



## **Linguistic Archaeology in Indigenous Kiranti-Köits Contexts of Nepal**

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**Abstract:** ‘Linguistic Archaeology’ is structural-evidence or data-based research methodology helpful for decolonizing indigenous peoples for claiming and reclaiming both their organic indigenous identity and knowledge in linguistic structures as well as the nomenclature of any indigenous language including those spoken in Nepal. In this regard, Nepal’s linguistic diversity mostly in the case of indigenous languages is the best methodology for indigenous researchers or experts to find out or explain organic indigeneity, identity, knowledge, land-territory, history and semanticity of ethno-clanonyms (clan + names) through morphological analyses. This methodology in Nepal’s indigenous contexts was first started by K. P. Malla (1981) in his seminal paper ‘Linguistic archaeology of the Nepal valley: A preliminary report’ was the first eye-opener for indigenous researchers and scholars now to be extended and reworked on Linda T. Smith’s (1999) theory of ‘Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples.’ Thus, this paper proposes to explore indigenous knowledge in linguistic nomenclature and structures as crucial steps to decolonize indigenous peoples all over the world and within Nepal by eliciting self-evident linguistic data mainly from indigenous Kiranti-Köits (colonizer’s exonyms: Sunwar, Mukhiya etc. see Rapacha 2005, 2016, 2022 and elsewhere) and comparatively some other selected indigenous Kiranti and non-Kiranti languages of Nepal.

**Keywords:** linguistic archaeology, decolonization, organic identity, knowledge

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<sup>1</sup>**Production credits:**

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**ISSN: 2128-1333**

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## Introduction

In the post-1990s decolonial or de-Sanskritized indigenous context of Nepal, linguistic archaeology is one of the fundamental methodologies to be applied while carrying out research by indigenous scholars locally and globally. Malla (1981 reprint 2015) for the first time in present indigenous contexts initiated and applied the methodology in his seminal article 'Linguistic archaeology of the Nepal Valley: A preliminary report.' In his article, Malla demonstrates that nearly 80% of toponymic nominal nomenclatures (2015, pp. 227-246) of the pre-historic *Yalākhom* (in Kiranti language) Nepal valley written in Nepali epigraphy are of non-Sanskrit in origin.

Malla's research findings suggest that during the Kirāta period of pre-historic Nepal known as *Yalākhom* (present Nepal valley), was inhabited by the Sino-Tibeto-Burman language-speaking Newārs. Such a majority of nomenclature nominals are the strongest evidence for modern Kirāta people and their existence in *Yalākhom* or the present Nepal valley. Additionally, Malla's three other papers viz., 'River-Names of the Nepal Valley: A Study in Cultural Annexation' (2015, pp. 247-260), 'The Profane Names of the Sacred Hilllocks' (2015, pp. 261-269), and 'Nepāla: Archaeology of the Word' (2015, pp. 270-284) prove that indigenous organic toponyms, loconyms, hydronyms, oronyms in later historical periods were Sanskritized or colonized with deceitful and intentional replacements as 'Other' or 'Obscure or meaningless' in Indo-Aryan nominal semantics.

In today's world, linguistic archaeology as one of the self-evident and linguistic data-based entity is the best tool of research to be applied or utilized by indigenous researchers and experts to 'discover' (Smith, 1999, p. 160) and re-discover indigenous people's organic identity nominal nomenclatures semantically meaningful in indigenous languages and in their core lexicon to be separated from the colonized one. In linguistic archaeology, practitioners value phone, phoneme, morpheme, and lexeme equally while digging out linguistic fossils in all phones, phonemes, morphemes, and lexemes possible and available in that particular indigenous language. When in the application phase, the research gap is to apply phone by phone, phoneme by phoneme, morpheme by morpheme, lexeme by lexeme and culmeme (the smallest segment of culture) by culmeme.

This paper's main objective is to extend and relink Smith's (1999) theory of decolonizing methodologies with linguistic fossils to 'relink' (Limbu 2017; 2021) the world's indigenous peoples' common plights with an example from Kiranti-Kōits (colonizer's exonyms: Sunwar, Mukhiya, etc.) indigenous people of Nepal. Some of her methodological projects like 'claiming, celebrating survival, indigenizing, revitalizing, connecting, reading, writing, reframing, restoring, returning, networking, protecting, creating, sharing, and naming' (1999, pp. 142-162) out of 25 methodological projects are of much more relevance in Nepali indigenous peoples'<sup>3</sup> contexts.

