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## Uncovering the Indigenous Khas Legacy of Resilience and Transformation in Western Nepal

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### Abstract

This study explores the history and cultural resilience of the *Khas Arya* community in western Nepal. The purpose of the study is to investigate the changing patterns of the ancient indigenous *Khas* ritual culture, distinct from the *Hindu Aryans* of the south, due to their legacy of resilience and transformation. The research question centres on how the *Khas Aryas* have preserved their unique identity and rituals over time despite external influences. This study employed the qualitative research method and the historical research design using published documents as the data tools. The study reveals that the *Khas* community has been residing in western Nepal for thousands of years. They have maintained their distinct language, culture, and traditions, even as they embraced Hinduism and Buddhism. The *Khas Aryas* have preserved their original rituals, including nature worship and communal dining. The study highlights that they have retained their unique identity, distinct from the Hindu Aryans of the south, due to their historical resilience and cultural adaptation. The *Khas Arya* community's enduring legacy as an indigenous people of western Nepal reflects their ability to maintain their cultural identity in the face of external influences and changing times.

**Keywords:** Khas Arya, Indigenous, Himalayas, Mahabharata, Cultural preservation

### Introduction

After centuries of evolution and linguistic transformation, the word 'Khas' has gracefully emerged, shedding its earlier variations of 'Kakes,' 'Kakas,' or 'Kas,' to attain a uniquely special and perfect form (Kshetri, 2013). In ancient Babylonia of West Asia, the Khas were known as 'Kas.' Over time, the *Kassiyap Sagar* in this

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region came to be named the Caspian Sea, with the term “Caspian” believed to have evolved from the word ‘Kas.’ The Khas community, rooted in history as aborigines, once thrived in the western reaches of Nepal, and their legacy has transcended time to encompass all corners of modern-day Nepal, leaving an indelible mark on regions stretching into Sikkim, Bengal, and Bhutan. The word indigenous represents human communities that have resided in specific geographic areas, maintaining land ownership and their independent existence since the earliest days of human civilization. They continue to inhabit the same ancestral lands, preserving their identity even in the face of challenges from other races (Rai, 2007). Therefore, the Khas, who initially forged their presence in these pristine lands through settlement in the ancient period, persist in the modern era, their enduring legacy firmly rooted in the heart of western Nepal’s Karnali region for centuries. Their enduring presence firmly establishes the Khas as an indigenous people of western Nepal.

Asia continent is widely acknowledged as one of the cradles of human civilization. However, the present-day inhabitants of Asia do not directly descend from the ancient humans who initially developed in this region. At some point in history, these early inhabitants of Asia were forced to migrate to other areas (Prasrit, 2014). The primary cause of this phenomenon was the recurring glacier ages on Earth. Creatures that walked on two legs and displayed hand-like activities evolved around two million years ago, whereas the creature resembling modern humans or our human ancestors is thought to have emerged only around one Lakh years ago (Darwin, 2012). To comprehend human history fully, it is essential to delve into a span of one Lakh years. During this time, humans embarked on journeys across various regions of the Earth. While exploring both inhabited and uninhabited lands, the earliest individuals to settle and establish permanent communities were the indigenous people of those regions. Within these communities, agriculture, animal husbandry, and horticulture became the foundation of their livelihoods. In Nepal, as an example, among the initial human groups to enter and occupy the land, the Kirats from the east and the Khas from the west were the first to engage in mining activities (Chemjong, 2003). In this sense, it is proved that the Khas are one of the most ancient castes of Nepal.

While the exact date of the Khas Aryan people’s arrival in the region now known as Nepal cannot be pinpointed, there is a consensus that they were among the earliest inhabitants of the area. In this context, numerous historians argue that the Khasas settled in Nepal before one thousand BC (Burghart, 1984). When examining the origins and migration of distinct ethnic groups in a particular region, scholars often rely on evidence from established centres of human civilization worldwide, such as Mesopotamia, Greece, Babylon, and the Indus Valley. In these regions,

various ethnicities and cultures have developed civilizations at different points in history (Sundas, 2020). Among these, the Khasas stand out as a nomadic group with a historical presence in the western region of Nepal dating back to ancient times. It is important to note that the Khasas were a caste within the broader framework of the Aryan race, rather than a distinct species.

When researching the origins of the Khas Arya community and their presence surrounding the area of Himavatkhand in historical texts, it is noteworthy that the Mahabharata references their participation in the Mahabharata war. In this epic narrative, the Khasas are cited alongside other castes such as *Padar*, *Dilghavenu*, *Parad*, *Kalind*, *Tangan*, *Ekasan*, *Arha*, etc. (Joshi, 1971). In the *Mahabharata*, the Khasas are mentioned as the inhabitants of the banks of the river Shailoda, situated between the Maru and the Mandar hills. In the *Mahabharata*, it is said that Yudhishtira gave them a gold mound called *Pripilak*, which was dug out of the ground by ants, as a gift for the great sacrifice he was about to perform (Kshetri, 2013). Based on this, it seems that the people of the Khasa caste have expanded to the northern region of modern India since the *Mahabharata* period.

