Mewa Khola Toponym is a Historical Document, and Tampering With it Shows Fanaticism

Abstract: The toponym of a place or river denotes the social, political, and economic clout of the local community at the time. Mewa Khola is a river in eastern Nepal that travels through the mountainous district of Taplejung. The Mewahangs who lived there toponym the Mewa Khola (river) that flows through the area. The article discusses the facts and reasons that support this notion. The essay delves into the history of the Kirat's Mewa clan and its descendants today. The folklore, genealogy, and history guide Mewa's identity. Around the beginning of the 21st century, the Limbu speakers distorted the ancient name of Mewa Khola to Mikwa/Mikhwa Khola. Mikwa, which means tears in the Limbu language, was their argument. The Limbu language and literature did not recognize the Mewahang, the elder brother of Limbu. Limbu speakers in New Nepal sought to rename in the name of originality in the backdrop of political change. The paper looked into who, when, where, and how founded Mikwa by intruding on the Mewa Toponym. The history of the Mewa people, who speak Limbu, is obscure, but history and culture have hinted at it. Based on a comparative investigation of the same sign, the article argues the Kirat Mewa sect's pre-arrival and arrival routes. Despite Kirat history and Kirat Mundhum Limbu speakers changed the toponym Mewa Khola to Mikwa Khola, Samba Limbu Mundhum has called the river and surrounding area Mewa Khola.

Key Words: Mewa Khola, Toponym, Kirat, Mewahang, Limbu, Mikwa Khola, Taplejung, Nepal.

INTRODUCTION

The toponym sounds something meaning. Toponyms contain the historical name of a place as well as its cultural legacy. A trained eye is occasionally required to retrieve the meaning from inside the sound, iconic image, and petrified shape. Toponyms of Alexander the Great are still available in Egypt's Al-Iskandariyyah (Alexandria), Afghanistan's Kandahar, and Turkey's Iskenderun. According to the Oxford and Cambridge legend, river crossings allowed communities to grow into towns in medieval times. The names of cities in England that culminated in -Chester or -caster allude to the Roman family (Tjeerd, 2002).

In recent years, India has renamed towns and landmarks to emphasize India's national identity as a Hindu homeland. They traveled from Bombay to Mumbai, expressing Hindu nationalism (Hansen, 2002). During federalism in Nepal, villages and municipalities were also named to represent local ethnic identity. Local villages' names adopted Limbu speech in the mountainous and hilly Limbu-dominated districts of Eastern Nepal, such as Phaktanglung, Sirijunga. Limbuwan's political campaign also plays a role in this movement. Because identity, language, religion, and political inclusiveness are all on the Limbuwan party's political agenda (Palungwa, 2013). Kirat Yakthung Chumnlug, a Kirat Limbu organization, has also raised awareness of Limbu toponyms in the region (KYC, 2021).

The Mewa Khola is a river in Nepal's eastern Himalayan area. The name of this river inspired the name of the locality, which is Mewa Khola Thum. It is now part of the Taplejung district. In Nepal's history, the Mewa Khola River and its surrounding territory served as an administrative region. In the Kirat Limbu history, has noted the name of the local ruler of this territory, as well as the name of the place (Chemjong, 2003a). Kirat mundhum also refers to the river and the region's name. Samba is a Kirat clan that hails from this area. Samba's toponym is also in this area as a result of their influence. The Samba people originated here, and they are now distributed throughout the country and beyond. Mangena Yak is the ancestral homeland of the Samba family (Chongbang, 2009). Mangena Yak, a center of worship for the Sambas in Samba village in Mewa Khola, is Lingthang Yak in the Limbu language. The Mewa Khola region, home to the Samba clan, for its historical and cultural significance in Nepal's history. The past incidents had created the toponyms in the areas. Why and how its name has altered has piqued the public's interest.
The Mewa Khola River, which runs through it. The Mewa Khola river and land are now part of Nepal's Tappejung District. During federal Nepal, Mewa Khola has renamed Mikwa/Mikhwa Khola, based on the Limbhu language, which means "river of tears." During the political transition in Nepal, the name Mewa Khola changed to Mikwa Khola. What caused this, and how did it happen? Have we begun to say or write Mikwa Khola today because it was incorrect to say or write it yesterday? Which name best typifies ancient history? Are we doing historical facts a disservice in the name of reform? Khola is just the word of a river. How did the word ‘Mewa’ came if it was Mewa Khola? If it is Mikwa Khola, who was the owner of the ‘Mikwa’ tear? Let us now investigate Mewa Khola, and later Mikwa Khola, based on which we began to call it. To find an answer to this question, I am reviewing Kirat history, legends, genealogy, and Mundhum.