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<sup>3</sup> In Nepal's context, indigenous peoples as defined by National Foundation for Development of Indigenous Nationalities (NFDIN) Act 2002 are those peoples having (i) distinct collective identity; (ii) own language, religion, tradition, and culture; (iii) own traditional relatively egalitarian social structure; (iv) traditional homeland and geographical area; and (v) written or oral history that traces their line of descent back to the occupants of territories before they were integrated into modern Nepal within the present Nepali frontiers.

## Data in naming process

Indigenous peoples all over the Mother Earth have and had their land-territories and languages before the arrival of European and Caucasian colonizers in America, Canada, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, and India. Similarly, the Nepal Himalaya was inhabited by Sino-Tibeto-Burman language-speaking Mongoloid Kirat (from Oirat cf. Rapacha, 2018) populations before the advent of Caucasoids in the Nepal Hills and Himalayas (cf. Chatterji 1998 [orig. 1951; revised 2nd edition 1974]). Later in history, due to sociolinguistic and socio-cultural contact pressures, their name developed into diverse Kiranti-speaking languages and cultures due to the rugged geographic isolations of eastern Himalayas of Nepal.

At present, they are diverse in more than two dozen Kiranti languages and cultural groups from *Wollo* 'hither, near,' *Majh*, 'mid' to *Pallo*, 'far' Kirat land-territory of the eastern part of Nepal Himalaya comprising the contemporary Bagmati Province and Province One.<sup>4</sup> Linguistic data of naming or nomenclatures (Table 1, Linguistic Map 1) that have lingo-archaeological importance have been presented and analyzed in this paper from all three Kirat (cf. Rapacha, 2016, pp. 284-316) land-territory.

## Naming in organic ethnonym Kiranti-Kōits

Regarding the organic indigenous auto-ethnonym, Rapacha (2005, 2022, and elsewhere) notes that the Kiranti-Kōits किराँती-कोइँच people are scarcely known to the scholarly world outside of their expropriated indigenous *Wollo*, 'hither/near' Kirat, *Kipat* (communal land) area. Few linguistic and socio-anthropological studies are available on them, and are mainly in the offensive or victimized exonym 'Sunwar/Sunuwar.' They are also known as 'Mukhiya मुखिया' in another Indo-Aryan colonial terminology. With that 'Mukhiya' power-title, they had minimal local rights to collect land revenues as suppressive feudal lords of their people in their settlement areas for the colonizers.

We indigenous people are facing victimization of epistemic violence by colonizers in media including lexicographers, textbook writers, and journalists regarding the exonyms 'Sunwar or Sunuwar' vs. 'Sunar' (goldsmith) – the Indo-Aryan term for untouchable (dehumanization) Dalit caste group in Hinduism – which they ignorantly or forcibly lump those indigenous people together interchangeably in their writings.

Such ignorance or coercion has aggravated their fear or psychosis of being proud in their indigeneity ('indigenizing' in Smith's terms) and they do not have to lie themselves as 'Rai' another Indo-Aryan term for 'village head' (cf. Rapacha, 2022 and elsewhere). Now, we claim (Smith, 1999) and re-claim our group's organic ethnonym identity as Kiranti-Kōits (endonym/auto-ethnonym) irrespective of exonyms like Sunwar (Sun+war (Indo-Aryan etymology) 'people residing on the west bank of Sunkoshi river' as suggested

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<sup>4</sup>Province One's proposed *de facto* name is Kirat Province, however due to the dominant ruler or Indo-Aryan colonizer or Sanskritization class's negative thought or misinterpretations on indigenous identity-based name till today, no naming process has taken place even after 2<sup>nd</sup> provincial elections on the 4<sup>th</sup> of November, 2022.

in literature cf. Rapacha, 2005), Sunuwar, Bhujuar (Indo-Aryan etymologies suggesting loconym), Pirthwar (Indo-Aryan etymology suggesting loconym), Mukhiya (Indo-Aryan etymology suggesting official post, title), Jisuki (blending of Ji(jicha) + Su(nuwar) + (Ki)rat created by Hari Jijicha Sunuwar Kirat). Hari Jisuki's daughters presently have academic certificates, citizenship certificates, and passports in these Jisuki family names.

