

Kakung Torkhan: An Indigenous Bon Harvest Ritual, Agrarian Cosmology and Religious Syncretism among the Dirang Monpas of Arunachal Pradesh

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Abstract

This article examines *Kakung Torkhan*, an indigenous pre-harvest ritual practiced by the Monpas of Sangti Valley in Dirang Circle, West Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh. Performed before the commencement of rice harvesting, the ritual seeks the protection and blessings of territorial deities, ancestral powers, and guardian spirits for agricultural prosperity, community well-being, and protection from misfortune. The study is based on qualitative ethnographic fieldwork, including participant observation, semi-structured interviews, oral narratives, and informal conversations with the *Mang Bonpu* (Bon community priest), *Changmin* (ritual assistant), *Tseepa Lama*, village elders, cultivators, and other community members. The findings show that *Kakung Torkhan* is organized through a complementary relationship between Bon ritual authority and Buddhist calendrical authority. Although the ritual is officiated by the *Mang Bonpu* (community priest), its date is determined by the *Tseepa Lama* according to the Tibetan lunar calendar. The ritual begins at the sacred grove, or *Narang*, and continues through household ceremonies involving offerings of *Kakung* (smashed rice), *Yetak* (smoked fish or locally prepared paneer), and *Yuthong* (traditional rice beer). Ritual exchange, household participation, behavioural prohibitions, and the sharing of consecrated food reaffirm collective identity and customary obligations. The article argues that *Kakung Torkhan* is not merely an agricultural ceremony but a living institution through which the Monpas transmit agrarian knowledge, ecological ethics, social norms, and indigenous religious traditions across generations. It further demonstrates that religious syncretism among the Monpas is not simply a blending of traditions but an institutional arrangement in which *Bon* and *Buddhism* perform distinct yet mutually supportive functions.

Keywords: Monpa; Bon; Kakung Torkhan; Sangti Valley; harvest ritual; agrarian cosmology; religious syncretism; Arunachal Pradesh

Introduction

The Eastern Himalayas constitute a culturally diverse region in which indigenous religious traditions have developed through sustained interaction with local ecologies, ancestral practices, and organized religious systems. Arunachal Pradesh is particularly significant in this regard because its communities preserve ritual traditions that remain closely connected to agriculture, landscape, kinship, and customary

law. Among the Monpas of West Kameng District, religious life is shaped by the coexistence of indigenous ritual practices and Tibetan Buddhism. This coexistence is especially visible in ceremonies associated with agriculture, where Buddhist institutions and indigenous ritual specialists operate within a shared cultural framework.

Agriculture occupies a central position in Monpa society. It is not understood solely as an economic activity but as a sacred process involving reciprocal relationships among human beings, cultivated land, animals, ancestral powers, territorial deities, and protective spirits. The agricultural cycle is therefore accompanied by ritual practices that regulate when cultivation and harvesting may begin, what offerings must be made, and how the first produce should be treated. These practices express a worldview in which agricultural success depends upon both human labour and the maintenance of harmonious relations with supernatural beings.

Kakung Torkhan is one of the important pre-harvest rituals observed by the Monpas of Sangti Valley. Performed immediately before the annual rice harvest, the ritual marks the transition from cultivation to harvesting. Community accounts describe it as an offering to local deities and as a request for permission to collect the produce of the fields. The ceremony is also associated with protection from crop failure, natural calamities, illness, pests, wild animals, and other forms of misfortune.

The ritual is distinctive because it brings together two forms of religious authority. The date of the ceremony is determined by the *Tseepa Lama*, a Buddhist religious specialist who consults the lunar calendar and identifies an auspicious day. The ritual itself, however, is performed by the *Mang Bonpu*, the hereditary village Bon priest, assisted by the Changmin. This arrangement illustrates the institutional character of Monpa religious accommodation. Buddhism does not replace the indigenous ritual system; rather, it provides a calendrical framework within which Bon practices continue to operate.

Existing ethnographic accounts of the Monpas have addressed questions relating to Buddhism, political organization, material culture, customary law, and environmental knowledge. However, indigenous agricultural rituals remain comparatively under documented, particularly at the level of ritual sequence, household participation, offerings, prohibitions and local interpretations. A recent account of *Kakung Torkhan* identifies it as a pre-harvest offering that combines Bon practice, agricultural life, and community solidarity (Gyese, 2025). Ethnoecological research among Monpa communities has also documented the relationship between agricultural offerings, spiritual beliefs, customary regulation, and local resource management (Singh, 2013).