**METHOD AND MATERIALS**

This paper is primarily a review article. The review process, however, began during Samba Phyang's ancestral study. Because Mewa Khola is the birthplace of Samba, the research required both primary and secondary material. The original data was acquired from 207 Nepalese, Indian, and Bhutanese homes. It was a way of sampling with a definite goal. A semi-structured questionnaire and checklist were used to acquire information about Mewa Khola, Ling Thang Yak. The study included a thematic analysis and a conclusion. This data was utilized to make comparisons with other pieces of evidence. Mundhum, folklore, and history were explored for historical evidence about toponyms. The paper presented the conclusion and logic.

**PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION**

A Mudenchhong Samba lineage legend is responsible for the renaming of Mewa Khola to Mikwa Khola. The myth has influenced Limbhu literature and philosophy. It captures human emotion. Currently, the marginalized Limbhu group attempted to support their ancestors’ tears. Limbhu-speaking people refer to Mewa Khola as Mikwa Khola since it is backed by the spirit and awareness of the Limbuwan campaign (Palungwa, 2013) and Kirat Yakthung Chumlung (KYC, 2021).

**A tale in Mudenchhong Samba genealogy**

We can look up Mudenchhong's genealogy to find out whose tears the river Mikwa Khola is named after (MudenchhongSamba, 2007). Mawarong Hang, the feudal king of Tibet Digarcha, was on his way to conquer Kathmandu and Kirat Limbuwan region. Munahang, another feudal, led him across the Himalayas. Munahang, Mudenchhong Samba's ancestor, led the way to the Tamber origin site. Munahang and his group made their way to the mouth of the Tamber River via the 'Tingtawa cape and the Tokpe cape. He then proceeded south to Kirat Limbu territory. They encountered difficulties on the way. Many followers, particularly the elderly, children, and women, moved to tears. When they arrived at Mewa Khola river, they drank river water, washed their face, and compared it to their tears. Munahang told the group that the tears of his followers flowed like this river, and he took a deep breath. Drops of water were also seen dripping from the nearby cliff-like eyes.

According to the Mudenchhong Samba genealogy, their ancestors first crossed the river with the goats they had brought with them while passing the Mewa Khola. They named the place 'Medatarang' which means 'Goat Crossing Bridge,' believing that the goat was the first-star bridge. Remember that in the Limbhu language, 'Meda' means goat, and 'Tarang' means bridge. They renamed Mewa into Mikwa (tears), commemorating the painful voyage of tears dropping Chak-Chak (falling sound) in the Limbhu language.

This author has no reservations about the fascinating historical event. But first, what was the name of this river? The Mudenchhong Samba arrived in Nepal from Lhasa Digarcha with the king Mawarong in the seventh century. The incident corresponds to the death of Hangshu Varma (640 AD) in history. According to historian Iman Singh Chemjong, the Ten Limbu chiefs established Ten Limbuwan by invading the Kirat Atharai rulers around a century before that in the sixth century. Shrenghang ruled in the Mewa Khola during ten Limbuwan reign in the sixth century. Thus, Shrenghang reigned in Mewa Khola a century before Mawarong. Munahang, Mudenchhong's ancestor, arrived in Kirat Limbu territory in the seventh century. Before Mudenchhong crossed the river, Mewa Khola had already been a toponym. Although Mudenchhong Samba's Mikwa Khola is a historical event in the genealogy, the Mewa Khola river is already known as Mewa Khola is proven.

Which king or dynasty the name Mewa Khola belongs to remains unaddressed. So, how did Mewa Khola's toponyms survive before Limbuwan state in the sixth century? While looking for an answer to that question, a Kirat legend and the Kirat tribe's genealogy show the knot. It is conceivable that Mewa Khola is named after Kirat legend's Mewahang. Mewa Khola is, without a doubt, a toponym of Mewahang.

**A Kirat Rai folklore**

As stated in Kirat folklore (Rai, 2005), one of the descendants of Rodu Kirat, Kambhungang, and Mewahang left Baraha Kshetra and rose towards the Tamber river. They were armed with bows and arrows. They also brought their goats. Kambhungang was the first to set out. When he stood up, he came to a halt in Kholung (Khowalung), and the road was blocked. Kambhungang requested that Kholung Dev let me go first. Kholung warned him not to let go. Kambhungang
took a look around and noticed a bird in a tree. The archer shot the same bird and gave it to Kholung. Kholung then cleared the path to Khambuhang to move forward.