### Naming in organic ethno-clanonyms

In this section, we look at the morphological dissection or taxonomy and classification of morphemes suggesting clanonyms of Kiranti-Kõits indigenous people and their language to trace morphophonemically meaningful naming in their mother tongue as shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Kiranti-Kõits clanonyms and morpho-semantic aspect/matrix

Serial #	Reconstructed Clanonyms in Roman Spelling and spoken form	Phonemic representation	Morpho-semantic aspect/matrix
01	Binicha Binich	/bi-n'i-cā/ बि-नि-चा बि-नि-च	cow-V-INF (v.t) 'to squeeze something, e.g., cow for milking' (n.) 'milk-man, legendary king'
02	Bigyacha Bigya(ch)	/bi-gyā-cā/ बि-ग्या- चा बि-ग्या-च	cow-V-INF (v.t) 'to look after cows' (n.) 'a cow-herder' (p/c with Lokpriya Mulicha-Sunuwar)
03	Bujicha Bujich	/bu-dz'i-cā/ बु-जि- चा बु-जि-च	V.INTF-V-INF (v.t) 'to break something abruptly' (n.) 'one who breaks something abruptly'
04	Bramlicha Bramlich	/brəm-li-cā/ ब्रम्-लि- चा ब्रम्-लि-च	buckwheat V-INF (v.t) 'to remain, decorate the buckwheat' (n.) 'one who performs such action'
05	Darkhacha Darkhach	/dār-kḥā:-cā/ दार- खा:-चा दार-खा:-च	UR-V-INF (v.t) 'to tear noisily' (n.) 'one who tears something noisily'
06	Dasucha Dasuch	/d̥ə-s'u-cā/ द-सु-चा द-सु-च	PAR-V-INF (v.t) 'to darn, repair, mend' (n.) 'one who darns'

07	Debbacha Debbach	/dʌb-bā-cā/ देब्-बाः- चा देब्-बाः-च	UR-V-INF (v.i) 'to stay, sit' (n.) 'a settler'
08	Digarcha Digarch	/di-gər-cā/ दि-गर- चा दि-गर-च	below-soil-pot-INF (v.t) 'to be friendly, toponym in Tibet' (n.) 'one who is friendly'
09	Durbicha Durbich	/dʊr-bi-cā/ दुर-बि-चा दुर-बि-च	UR-V-INF (v.t) 'to be full' (n.) 'one which becomes full'
10	Phaticha Phatich	/pʰə-tʰi-cā/ फ-ति-चा फ-ति-च	UR-V-INF (v.t) 'to separate, filter' (n.) 'one who filters'
11	Gaurocha Gauroch	/gəu-ro-cā/ गउ-रो- चा गउ-रो-च	ten-v-INF (v.t) 'to open immediately' (n.) 'one who opens immediately'
12	Gongrocha Gongroch	/goŋ-ro-cā/ गोङ्-रोः- चा गोङ्-रोः-च	UR-V-INF (v.t) 'to open noisily' (n.) 'one who opens noisily, title/post'
13	Jespucha Jespuch	/dzɛs-pʰu-cā/ जेस्- 'पु-चा जेस्-'पु-च	V-V-INF (v.t) 'to blast having burnt' (n.) 'one who blasts having burnt'
14	Jijicha Jijich	/dzi-dzʰi-cā/ जि-जि- चा जि-जि-च	UR-V-INF (v.t) 'to break violently' (n.) 'one who break violently, sweet, polite'
15	Jenticha Jentich	/dzyɛ̃-tʰi-cā/ ज्ये- ति-चा ज्ये-ति-च	UR-V-INF (v.t) 'to separate, filter' (n.) 'one who separates'
16	Katicha Katich	/kā:tʰi-cā/ काः-ति- चा काः-ति-च	one-V-INF (v.t) 'to darn, mend' (n.) 'one who darns, remains aloof' (p/c with Uttam Katicha-Sunuwar)
17	Khunlich Khunlich	/kʰū-lʰi-cā/ खुँ-लिँ-चा खुँ-लिँ-च	UR-V-INF (v.t) 'to put on, wear' (n.) 'one who puts on'

18	Kyabacha Kyaba(ch)	/kyā-bā-cā/ क्या- बाः-चा क्या-बाः-च	UR-V-INF (v.i) 'to stay, sit' (n.) 'one who stays or sits'
19	Khyonpaticha Khyonpatich	/k <sup>h</sup> yōpə-t̥j-cā/ ख्योप-ति-चा ख्योप-ति-च	book-V-INF (v.t) 'to cover with a book, separate, filter' (n.) 'one who covers with a book or hides under the pile of books (p/c with Ganga Katicha [married to a Je'ticha clan]; narrated to me a war story in Tibet during the prehistoric time, where one hid himself under the piles of books and that is how the clanonym has been derived)
20	Kyuinticha Kyuintich	/kyuī-t̥'i-cā/ क्युइँ- तिः-चा क्युइँ-तिः-च	UR-V-INF (v.t) 'to separate, filter' (n.) 'one who separates'
21	Kormocha Kormoch	/kor-mo-cā/ कोर-मो- चा कोर-मो-च	landslide-so-INF (v.t) 'to take place a landslide' (n.) 'one who dwelt in a landslide taking area' [korom yolšo tsuŋ(n)tsimi bāʔšo pəʔikəm kormots dumšo nəm (p/c with Lokpriya Mulicha-Sunuwar)]
22	Laspacha Laspach	/ləs-pā-cā/ लस्-पाः- चा लस्-पाः-च	V:go:2DU-VR-INF (v.t) 'to open up' (n.) 'one who opens up for himself or herself'
23	Linocha Linoch	/li-no-cā/ लि-नो-चा लि-नो-च	bow-V-INF (v.t) 'to prepare a bow' (n.) 'one who prepares a bow'
24	Lonkucha Lonkuch	/lō:-ku-cā/ लौं-कु-चा लौं-कु-च	UR-V-INF (v.t) 'to come up' (n.) 'one who comes'
25	Lunkicha Lunkich	/lū-k <sup>(h)</sup> 'i-cā/ लुँ-कि- चा लुँ-कि-च	UR-V-INF (v.t) 'to burn' (n.) 'burn'
26	Mulicha Mulich	/mu-li-cā/ मु-लि-चा मु-लि-च	time-V-INF (v.t) 'to remain something after use' (n.) 'one who dwells in the first ancestral family house' (Lokpriya Mulicha-Sunuwar, p/c)