This article documents *Kakung Torkhan* as practiced in Sangti Valley and analyses its significance in relation to four themes: indigenous Bon cosmology, religious accommodation, community cohesion and ecological knowledge. It argues that *Kakung Torkhan* is a complex socio-religious institution through which the Monpas regulate agricultural time, acknowledge the sacred character of the landscape, reinforce customary obligations, and transmit cultural knowledge across generations.

Study Area

The study was conducted in Sangti Valley, located in Dirang Circle of West Kameng District, Arunachal Pradesh. The valley lies within the eastern Himalayan foothills and is associated with the Sangti River, agricultural fields, forested slopes, and mountain landscapes. Its riverine environment supports the cultivation of rice, maize, barley, millet, vegetables, and other crops. Agriculture, animal husbandry, and the use of forest resources have traditionally formed the basis of local subsistence.

The Monpas of Sangti Valley are predominantly followers of Tibetan Buddhism. At the same time, indi-

genous beliefs concerning territorial deities, mountain spirits, ancestral forces, and protective beings remain important in village life. These beliefs are expressed through agricultural rituals, healing ceremonies, offerings, taboos, and customary practices associated with sacred landscapes.

Previous ethnoecological research has shown that Monpa subsistence practices are closely connected with spiritual beliefs, local ecological knowledge, sacred landscapes, and community-based systems of resource regulation (Singh, 2013). This context is important for understanding *Kakung Torkhan* because the ritual is embedded within a wider system in which agriculture, religious practice, social responsibility and environmental relations are interconnected.

Sangti Valley was selected purposively because *Kakung Torkhan* continues to be performed there with the participation of village households and under the guidance of hereditary ritual specialists. The ritual provides an opportunity to examine how an indigenous ceremony survives within a society that has undergone centuries of Buddhist influence, as well as more recent changes associated with education, transport, market integration, tourism, and technological development.

Objectives

The study pursued the following objectives:

1. To document the ritual sequence of *Kakung Torkhan* as practiced by the Monpas of Sangti Valley.
2. To examine the roles of the *Mang Bonpu*, *Changmin*, and *Tseepa Lama*.
3. To analyse the symbolic meanings of ritual offerings, sacred spaces, and ceremonial exchanges.
4. To examine the interaction between Bon traditions and Tibetan Buddhism.
5. To explore the ritual's role in community cohesion, customary regulation, ecological ethics, and intergenerational knowledge transmission.
6. To assess the contemporary relevance of *Kakung Torkhan* as intangible cultural heritage.

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative ethnographic approach to examine *Kakung Torkhan* within its religious, agricultural, social, and ecological context. An ethnographic design was considered appropriate because the ritual is a community-based practice whose meanings are expressed through participation, observation, oral explanation, ritual performance, and customary behaviour. The study does not attempt statistical generalization; rather, it provides a contextual interpretation of the ritual as understood and practiced by community members in Sangti Valley.

The article is based primarily on original fieldwork. The central evidence consists of participant observations, interviews, informal conversations, oral narratives, and field notes. Published sources are used only to situate the study within existing discussions of Monpa ethnoecology and to compare the present account with publicly available descriptions of the ritual. Interpretations concerning the Sangti Valley performance derive from the present field study.

Fieldwork and Participants

Fieldwork was conducted in Sangti Valley during the period associated with the performance of *Kakung Torkhan*. Participants included the *Mang Bonpu* (Community Bon priest), *Changmin* (ritual assistant), *Tseepa Lama*, village elders, knowledgeable community members, rice cultivators, household representatives, women involved in ritual preparations and younger community members.

Participants were selected purposively because of their knowledge of the ritual, agricultural practices, oral traditions, and customary rules. Personal names and identifying details have been omitted where necessary to protect privacy and culturally sensitive information.

Data Collection

Data were collected through participant observation, semi-structured interviews, informal conversations, oral narratives, and field-note documentation. Participant observation focused on:

- the determination of the ritual date,
- preparation of household offerings,
- movement of ritual specialists through the village,
- performance at the sacred grove,
- household invocations and blessings,
- ritual exchange of offerings,
- behavioural prohibitions,
- distribution and consumption of consecrated food, and
- participation of different generations.

Semi-structured interviews explored local interpretations of the ritual's origin, meaning, proper procedure, associated deities, ritual taboos, agricultural significance, and contemporary changes. Oral narratives were treated not as literal historical records but as cultural accounts through which elders communicate moral values, ritual obligations, and customary law.

