecting all aspects of nature.

The tradition of performing all rituals from birth to death through the Samajik Mundhum practices has been preserved from time immemorial to the present day. Likewise, ancestral deities, language, script, literature, ornaments, customs, and other cultural elements have been preserved in the same way.