According to the Karna Parva of the *Mahabharata*, the cavalry of Pulinda, Balhik, Khasa etc. were killed by the Pandavas (Adhikari, 2004). During the Mahabharata period of ancient India, the Himalayas, Ganges, Saraswati, Yamuna and beyond the borders of *Kurukshetra* and the area between Sutlej, Beas, Chinav, Bholam and Indus rivers were called Bahik Pradesh and the Khasas were also mentioned as the inhabitants of that region (Gellner, 2014). In the war of Mahabharata, it is mentioned that tribes like Khasa, Kirat, Tusar, Yavana, Darva, Visar, Darad, Sak, Kamath, Andhak, Pulind, Mlenchcha fought on the side of Kauravas (Adhikari, 2011). Khas is not only a word that refers to a single caste, but it is a word that refers to a community. Even before the origin and development of the word caste in the Indian subcontinent, the people of the Khas, a vast human community extending from the Himalayan range in the north to the sea in the south, have come to be known as the Khas Arya (Pokhrel, 1998). In this context, it appears that the Khasas have historically inhabited and spread across mountainous regions spanning Nepal, India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan throughout ancient history.

Manusmriti and post-Vedic literature like *Ismiriti Grantha* (memorial texts) mention that the castes groups such as Kirat, Huna, Avir, Yavana, Pulind, Paunduk, Dravida, Shaka, Parad, Palhav, China, Darad did not adopt Hindu culture, even though the Khasas are Aryan people of the Ganga and Jamuna from the south. It is believed that the Khasas expanded in this Himawatkhand before the Aryan people who developed the Hindu civilization in the middle place of the Ganga and Jamuna rivers. In this region, the Khas were spreading from the north to the south, while

the Aryans were developing the Hindu civilization in the coastal region of the Ganges River in India, the Khas were limited to the northern, mountainous region though, they were the another groups of Aryan people (Shrestha, 2007). After that, they expanded from the lower part of the Himalayas and the mid-hill region towards the east. As the civilization gradually developed in the uninhabited northern hilly Unkantar forest area, their rituals and culture were gradually developing. Therefore, they developed as an original and independent community. As things like the caste system and caste system of Hindu society gradually affected these Khas, castes like *Brahmin, Thakuri, Chhetri, Gharti, Jogi, Bhat, Kami, Damai, Badi, Saraki, Gayne, Sanyasi* were developed within the same community (Sharma, 2004). In such mountains, Khas castes, some of their original rituals and culture have been preserved even to the present. The problem of this study is that due to the encroachment on the original culture of the Khas and the attempts to destroy it rather than protect it, the modern-era Khas Aryans and the Hindu Aryans of the south cannot be distinguished. The purpose of this study is to find out the changing pattern of ancient indigenous Khas ritual culture which is different from the *Hindu Aryans* of the South because of the legacy of resilience and transformation.

### **Literature Review**

Khas people are called Khas Arya because they are of Aryan origin but not Hindu Arya who developed Vedic civilization (Bista, 1996). The Khasa Aryas had already expanded in the western and northern regions before the *Hindu Aryas* of the south and had expanded to various parts of present-day India, Nepal and South Asia (Chauhan, 1998). The *Khasas* were the Kassites of ancient Babylonia, then Khuzistan, Iran, Iraq, *Kashyap Sagar* (Caspian Sea), Balti, Kumaon, Gudwal, Kashmir, Khari, and extended to Nepal (Adhikari, 2004). Around 700 years BC, the people who were travelling up the Sindhuli route from the Videh area to the valley and west of Nepal were Khas (Acharya, 1969). The *Khasas* were the ancient tribes, living on the banks of the Shailoda River located between the Meru and Mandar hills. The basis that Hinduism is a caste separated from the influence of culture is proved by fighting on the Kaurava side in the Mahabharata war because most of the non-Hindu castes at that time helped the master of Kaurav Duryodhana in the Mahabharata war. The *Khasas* were known as brave cavalry soldiers (Joshi, 1971). Khas, Kirat and Mlechchhas also helped the Kauravas in the war of Mahabharata. The *Khasas* at that time were known as a warrior caste (Adhikari, 2011). This evidence properly illustrates that the *Khasas* were the ancient tribal people who inhabited the *Himavatkhand* region during pre-Hindu civilization in the Gangetic plain in ancient India.