Data Recording and Verification

Observations were recorded in field diaries and supplemented by descriptive notes and photographic documentation where permission was granted. Information obtained from different participants was compared through repeated conversations and observation of ritual practice. This process helped identify areas of agreement, variation, and uncertainty within community accounts.

The study distinguishes among observed ritual practices, statements provided by participants, and the researcher's interpretation. Accordingly, particular claims are attributed to elders, ritual specialists, or community members rather than being presented as universally shared by all Monpas.

Data Analysis

The field material was analysed thematically. The principal analytical categories were agrarian cosmology, religious authority, Bon-Buddhist complementarity, ritual exchange, sacred landscape, ecological ethics, customary regulation, community cohesion and intergenerational transmission.

The analysis combines descriptive ethnography with interpretation. It examines both the observable features of *Kakung Torkhan* and the meanings assigned to the ritual by community members. Particular attention was given to the ways in which the ceremony organizes relationships among people, agricultural resources, sacred places, ritual specialists, households, and supernatural powers.

Ethical Considerations

The research was conducted through respectful engagement with community members and ritual specialists. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the intended academic use of their contributions. Oral accounts and ritual descriptions were recorded with permission. The study does

not disclose restricted or esoteric ritual knowledge. The names of individual participants have been withheld, and ritual information has been limited to material considered appropriate for academic discussion.

Local Meaning of Kakung Torkhan

Community explanations identify *Kakung Torkhan* as a pre-harvest offering. In local usage, *Kakung* refers to smashed rice, while *Torkhan* denotes an offering, particularly an offering made to local deities. Thus, *Kakung Torkhan* refers to the offering of agricultural produce before harvesting begins.

Several elders explained that the first produce of the season should not be treated as ordinary food. It is symbolically associated with the deities who protect the land, regulate fertility and safeguard the village. According to these accounts, harvesting before the ritual would mean taking agricultural produce without first acknowledging the spiritual powers associated with it.

The ritual marks a transition between two stages of the agricultural cycle. Before *Kakung Torkhan*, the crop remains under the protection and authority of the deities. After the ritual, harvesting may begin under the protection invoked by the *Mang Bonpu*. This transition gives agricultural time a ritual structure and transforms harvesting into a socially and religiously regulated activity.

The ritual is also described by informants as a communal obligation. Every household is expected to participate, irrespective of economic position. Community members explained that the welfare of one household cannot be separated from that of the village. Agricultural prosperity is consequently imagined as collective prosperity and ritual participation is understood as both a religious duty and a customary responsibility.

Ritual Authority and Religious Accommodation

The organization of *Kakung Torkhan* demonstrates the complementary relationship between *Bon* and *Buddhism* in Monpa religious life. The *Tseepa Lama* determines the date of the ceremony by consulting the Tibetan lunar calendar. The *Mang Bonpu* performs the principal ritual invocations, while the *Changmin* assists with ritual materials, responses, communication and ceremonial movement.

This arrangement reveals a division of religious authority rather than a complete fusion of traditions. The Buddhist lama determines ritual time, while the *Bon* priest conducts the indigenous ceremonial process. Each specialist performs a distinct function and the ritual depends upon the cooperation of both.

The relationship may therefore be understood as institutional complementarity. Buddhism provides the calendrical framework within which the ritual occurs, whereas *Bon* priest provides the ritual expertise, deities, offerings, sacred geography and ceremonial language through which agricultural protection is sought.

Several informants did not describe *Bon* and *Buddhism* as mutually exclusive systems. Instead, their accounts indicated that the two traditions occupy different but connected domains of community life. This arrangement suggests that religious accommodation among the Monpas is not simply an undifferentiated mixture of beliefs. It is a practical system of cooperation in which different specialists and traditions perform complementary functions.

Sacred Grove and Ritual Landscape

The first major phase of *Kakung Torkhan* takes place at the village sacred grove known as *Narang*. Informants described the grove as the dwelling place of territorial deities and protective spirits. It is not

simply a natural area but a religiously constituted landscape whose significance derives from its relationship with the community, territory, agricultural fields, and supernatural protectors.

At *Narang*, the *Mang Bonpu* and *Changmin* invoke deities identified locally as *Phu-da*, *Ke-lha*, and *Yul-lha*. According to community accounts, the invocations express gratitude for protection during the previous agricultural cycle and request abundance, health and safety during the coming harvest.