27	Nasocha Nasoch	/nā-so:-cā/ ना-सो:- चा ना-सो:-च	sun-V-INF (v.t) 'to set the sun' (n.) 'one who sets like the sun'
28	Ngawocha Ngawoch	/ŋā-wə-cā/ डा-व:-चा डा-व:-च	LOC-V-INF (v.t) 'to enter' (n.) 'one who enters first, elder brother'
29	Nomlicha Nomlich	/no(ə)m-li-cā/ नोम्- लि-चा नोम्-लि-च	UR/love-V-INF (v.t) 'to remain, put on' (n.) 'one who puts on, remains'
30	Pargacha Pargach	/pər-gā-cā/ पर-गा:- चा पर-गा:-च	UR-V-INF (v.t) 'to walk' (n.) 'one who walks'
31	Pretticha Prettich	/prɛt-t̪i-cā/ प्रेत्-'ति- चा प्रेत्-'ति-च	V-V-INF (v.t) 'to jump, separate, filter' (n.) 'one who jumps'
32	Rapachad Rapach	rā:-pə-cā रा:-प-चा रा:-प-च	V-V-INF (v.t) 'to make something rot' (n.) 'a catalyst'
33	Rapicha* Rapich	rā:-pi-cā रा:-पि-चा रा:-पि-च	V-V-INF (v.t) 'to come' (n.) 'one who comes'
34	Rawacha Rawach	rə-wā-cā र-वा:-चा र-वा:-च	UR-V-INF (v.t) 'to plough' (n.) 'one who ploughs' (< ruwātsā 'to plough the land'; p/c Lokpriya Mulicha-Sunuwar)
35	Rudicha Rudich	ru-di-cā रु-दि-चा रु-दि-च	field/land-V, (below)-INF (v.t) 'to go for bringing' (n.) 'one goes for bringing'
36	Rujicha Rujich	ru-dzi-cā रु-जि-चा रु-जि-च	field/land-V-INF (v.t) 'to break sth.' (n.) 'one who divides property'
37	Rupacha Rupach	ru-pā:-cā रु-पा:-चा रु-पा:-च	land, field-V-INF (v.t) 'to open' (n.) 'one who used to dwell in a cave known as Rupāpūk <sup>h</sup> rī' (Bed Rupacha-Sunuwar and Lokpriya Mulicha-Sunuwar, p/c)
38	Shyochulcha Shyochul(ch)	šyo-cu(l)-cā श्यो- चुल्-चा श्यो-चुल्-च	mouth-UR/v: thrash-INF (v.t) 'to thrash' (n.) 'one who thrashes'