Based on the study of the above relevant pre-published materials, it seems that the Khasas were extended to different parts of the *Himawatkhand* during the latter of the nomadic era. It seems that the Khas Aryas are a culturally different community from the Hindu Aryas who came to India from the southern coastal region and developed civilization in the coastal areas of the Ganga and Jamuna Rivers. In terms of species, *Khas Arya* and *Hindu Arya* seem to have the same place of origin. *Vedic Aryans* seem to have expanded from the southern region and non-Vedic and *Khas Aryans* from the northern region to *Himavatkhand*. The non-Hindu rituals developed by the Khas of Nepal are rarely discussed in these previously published materials. There is ongoing debate about the identity, origin, and expansion of the *Khas Aryas*. However, the development of the ancient culture by these Khas Aryas in Western Nepal and the current state of its remains have not been extensively examined. These aspects remain relatively unexplored within the discourse surrounding the *Khas Aryas*. In the study, this subject has been taken as a study gap. Although the pre-published sources in this study are limited, they have been used to conclude as much as possible according to the objective.

### **Methods and Procedures**

The study is based on a qualitative research method with a historical research design. The historical method is a structured approach that entails the methodical gathering and impartial assessment of data related to past events. Its primary purpose is to rigorously examine hypotheses concerning the influence of caste or discernible patterns within those historical occurrences. This process not only enhances our understanding of contemporary events but also enables us to anticipate and prepare for future developments with greater precision (Anderson, 1994). This study is based on secondary sources. Published documents and Internet archives were used as the tools of data collection. The study has been completed by adopting the descriptive and analytical methods of the collected materials.

### **Results and Discussion**

The study used a wide range of materials to conclude. The findings and results are based on analyzing this data, highlighting the importance of the information collected in shaping the study's outcomes.

### **Historical Review of Khasas**

Based on historical, archaeological and literary sources, it has been found that the Khasas had already spread to different parts of Nepal during the Indus Valley Civilization period in India (Devkota, 2007). The Indus Valley Civilization dates back to 2800 BC to 2200 BC (Adhikari, 2018). Based on the various archaeological

excavations in Nepal and the study of various sites with Stone Age tools and human settlements, it has been found that people lived in the caves and river banks of the northern region of Nepal before 1000 years BC and the remains of various tools and objects used by them have been found. It seems that such settlements must have been made by the Khas in western Nepal (Mishra, 2004). When studying the details given by such sources, it seems that the Khas Aryas came to Nepal as early as the Neolithic period.

During the ancient nomadic period, while the Khas were expanding towards the east, instead of going towards the plains of India, they spread from Central Asia through the mountains of Kashmir, Kangra, Kumaon and across the Mahakali river to the land of present-day Nepal. Although the date of that time cannot be said with certainty, the Khas were found to have spread to the western highlands thousands of years ago (Acharya, 1969). Based on the research and study, it seems that the Kirats from the east and the *Khasas* from the west entered Nepal around the same time (Chemjong, 2003). Research has reached near the truth that they were indeed ancient inhabitants of Central Asia, which aligns closely with the truth. In the beginning, some branches of the Khas, who were indigenous to the western mountainous region of Nepal, expanded throughout the country over time. Those Khas were not divided into any caste, class or different community in ancient times. They developed the traditions of Shaivism and the Dharmic Jhankri worship system. By the time of the Middle Ages, Gandaki Province, Karnali Province, Kumaon, Gadwal and other areas had expanded their power (Baldauf & Kaplan, 2000). Thus, based on the study and research of various sources, the Khas entered Western Nepal in the primitive period and they were the first among the castes to expand to Nepal at that time, so they can be considered the tribals of Western Nepal (Thapa, 2022). Therefore, it is claimed that the Khas, originating from Central Asia, migrated to Western Nepal in ancient times, spreading across the region and becoming the first among the castes to establish themselves as the tribals of Western Nepal with distinctive traditions and cultural practices.

The evidence supporting the notion that the Khas people are non-Vedic Aryans is bolstered by the presence of surnames rooted in words denoting hilly and mountainous terrain. Before the emergence of Vedic civilization in India, those Khas Aryans had established their unique way of life due to their expansion into various regions of northwestern India and western Nepal. Consequently, the Aryans who cultivated Hindu civilization in India did not typically categorize the Khas Aryans as belonging to the same ethnic group (Pande, 1997). The Khas, indeed, have been the indigenous inhabitants of modern western Nepal since ancient times. They settled in the Himalayan range well before the emergence of both Himalayan Buddhism

and the Bronze Age Indus Valley civilization, which thrived from 3300 to 1300 BC (Adhikari, 2011). Around the time when people were developing a civilization of permanent settlement in Central Asia, the Khasas migrated to the southeast, crossed the Mahakali River through the Himalayas, and settled in the Karnali region of the lower part of the mountain. After a long time, a branch of the Khasas crossed the Himalayas from the Khari region of Tibet and came to Sinja and established the state system. After the establishment of the kingdom by the Khas, that area became known as Khasan Province (Joshi, 1971). During the reign of the Maurya emperors in India, the original inhabitants of the Karnali region of Nepal were the Khasas (Atkinson, 1974). The Khas have resided in the same region since the dawn of civilization and continue to inhabit it today. Given their status as the indigenous people of western Nepal, it is only natural to inquire about their cultural practices and contemporary changes due to external forces.