The movement from the sacred grove to individual households is significant. The ceremony begins at the centre of the territorial landscape and then moves into the domestic sphere. The ritual consequently connects three domains:

- the sacred grove, associated with territorial deities;
- the agricultural fields, associated with fertility and production;
- the household, associated with family welfare and continuity.

The village is thereby transformed into a unified ritual space. The sacred is not confined to a monastery or shrine; it is distributed across the landscape, fields, paths and homes that constitute everyday Monpa life.

Household Preparations

Preparations begin several days before the appointed date. Households clean their living spaces, arrange the ritual altar, prepare offerings, and organize the participation of family members. Community members explained that household preparation is itself part of the ritual process because it requires each family to recognize its relationship with the agricultural cycle and its obligations to the village.

The principal offerings are *Kakung*, consisting of smashed rice; *Yetak* consisting of smoked fish, and in some households, locally prepared paneer; and *Yuthong*, a traditional rice beer.

Fresh plantain leaves, locally available vegetation, and clay containers are used to arrange or present the offerings. These materials reflect the ecological context of the valley and the practical integration of natural resources into ritual life.

Household Ritual Sequence

After the ceremony at *Narang*, the *Mang Bonpu* and *Changmin* visit each household. Family members gather before the household altar and receive the ritual specialists. The *Mang Bonpu* recites invocations in the traditional ritual language, calling upon protective deities to safeguard the household, protect livestock, ensure agricultural abundance, and preserve the health of family members.

The *Changmin* assists by arranging ritual objects, responding to the *Bonpu*, and facilitating communication between the ritual specialist and the household. The presence of both figures emphasizes that ritual performance is not an individual act but an organized social process requiring specialized knowledge and recognized authority.

Field observations indicated that household participation followed a regular sequence, although minor variations occurred in the arrangement of offerings and the organization of family members. The basic pattern remained consistent: preparation of the altar, arrival of the ritual specialists, recitation of invocations, exchange of offerings, blessing of the household, and distribution of consecrated food.

Ritual Exchange and Consecrated Food

A central feature of *Kakung Torkhan* is the exchange of offerings. The offerings carried by the *Mang Bonpu* are exchanged with those prepared by the household. This exchange expresses reciprocity among

the ritual specialists, the household, the deities and the wider community.

The exchanged offerings are not treated as ordinary food. Once handled and blessed during the ritual, they acquire sacred significance. They are distributed among family members and consumed as consecrated food. Sharing these offerings allows divine protection and prosperity to circulate within the household.

The exchange also communicates a broader principle of reciprocity. The community offers agricultural products, food, and drink to the deities, while the deities are understood to return protection, fertility and well-being. The relationship is therefore not conceived as unilateral worship but as an ongoing exchange of obligations and benefits.

Ritual Taboos

Kakung Torkhan is accompanied by behavioural restrictions that regulate conduct during the ritual period. Informants described these restrictions as necessary for maintaining the efficacy of the ceremony and preventing disturbance to the deities and spirits.

Loud noises, including shouting, whistling, singing and playing any musical instruments, are traditionally prohibited. Elders explained that silence expresses humility and prevents disturbance to the spiritual powers invoked during the ceremony.

Activities involving pounding, grinding, or smashing grain are also restricted. Oral accounts recall that, in earlier times, households that needed to pound rice or maize carried out the work near the riverbank. The sound was believed to merge with the sound of flowing water and thus avoid disturbing the deities. Although mechanical mills and changed lifestyles have reduced the practical importance of this rule, the memory of the practice continues to communicate earlier forms of ritual discipline.

Unnecessary travel, night-time wandering, recreational activities and excessive merrymaking are also discouraged. Community members described the ritual period as a sacred interval during which people should remain close to their households and participate respectfully in the ceremony.

One oral narrative concerns a young girl who plucked and consumed newly ripened rice grain before the completion of *Kakung Torkhan*. According to the narrative, her violation of customary practice angered the deities and resulted in the severe disfigurement of her face. Informants presented this account as a warning narrative rather than as a documented historical event. Its primary function is pedagogical: it warns against premature harvesting, teaches respect for ritual authority and reinforces collective responsibility.

Symbolism of the Offerings

Kakung

Kakung represents the first agricultural produce and symbolizes the community's dependence on both human labour and supernatural protection. Its offering acknowledges that agricultural productivity is not attributed exclusively to human effort. The crop is treated as a gift made possible through the cooperation of land, water, climate, ancestors, deities, and cultivators.

The offering also expresses humility. By giving the first produce to the deities before consuming or marketing it, the community recognizes that human beings are beneficiaries rather than absolute owners of agricultural resources.