39	Susucha Susuch	su-su-cā सु-सु-चा सु-सु-च	UR/who-who/V-INF (v.t) 'to seal, pack' (n.) 'one who seals'
40	Teppacha Teppach	tʰɛp-pā-cā तेप्-पाः-चा तेप्-पाः-च	V-V-INF (v.t) 'to open, e.g., a bag' (n.) 'one who opens'
41	Thangracha Thangrach	Tʰaŋ-rā-cā ठाङ्-राः- चा ठाङ्-राः-च	fence-V-INF (v.t) 'to rot' (n.) 'one who provides support'
42	Tholocha Tholoch	tʰo-lo-cā थो-लो-चा थो-लो-च	place/V.INTF-V-INF (v.t) 'place/to turn gently' (n.) 'a settler, dweller' [kyuĩ-tʰi-cālā thušā læšo pəʈikɛm tho-lo-cā ɟumšo; p/c Lokpriya Mulicha-Sunuwar]
43	Tonkucha Tonkuch	tʰõ:-ku-cā तों-कु-चा तों-कु-च	meeting-V-INF 'to come in the meeting' (n.) 'one who presides the meeting'
44	Thungucha Thunguch	tʰũ:-gu-cā थुँ-गु-चा थुँ-गु-च	mind, (fig) wisdom-V-INF (v.t) 'to appear' (n.) 'one who is wise'
45	Tursucha Tursuch	tʰur-su-cā तुर-सु-चा तुर-सु-च	tʰurs 'grave'-V-INF (v.t) 'to darn, mend' (n.) 'one who darns' [also one who is born on the graveyard; p/c Lokpriya Mulicha- Sunuwar]
46	Wangdecha Wangdech	wəŋ-ɟɛ-cā वङ्-दे-चा वङ्-दे-च	enter-V-INF (v.t) 'to say' (n.) 'one who says'
47	Yaɽacha Yaɽa(ch)	yā-ʼtʰā-cā या-ʼताः-चा या-ʼताः-च	V-V-INF 'to take something away swiftly' (n.) 'one who takes something away swiftly'

Source: Rapacha (2005, pp. 21-25; Rapacha, 2016, pp. 284-316)

\* = doubtful, 2 = second person, DU = dual, UR = unknown root, n. = noun, v.t/i = verb transitive/intransitive, INF = infinitive, INTF = intensifier, LOC = locative, p/c = personal communication, PAR = particle, sth. = something, /tʰ/ = /तʰ/, /ɟ/ = /द/, /ɛ/ = /ए/

š /š/ = शो

*Explanation:* More clanonyms may appear here.

Table 1 shows that available and possible 47 clanonyms in autonomous Kiranti-Kõits indigenous language are semantically meaningful in categoric description morpheme by morpheme in its organic indigenous lexicon. Categorically, all morphemes in the table



contribute nominal or verbal and infinitival meanings in the naming process of clanonyms. Semantically, all these clanonyms suggest historical events, profession, doer, attitude, characteristics, manner etc. This rich morpho-semantic clanonyms in 27 Kiranti linguistic groups is preliminarily studied by Rapacha (2016) by linking and re-linking them in historical contexts as one of the best agenda or projects in indigenous research of Nepal.

In the same manner, their endonym or auto-ethnonym *Kōits* कौँच [kōits] /kōic/also is meaningful in their indigenous mother tongue. The organic indigenous endonym *Kōits* is derived from *kōicha* [kōitsā] कौँचा /kōicā/ (kō-i-tsā phonetically and kō-i-cā phonemically) as the verbal (v.) lexeme having its meaning 'to show (fig.) to guide' (देखाउनु वा निर्देशन गर्नु). Usually, the final vowel /-ā/ /-आ/ in spoken form of the endonym *kōitsā* कौँचा (v.) in the lexicon of the language gets dropped out and remains as *kōits* कौँच (n.) meaning 'guide or leader.' This semantic aspect of the lexicon *Kōits* कौँच and meaningful morphemes *kō-i-tsā* as linguistic fossils of the indigenous mother tongue have no space in the colonizer's dictionary and out of notice or knowledge since indigenous peoples are the colonized one and easily can be dehumanized in the colonizer's domain of knowledge, administration, and academic institutions, including its mainstream media. Apparently, the dehumanization process is disrespect or even epistemic violence for/on indigenous peoples.

Since the inception of the modern and so-called unified Nepal with the conquests of Gorkha (Pradhan, 2009), the Nepali indigenous peoples have undergone sociopolitical, linguistic, cultural, and psychological trauma for centuries. For many indigenous critics, researchers, and scholars this traumatizing process has manifested in the form of internal colonization of the indigenous peoples, particularly categorized in Indigenous Two within 'indigenism' (Lee, 2006) or post-colonial and native science/indigenous paradigm (Cajete, 2000) frameworks. Even after the post-1990's indigenous movements in Nepal, internal colonization is still an ongoing process campaigned first by Prithivi Narayan Shah and his allies – the Columbus of Nepal – hence the following measures till today are rampant as tools to oppress the Nepali indigenous peoples:

- Linguistic hegemony—colonizers' languages
- Glorification of colonizers' culture
- Privileging certain race/caste groups over indigenous peoples
- Employment for colonizers and high caste groups
- Exploitation of raw, natural resources
- Mandatory market for colonizer-finished foods
- Disruption of traditional economy and residence
- Arbitrary boundaries—designed for colonizer's convenience, not according to indigenous boundaries
- Simplified communication—other as simpleton
- Christianity/Islam/Hindu vs. traditional/indigenous religion
- Creating a new "class" of the colonized—indebted to colonizer masters

- Class/caste status for colonizers
- Improvements in standard of living for some, lowered standard for 'Others' etc.