Later, Mewahang arrived, having been led there by his brother. In the same way, Kholung Dev obstructed him. "Brother!" he exclaimed to his brother. How did you do it? Please tell me how to get there. Brother Khambuhang was afraid that if his younger brother Mewahang arrived, his place would be taken away from him. His heart was overflowing with sin. He lied to his brother instead of telling him the truth. He told his brother that he had severed his youngest disciple's little finger and offered it to Kholung Dev (God). The brother took his brother's words seriously. Brother Mewahang, on the advice of his brother Khambuhang, severed his pregnant younger sister's little finger and offered it to Kholung Dev. A lot of blood flowed from her sister's hand after she cut her finger. The goat began to lick the blood from her hand. The sister died as a result of severe bleeding. Mewahang and her children decided not to eat goat meat again after the goat licked her sister's blood. Even today, some Kirat refuse to consume goat meat.

Mewahang was heartbroken by his sister's death, and when he discovered the truth, he was furious with his brother. He then proceeded to the mouth of the Arun River. He traveled to Tibet and stayed for a while. Mewahang spotted a deer near the base of Mount Geljumma. He fell into Kirat territory while hunting deer. He arrived in Bhojpur via Arun, Varun, and Sankhuwasabha. According to a Kirat legend, this Shilichung now belongs to the Bhojpur district of Nepal.

The above folktale is a popular one in Kirat Rai. According to this story, Arun, Varun, and Mewa Khola's headhunt for Mewahang is the same area, so the name Mewa Khola is derived from the name of Mewahang mentioned in folklore. Tungdunge Mundhum of Samba also claims that the Arun-Barun region was Kirat's playground at the time. Rodu Kirat's genealogy proved the hypothesis that Mewahang survived Mewa Khola (Thomrom, 2001). The Kirat Rodu genealogy confirms that Khambuhang (the elder), Mewahang (the middle), and Metnahang Limbu (the third/younger) are brothers of the Kirat dynasty.

In line with the Kirat genealogy (2001), numerous Rai came from Khambuhang, including present-day Chamling and Bantawa, and several Rai. Mewahang children grew up to become Mewahang, Lohorung, Yamphu, Yakkha, and Athpare Rai. Metnahang is the third Rodu Kirat brother who gave rise to Limbu, according to the Rodu Kirat genealogy. Sunuwar descended from the fourth Anglewa, and Dhimal, Meche, and Nāga descended from the fifth-youngest brother Merati (Thomrom, 2001). As a result, because Mewahang is an ancient ancestor, his descendants Lohorung, Yakkha, Mewahang are now spread throughout the Arun-Varun, Mewa Khola area. In the coinage, Mewa Khola is the name associated with Limbu's senior brother Kirat Mewahang. By including Mewahang's name, the Kirat genealogy supports the idea that the river's name has been a toponym to Mewa Khola.

**Mundhum is A Folk Song and Traditional Knowledge**

Mundhum is a type of folklore. Folklore is a term that also indicates the science of folklore in English. Folklore planted on a specific occurrence. Folklore, according to scholars, was created to convey history, facts, and positive messages. Folklore is a scientific discipline that studies the origin, decoration, and intent of folklore (Smith & Buxton, nd). It is a set of spiritual, moral, social, political, and economic values and beliefs that are allegorical, romantic, and comparative. Folklore has elements of Folkloric, Functionalist, Structuralist, and Formalist theory.

Folk tale is critical to give the story a rooted meaning by using a memorable metaphor. In folklore, the frog does not jump; instead, it does walk as if it were a human, and it speaks of stones and trees. As a result, it is necessary to check the various symbolic meanings found in folklore. We cannot use it to prove history; it is only an indication or a foundation, but we must understand its signs.

Language is contagious, according to well-known linguist comparative scholars of various languages, Friedrich Max Muller. He has discovered that the meaning of a word found in old texts has recently changed. He identified that the same word could have different meanings in different contexts (MaxMuller, 1988). A simple example of a word's meaning is the Nepali word 'oil,' which was initially understood only to mean mustard oil, now means petrol and inedible oil. Semantics may also be meaningful. 'Someone ate Siltimmur,' such as, which means that someone died. Although people eat Siltimmur as pickled, it also makes medicine for humans and animals. Instead of food or medication, the indirect literal meaning relates to death.