Yetak

Yetak, consisting of smoked fish or locally prepared paneer, symbolizes nourishment and subsistence. Its inclusion demonstrates that Monpa food systems are not based on crops alone but combine cultivation, animal husbandry, fishing, food preservation and locally available resources.

Informants associated this offering with food security and household well-being. It also links the agricultural ritual to the wider subsistence economy of the community.

Yuthong

Yuthong, or traditional rice beer, signifies hospitality, respect and ritual sharing. It is offered to the deities and later consumed by household members. Its ceremonial use establishes a relationship of welcome between human beings and supernatural powers.

The communal consumption of *Yuthong* also converts ritual blessing into social experience. The offering is not retained by the ritual specialist or a particular household but becomes part of a shared process of participation.

Natural Materials

Plantain leaves, other vegetation, and clay containers connect the ritual to the surrounding environment. These materials reflect a cultural logic in which ritual purity, availability and ecological belonging are closely related.

The use of local materials also indicates that ritual practice is embedded in the landscape. The environment supplies not only agricultural produce but also the substances through which religious communication is established.

Discussion**Kakung Torkhan and Agrarian Cosmology**

The ethnographic findings demonstrate that *Kakung Torkhan* expresses an agrarian cosmology in which agricultural production is understood as a relationship among humans, land, crops, animals, ancestors, and deities. Harvesting is not simply the removal of crops from fields; it is a morally regulated act that requires acknowledgment of the spiritual agencies associated with fertility and protection.

The ritual creates a cultural framework of gratitude and restraint. By offering the first produce before harvesting begins, the Monpas recognize limits to human entitlement. The land is productive, but its productivity is not treated as an unlimited resource. It is sustained through reciprocal relations and ritual responsibility.

The findings correspond with broader ethnographic observations that Monpa agricultural and subsistence practices are embedded within spiritual values, sacred landscapes, and customary rules concerning natural resources (*Singh, 2013*). *Kakung Torkhan* provides a specific ritual expression of this wider relationship between agriculture, ecology, and religious life.

Bon–Buddhist Complementarity

The division of authority between the *Tseepa Lama* and the *Mang Bonpu* is the most important institutional feature of the ritual. The lama determines ritual time, while the *Bonpu* performs the indigenous ceremony. This arrangement demonstrates that religious accommodation is organized through practical cooperation.

The ritual also shows that the persistence of *Bon* cannot be measured only by the existence of an independent institutional structure. *Bon* survives through ritual expertise, oral language, sacred

geography, priestly authority, and community participation. Its continuing relevance is evident in the fact that the agricultural transition remains ritually incomplete until the Bon ceremony has been performed.

The evidence therefore supports an understanding of Monpa religious life as plural and relational. Buddhist and Bon practices are not always performed by the same specialists or according to the same symbolic system. Their coexistence is achieved through negotiated roles and shared community recognition.

Social Cohesion and Customary Law

Kakung Torkhan requires participation from every household and consequently creates a strong sense of collective obligation. The ritual distributes blessings across the village rather than restricting them to individual families. Its egalitarian structure reinforces the idea that agricultural well-being is shared.

The taboos associated with the ritual further strengthen customary law. By regulating sound, movement, work and recreation, the ritual produces a temporary moral order. Collective restraint confirms respect for the deities and commitment to customary norms.

The oral narrative concerning premature consumption of newly ripened rice functions similarly. It provides a memorable form through which elders communicate the consequences of violating agricultural timing and ritual authority. The story's value lies not in whether the event can be historically verified but in the way it organizes social expectations.

Ecological Ethics

The ritual's treatment of the sacred grove, cultivated fields, water, plants, and agricultural produce reflects an indigenous ecological ethic. The environment is understood as inhabited, relational, and morally significant. Sacred spaces are not merely symbolic; they are locations through which social obligations toward the landscape are maintained.

Ritual belief does not automatically guarantee environmental conservation, and the present study does not make a direct causal claim of that kind. However, *Kakung Torkhan* provides cultural reasons for respecting forests, rivers, groves, fields and local resources. It teaches that ecological well-being and community well-being are interdependent.

This interpretation is consistent with previous research showing that Monpa ecological knowledge is embedded in cultural practices, spiritual beliefs, local institutions, and customary regulation (Singh, 2013). *Kakung Torkhan* should therefore be understood as one component of a wider cultural system of environmental relations.