These inhumane and dehumanizing measures have forced the Nepali indigenous peoples to delink (Limbu, 2017; 2021) from their mother tongues, cultures, original identities, economies including their territories. As a result, their participation in nation building is insignificant and marginalized. For instance, they were conspiratorially sold to the British Raj to ignite the imperial/colonial power under the colonial mercenary label 'brave Gurkha' (cf. Pradhan, 2009) over 200 years ago.

This has served as a process of assimilationist brainwashing for losing the diverse identities of the indigenous populations of which the loss of their organic clanonyms (Table 1) or endonyms/ethnonyms can be taken as an example. Thus, the linguistic archaeological frame of indigenism and native science, in the context of rising social justice for the colonized ones, are laudable as the indigenous peoples are losing their identities phone by phone, phoneme by phoneme, morpheme by morpheme, lexeme by lexeme, and culmeme by culmeme.

This loss can palpably be seen in 'Sunwar' exonym and in related clanonyms (Table 1 and beyond) elsewhere in research carried out by outsiders. After a cursory survey of the distribution and internal comparison of important linking or re-linking clanonym's suffix morphemes having linguistic-paleontological meaning and importance in 27 Kiranti language groups (Köits, Bayung, RaDhu, Jerung, Hayu, Radu, Khaling, Kulung, Nachiring, Rodung (Chamling), Tilung, Sampang, Puma, Thulung, Koyu/Koyee, Mewahang, Newahang, Lohorong, Yakthung, Yakkha, Yamphu, Athpre, Belhare, Chintang, Chulung, Kirawa and Dungma(li) from *Wollo* 'hither/near' to *Pallo* 'far' Kirat see Appendix A for linguistic Map 1), we now examine into the orthographically wrong, inaccurate, and inconsistent ethnonyms and clanonyms of the Kiranti-Köits exonyms in the past literature (outsiders' view) in line with this study's research methodology in linguistic archaeology or paleontology. Here we shall observe their problematic misspellings as well as misrepresentation, which are meaningless in their indigenous cultural and semantic paradigms (cf. Rapacha, 2005, 2016, 2022 and elsewhere), at least for a fluent native speaker of Kiranti-Köits such as:

SANWAR\* (sic; Beams 1867 [rpt. 1960, pp. 20-21])

SANWAR\* (sic; Bezruchka 1985: 325 [5th edition; 1st 1972]) appeared for the first time in a photograph caption: 'A Sanwar woman wearing *Cheptisun* (N) 'earring' and two types of nose ornaments. (Photo: Dave Hardenbergh)

SUNAWAR\* (sic) census year: 1881; earlier distribution: Bengal (Singh 1996 p 928)

SUNUWAR – Pol (People of India) Equivalent: SUNUWAR

Census years: 1891, 1901, 1911, 1941; earlier distribution: Assam, Bengal, Sikkim, Elsewhere; present distribution: Sikkim: throughout the state, Uttar Pradesh: Dehradun, West Bengal: Darjeeling, Jalpaiguri, West Dinajpur (Singh 1996, p. 929)

SUNUWAR (SUNWAR), census year: 1931; earlier distribution: Sikkim (Singh, 1996, p. 930)

SUNUWAR, **Synonyms:** Mukhiya (Chief), Sonwar<sup>1</sup> [(sic) Sikkim] Groups/sub-groups: Barathare, Dasthare<sup>1</sup>, Jirel [Sikkim; now Jirel has been classified as an independent indigenous group in Nepal, *my information*]

Barathare, Dasthare [Uttar Pradesh]; [is a false classification in suppression and imitation of the Hindu rulers in the past and even at present some orthodox people think it to be so; *My comment added*]

**Titles:** Mukhiya [Sikkim], Mukhia [Uttar Pradesh]

**Surnames:** Mukhiya, Sunuwar [Sikkim]

**Exogamous units/clans:** Aditya, Bisu, Busyabisu, Bomyany, Chabbalich, Dongan, Durbic, Goma, Gorya, Grangden, Gyan, Gyapok, Hem, Himal, Jayatich, Jhumba Jyoitishi, Kanshi, Kaumourch, Kusya, Laspach, Linoch, Lukhich, Moktar<sup>2</sup>, Mulich, Negj, Phatich, Porophan, Pukrin, Rawach, Rujich, Shyam, Silirg, Sree, Srim, Suchich, Suriya, Syangbo, Thing, Thokar, Waiba, Yonjan [Sikkim]