When a folktale communicates, another challenge is there in communication-medium-recipient cycles arising from principles obstacle (Noise) occurs (Burnett & Dollar, 1989). We all know how much something becomes crooked or comes different when something is said in the beginning when something happens in the field. The author creates an unforgettable folktale (Thompson, 2017). People easily forget things like a river flowing or shouting. But the story of a river talking like a human being is remembered. People do not forget what the mountains, sea, stars, sun, and moon have to say something like a human being. As a result, these are well-known folklore characters. The
researcher must exercise extreme caution when determining the meaning of any folklore character or object. One needs aware of the situation that may arise from information communication barriers and exercise caution. This author has paid close attention to the characteristics and ideals of folklore stated above.

**Kirat Dynasties Include Khambuhang, Mewahang, and Metnahang**

An outline of relation is depicted in the Kirat genealogy. Are they the same mother's or father's children? That is not the correct way to understand it. To understand the genealogy's chain of siblings, one must first go back to mythological and historical times. They have drawn Non-ethnic people to their lineage in ancient times; such children known as adopted members or Manasputra or Misalbhai. Adopted member is also the clan's leader (Plukker & Veldhuijzen, 1993). Children of the same father are not the only siblings in the Kirat genealogy. There is also the work of creating adopted brothers or incorporating them into the family. The genealogy refers to it as 'Mibalbhai.'

![Kirat Dynasty in Mewa Khol, Kirat Region](image)

**Figure 1. Kirat Dynasty in Mewa Khol, Kirat Region**

Figure 1 depicts Khambuhang developed Rai, the oldest brother in the Kirat region, Mewa Khol. Likewise, Mewahang, the middle brother continued as Lohorung, Yamphu, Yakkha, and Athpare. Metnahang was the youngest of them all. From him, the Limbu family grew in the area (Thomrom, 2001). Kirat genealogy gives Lohorung and Yakkha in the Arun Barun zone, demonstrates the existence of Mewahang. Mundhum is one of the reliable bases for the view. Lohorung, Yamfu, Yakkha, and Athpare are family members of Mewahang ethnic groups. Mewahang had already named the area Mewa Kholo before Metnahang, Limbu ancestor arrived.

Khambuhang and Mewahang may or could not be the same father's children. Genealogy involves a large family or group. An elder brother comes first in a territory in folklore, followed by a younger brother who comes later. The elder brother, middle brother, and youngest brother shown in the fable and genealogy above could be the sequential arrival in the territory from the same dynasty or else. More likely, the first to arrive at a place became an elder brother. Genealogy symbolically picks up on ancient characters.

Khambuhang, also known as Kambahnga or Bhupinaputra, is the Ganges Kashi dynasty or Kashigotra (Chemjong, 2003b). Folklore has it that they were the first to arrive in the Mewa Kholo Kirat region. The Kirat genealogy also supports this proof. The study of linguistic genetics also backed the theory of the origin, distribution, and transport of the Kirat Limbu language, Tibeto-Burmese language family (Van Driem, 2005).

**Samba Mundhums suggest Mewa Kholo**

Samba's Pong mundhum, Mangenna mundhum, and Tungdunge mundhum show that their ancestors came Mewa Kholo from Mechi, Koshi, Tama Koshi, and Sun Koshi. They entered the Himalayas via the Koshi Baraha Kshetra route. Samba's Tungdunge ancestor also traveled to Mewa Kholo in Taplejung's northern region via Dhankuta, Terathum, and Arun-Varun of Sankhuwasabha. In Mewa Kholo, Sulungden Samba greeted and honored him. Mundhums record Mewa Kholo as an ancestral site of the Samba clan (ChongbangSamba, 2009). There is no Mikwa/Mikhwa Kholo mentioned in any Samba Mundhum. According to the facts and figures of Kirat and Mundhum's history, the name of the river flowing in the Samba-dominated area is the Mewa Kholo.

Mewa Kholo is an ancient toponym that appears in folklore and historical accounts. Replacing a toponym has a biased strategic obligation to serve a political purpose. However, Limbu, who appreciates mundhum, has overlooked the Mewa Kholo's altered toponym.

**Historical Background**

In this context, Yalumba, the first monarch of the Kirat dynasty, conquered the Kathmandu Valley was from the Ganges plain via Simangarh in the year BC (Chemjong, 2003a). The Kirat dynasty has a history of invading the Himalayas via Chittaurgarh, Mewargarh (Rajasthan, India), via Simangarh (Parsa, Nepal), and occupying many titles from the Eastern to Western Himalayan belt of Nepal (Chemjong, 2003b). Mewahang must have entered Kirat Pradesh somewhere between the first and fifth centuries AD in this context.
Based on his authority and influence, the author claims, the area where he lived became a toponym, the Mewa Khola.