Cultural Transmission

Kakung Torkhan transmits knowledge through participation rather than formal instruction. Children and young people observe the preparation of offerings, the movement of ritual specialists, household prayers, taboos and the sharing of consecrated food. Elders communicate the meaning of the ritual through oral explanations and narratives.

The ritual functions as a community-based educational institution. It teaches agricultural timing, respectful conduct, ritual language, food practices, local geography, social hierarchy, and collective responsibility. Such knowledge is embodied in repeated practice and may not be fully captured through textual documentation alone.

Continuity and Change

The ritual continues despite modernization, formal education, changing agricultural practices, migration and increased contact with external institutions. Some practical aspects have changed, particularly the restriction on pounding grain near the riverbank, as mechanical mills have altered domestic labour. Nevertheless, the fundamental ritual structure remains recognizable.

This continuity should not be interpreted as cultural stasis. *Kakung Torkhan* survives because the community adapts its performance while preserving meanings considered essential. Its resilience lies in its ability to accommodate change without abandoning the relationship among agriculture, sacred power, social obligation, and communal identity.

Conclusion

Kakung Torkhan is a significant indigenous harvest ritual of the Dirang Monpas of Sangti Valley. The ritual marks the beginning of the rice harvest, but its meaning extends well beyond agricultural timing. It constitutes a cultural institution through which the Monpas express gratitude to the land, seek protection from territorial deities, reaffirm customary obligations, and sustain collective identity.

The ritual demonstrates the continuing vitality of *Bon* traditions within a predominantly *Buddhist* society. The *Tseepa Lama* determines the auspicious date according to the Buddhist lunar calendar, while the *Mang Bonpu* and *Changmin* conduct the indigenous ceremonial process. This division of authority illustrates a form of religious accommodation based on complementarity rather than replacement.

Kakung Torkhan also performs important social and ecological functions. The participation of every household strengthens solidarity, while the exchange and sharing of consecrated offerings reinforce reciprocity. Ritual taboos regulate community behaviour and preserve customary law. The veneration of sacred groves, territorial deities, agricultural produce, and natural materials reflects an ecological worldview in which human welfare depends upon respectful relations with the natural and supernatural environment.

The study is based on ethnographic observation, interviews, oral narratives, and informal conversations conducted in Sangti Valley. Its contribution lies in presenting a community-centred account of a ritual that remains insufficiently documented. At the same time, the study is limited to one valley and should not be assumed to represent all Monpa communities. Comparative research in other Monpa settlements would be necessary to identify regional variations in terminology, ritual authority, offerings, taboos and religious interpretation.

Kakung Torkhan deserves continued documentation as an element of the intangible cultural heritage of the Eastern Himalayas. Preservation initiatives should involve the Monpa community, ritual specialists, schools, local cultural organizations, and researchers. Documentation should prioritize community consent, accurate recording of local terminology, protection of sacred knowledge, and transmission of ritual practice to younger generations.

Ultimately, *Kakung Torkhan* demonstrates that indigenous rituals remain active systems of knowledge rather than remnants of the past. Through this pre-harvest ceremony, the Monpas of Sangti Valley continue to connect agriculture with spirituality, ecology with customary law, and individual households with the wider moral community.

Limitations of the Study

This study has several limitations. First, it focuses on *Kakung Torkhan* as practiced in Sangti Valley and does not claim to represent all Monpa settlements. Ritual terminology, offerings, priestly roles, and prohibitions may vary across villages. Second, the study is based primarily on qualitative evidence and does not attempt statistical generalization. Third, some ritual knowledge may not have been shared because it is restricted, sacred, or transmitted only within particular ritual lineages. Finally, the study reflects the period during which fieldwork was conducted and may not capture subsequent changes in the ritual's organization, performance, or interpretation.

Declarations**Ethics Statement**

The research was conducted through respectful engagement with community members and ritual specialists. Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and the intended academic use of their contributions. Oral accounts and ritual descriptions were recorded with permission. The study does not disclose restricted or esoteric ritual knowledge. The names of individual participants have been withheld, and ritual information has been limited to material considered appropriate for academic discussion.

Consent to Participate

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, the voluntary nature of their participation, and the intended use of the information for academic publication. Oral informed consent was obtained from participants and ritual specialists before interviews and observations were conducted. Participants were free to decline to answer questions or discontinue their participation.

Consent for Publication

Permission was obtained to publish the non-restricted cultural information presented in this article. Personal names and identifying details have been omitted. No identifiable photographs or restricted ritual materials are included without specific permission.

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