**Exogamous units/clans (thar):** Kari Lasa, Seni [Uttar Pradesh]

**Septs** (thar): Brahmilcha\*, Shhapaticha\*, Durbicha, Jashkucha\*, Jespucha, Jijicha, Jireli\*, Katicha, Khyongpoticha, Kinticha\*, Kyohbohcha\*, Loikicha\*, Pargacha, Rahpacha\*, Rajicha\*, Shushicha\*, Thoholacha\*, Thumucha\*, Wangdecha, Yaktacha\*, Yeti\* in Darjeeling and Nepal [H.H. Risley 1891] (Singh 1996, pp. 1798-1799)

**Alternate names:** SUNUWAR, SUNBAR\* (sic), SUNWARI\* (sic),<sup>3</sup> MUKHIYA, KWOICO\* (sic) LO [SONOWAR\* (sic), SONOWAL\* (sic) in *Ethnologue* 2005 p 479] ([www.ethnologue.com/showlanguage.asp?code=SUZ](http://www.ethnologue.com/showlanguage.asp?code=SUZ))

**Sunwari**\* (sic): Shafer (1953 see note 3)

**Sunwari**\* (sic): Genetti (1988b, 1992 see note 3)

**Sunuwari**\* (sic): Sunuwar (2003 see note 3)

**Sunuwar:** *Sikkim Government Gazette* (1994 cf. in Rapacha 2005) Explanation II- 'The expression 'Sunuwar' includes Koincha\* (sic)/ Mukhia' [actually the alternative term 'Koincha'\* (sic) must correctly be spelt as Kōits कोइच; cf. Rapacha, 2005]

Most of the ethnonyms and ethno-clanonyms cited here with an asterisk and underline are problematic in their orthography except for three terms 'Kiranti-Kōits or Sun(u)war/Mukhia', which apparently and meaninglessly diversified with their semantic loss from language contact and domination or assimilation situations (cf. Abbi, 1992, pp. 39-49), especially with the Indo-Aryan languages like Nepali in Nepal or Hindi in India on Kiranti-Kōits is a case of delinking or colonized in their tribal or indigenous history, and is the loss or decay of indigeneity. This process has become their inheritance of loss due to external or colonial pressure.

After analyzing and interpreting morphological identity and meanings of ethno-clanonyms and endonyms or auto-ethnonyms, we move on to the examples of toponyms or loconyms (naming land territory and locality), hydronyms (river, rivulet, brooks' name in Kiranti-Kōits and the rest of 27 Kiranti language groups), and oronyms (hill, cliff, Mt. names). A toponymic study by Rai and Chamling (2017) is a recent and exhaustive claim and re-claim of Kirat nations' (*Wollo* 'hither/near/, *Majh* 'mid/middle' and *Pallo* 'far')

toponymic evidence that helps researchers to understand the Kirat land territory in their organic linguistic forms and identity. Their study reveals that those toponyms in their locality have been replaced, Sanskritized, or colonized in different periods of historical development of modern Nepal.

As Witzel (1991, p. 3) notes:

In the context of the Himalayas there are, however, two disturbing factors, one, the influence of Sanskrit name-giving and secondly, the steady spread of the Nepali language as a *lingua franca*. Both obscure the original distribution of names. For example, name such as Narayani, Kamala, Bagmati < Skt. *Vagmati*, Uttar Ganga (in Dhorpatan) are comparatively late Sanskrit substitutes for often unknown local names. Similarly, the continuing eastward spread of Nepali, which has been occurring since the Middle Ages, frequently obliterated, and still continues to efface more and more of the local names” (cited in Rai & Chamling, 2017, p. 103). Here, Witzel’s main concern of linguistic archaeological naming is followed by Malla’s (1981; 2015) research findings that of more than 80% toponymic evidence include from non-Sanskrit lexicon related to indigenous Kirāta languages family (i.e. Sino-Tibeto-Burman mega family) indicating the first native or indigenous settlers in *Yalākhom* (Kiranti lexicon) or the later Nepal valley.

## Conclusion

Semantically meaningful data (including phonemes, morphemes, lexemes and nomenclature nominals) of Kiranti-Kōits clanonyms’ linguistic structures and other nominal nomenclature(s), presented and analyzed in Table 1 of this study, prove the importance of linguistic archaeological research of world indigenous peoples, including Nepal. Organic semantic identities of indigenous peoples before colonization underlie their mother tongue’s linguistic structures as analyzed or decolonized by indicating misrepresentations and epistemic violence in this paper. Today’s intellectual or academic need for indigenous researchers is to restore linguistic archaeology by applying the tool discovered or re-discovered in Kirant-Kōits as an example for naming, indigenizing, revitalizing, connecting, claiming, celebrating survival, restoring, returning, networking, protecting, and sharing (Smith, 1999, pp. 142-162) indigenous knowledge worldwide phone by phone, phoneme by phoneme, morpheme by morpheme, lexeme by lexeme and culmeme by culmeme.