A Kirat Sen author Chobegu Limbu claims that after the Kushan invasion in India, Nāga, Sen, and Licchavi from India ran away and entered the Kirat country around 89 AD (SenChobegu, 2007). Indian author has also mentioned it. Following the Kusan invasion of India in 340–455, the Huns, Sen, and Licchavi crossed the Himalayas and became the Kirat, Limbu (Pandeya, 2013). According to historian Iman Singh Chemjong, in the sixth century AD, ten Limbu states were formed. It shows that before ten Limbuwan formations in the sixth century, there was Mewa Khola Toponym already established. As a result, between the first and fifth centuries, the Mewahang created the toponym Mewa Khola.

In consonance with Kirat legend, Mewahang visited the area, and afterward, it was the toponym for him. Curiosity about who these Mewahangs are may arise. This author speculates and debates about members of the royal family and the Kirat dynasty of Mewargarh and Chittaurgarh in Rajasthan, Indira's Ganges plain (LingdenLimbu, 2010). His people may have penetrated the Himalayan region between the first and fifth centuries to avoid Kusan or other external invasions or disasters. Based on historical facts and folklore, residents of Mewargarh that the royal family and their adherents founded Mewahang and toponym Mewa Khola in Kirat Pradesh.

Linguistics Reference

Linguist Michailovsky compared Kirat Languages Hayu, Bahing, Thulung, Wambule, Khaling, Kulung, Chamling, Bantawa, Athpare, Chhintang, Belhare, Yampu, and Yakkha, including Tamberkhole Limbu Mewahang dialect. He has examined the Tamberkhole vertical marking system's five directional and locative terms. He has discovered that the other Kirat languages have cognates in each other (Michailovsky, 2015). The toponym and Limbu Tamberkhole Mewahang dialect are the sign of the lineage of Mewahang, as demonstrated by this linguistic evidence.

CONCLUSION

Mewakhola is a historical river in the Taplejung district of the eastern Himalayas in Nepal. The name of this region is Mewa Khola, which is from the name of this river. Mewa Khola had named before the Ten Limbuwan formation in the sixth century, according to historical evidence. The Mundhums of Kirat Samba traces their ancestry back to Mewa Khola Lingthang Yak. The Mewahangs of the pre-Limbu generation had toponym the river and area, according to the Samba mundhum, legend, and history. On the same basis, the name of this river and region became Mewa Khola. Based on historical sources, groups from Mewargarh, Rajasthan, India, have come as Mewahang in the Pre-Mewa Khola Kirat region. During the Kusan invasion in the first to the fifth century, the Kirat dynasty Hun, Sen, and Licchavi reached the Himalayas from India. Hun, Sen, and Licchavi became Kirat and Limbu after entering the Himalayas. One of the royal families reached the Pre-Mewa Khola and Tamber Khola Kirat territory via Koshi Baraha Kshetra. These Hun, Sen, and Licchavi of Mewar became Mewahang. It is safe to say that the river and the area's toponym, Mewa Khola, had been preserved. Limbu is a Kirat dynasty Metnahang's children. Mewahang's next generation is still found established in that place.

Now, the toponym Mewa Khola had transformed to Mikwa/Mikhwa Khola by Limbu speakers in the area. The Limbuwan's political movement and Kirat Yakthung Chulung's strategic awareness campaign have contributed to the federalism with toponyms that have appeared in Nepal's political transition. The history of Mawarong, the ruler of Tibet who invaded Nepal in the 7th century, does associate with the Mikwa Khola attempt. His ally Munahang Samba's legend has a role in the base of this toponym move. Mudenchhong Samba is Munahang's offspring. The tears of Munahang's followers streamed from Tibet to Taplejung through Mewa Khola, which had inspired to coinage the river Mikwa Khola or River of Tears. The successors of his brother Metnahang Limbu contested Mewahang of the Kirat dynasty's toponym after a long time. Mewahang's Mewa Khola, however, has a long history documented and is well-known in Kirat Mundhum.

History and documents have proven the toponym Mewa Khola. Kirat Mundhum and even legend have backed it up. Curbing toponyms means ignoring and misinterpreting history and Mundhum. We should not erase the historical idol and toponym obfuscated. That history will be acceptable if the ruler does creative work and sets up a reputation for people.

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REFERENCES