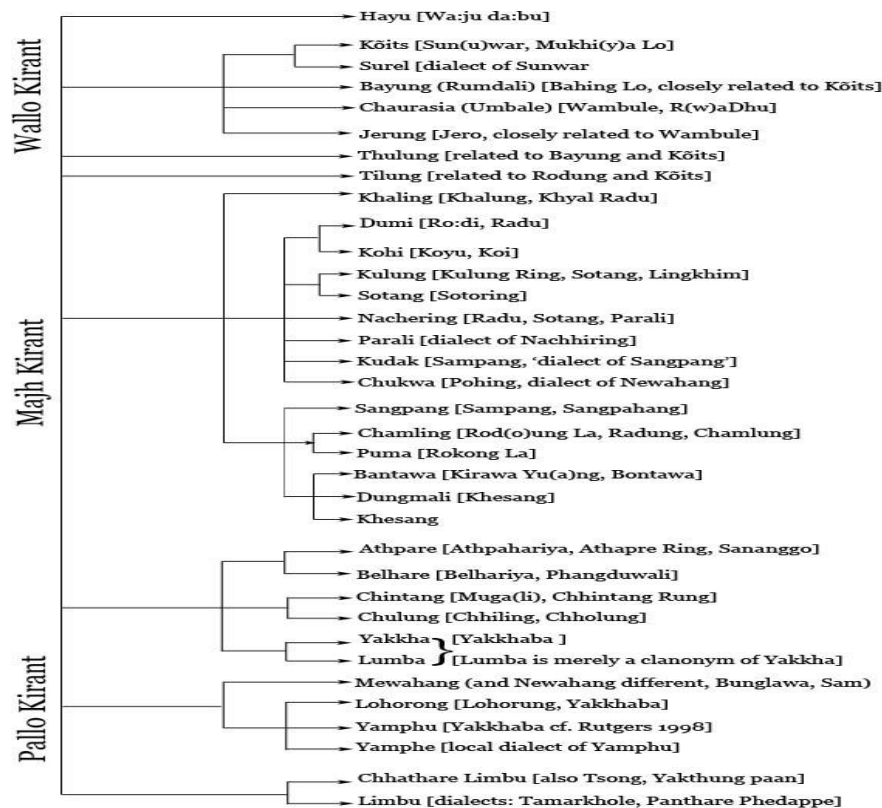
## Notes

<sup>1</sup>All underlined words [I did it to the original author’s version] are either of Indo-Aryan [Indic] Nepali stock or corrupted form and do not exist in Kirānti-Kōits lexicon; and there is no system of clanonyms as such in Kirānti-Kōits as in Indo-Aryan paradigm to my knowledge until today. The underlined and italicized clans are either of Rajput e.g., Negi or of Tamang/Murmi, e.g., Thokar.

<sup>2</sup>Moktan, Thing, Thokar, Waiba and Yonjan are Tamang/Murmi clanonyms, which are underlined and italicized as well. One cannot be sure why these clans have been lumped into the Kiranti-Kōits clanonyms as exogamous units.

<sup>3</sup>'Sunwari' is a twice Nepalized [Indo-Aryanized or Indicized] name of the Kōits in Tibeto-Burman language family, which first appeared in Shafer (1953) and later in Genetti (1988; 1992) and cf. Sunuwar (2003 [VS 2060]). Genetti might have added the Indo-Aryan Nepali suffix *-i* while generalizing from Newa (based on Prof. T.R. Kansakar's e-information (2004) →Newar →Newari, another Tibeto-Burman language of the Nepal valley and Dolakha district etc. The other alternate name 'Sunbar' is the first one in its (Kiranti-Kōits) written history, which I never heard in my boyhood or in adulthood or as a researcher. It might be purely an auditory error of the occidental linguists. So is the case with the last alternate name 'Kwoico [actually Kōits] Lo'; whereas its appropriate representation is Kōits Lo: कौँच लो: which can be [kōits lʰo:] phonetically. The other alternative colonial title exonym MUKHIYA nowadays is written without 'Y' in Sikkim's official documents (see Rapacha 2005 Appendix D) and all speakers who have adopted this name in Darjeeling or elsewhere in India write without 'Y'.

**Appendix A:** Interrelated Kiranti languages of *Wallo*, *Majh* and *Pallo* Kirant, eastern Himalaya, Nepal



**Source:** Rapacha *et al.* (2008 after Bradley 1997)

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