### **Legacy of Resilience the Khas Culture**

The Khas Arya community comprises an ancient people with a distinct and enduring existence and identity. The most compelling evidence supporting this claim is the enduring preservation of their original language and culture to the present day. Language is one of the foundations of the distinct identity of any human community. The current Nepali language is the modified form of the ancient Khas language (Pokhrel, 1998). The Khas language was developed by the Khas, the primitive inhabitants of the Karnali region. It is because of the development of the Khas language that the mountainous region of Karnali province is called Khasan. By the end of the medieval period, the Khas language was called the Nepali language and that language became the common language of Nepal (Khanal, 2011). When studied from a religious point of view, the Khas had developed as a nature-worshipping community since ancient times. After religious faith and fear were born in them, they started worshipping natural elements like Caves, water, Bar, Peepal, Tulsi, Kush, Surya, Goth, Mud, Stone etc. (Camron, 1998). The remnants of the original culture and tradition developed by them are still being maintained.

For nearly 2,000 years, the *Khas Arya* community in western Nepal existed as a distinct tribe, living separately from other communities and caste groups during that historical period. A tribe is a human community with its original rites, culture, tradition, beliefs, religion, language and social form. It is believed that the Khasas have been living in the form of a tribe due to their original nature. But from around 11th to 12th century, Buddhism and Hinduism began to influence the Khasas. Nagaraja, the first Khasa ruler of the Karnali region of western Nepal, converted to Buddhism before establishing his kingdom at Jumla (Shrestha, 2005). In many records after the establishment of the Khasa kingdom, the mantra Om Mani Padme

Hoon is written in Tibetan script (Adhikari, 2011). By the end of the 13th century, the Khas rulers had adopted Hinduism. As Hinduism gradually expanded from the south to the north, people gradually left Buddhism. As the relationship between the Khas kings and the Malla kings of the Kathmandu valley was established, the influence of the art, architecture and craftsmanship of that place also fell on them. Before that, the Khas had their original rituals and customs.

While the Khasas embraced aspects of Hinduism and Buddhism, they diligently preserved their traditional and original rituals within their society. Such original rituals and cultures of the Khas people have been maintained even in the present. Even at the present, there is a custom of Khas to marry only within their own community. During the performance of various rituals and worships, the Khas had a practice of putting rice in a red *Avir* mixing it with curd and putting it on the forehead. Such culture is not found in any other caste and community. However, such practice is not found even in Hindu Aryan culture developed in India (Thapa, 2022). Khas Aryas do not have the practice of worshipping clay gods even at present. They mostly worship nature gods or stone gods. There is a custom of taking off the cap while eating in the Khas (Kshetri, 2013). They regard dishes prepared with ghee as sacred, emphasizing communal dining where all individuals should gather in one place. However, those belonging to Khas Brahmin families, with and without *bratbandha*, traditionally do not dine together. In this society, it is believed that father, son and grandson should not eat on the same plate. In Kha's society, bathing in the afternoon is believed to be unlucky.

Inter-group marriage and remarriage of women are allowed within the Khas Arya community. The practice of *pewadhan* (women's self-property) has been traditionally maintained in the Khas since long ago. The tradition of the bridegroom filling the khukuri and flying the umbrella is also an original tradition of the Khas Aryas. In this society, it is customary to give *Dakshina* (to give money or gifts) to the daughter by pretending to be like a god. In Khas society, it is customary to respect all the relatives of the daughter, her children, her son-in-law, etc. and also give *Dakshina* (Badal, 2021). In this society, it is customary to keep the daughter-in-law in her own house if only a daughter is born, not a son. When it comes to shareholding and marriage, buying and selling goods, extorting money, and being a witness, the maternal uncle has a great responsibility. In this society, it is the maternal uncle who settles the small cases and solves the problems in the household. Since such an original tradition is found only in Khasa society, it seems that it is the *Raithane* (local) tradition of Khas society.

The Karnali region of western Nepal, which has been inhabited by the Khas Arya community since ancient times, has a tradition of walking from house to house



at night after reciting special mantras to ward off ghosts is known as *Firi Lagauni*. Such a tradition is found only in special communities of Nepal. In every settlement of the Khas community, it is customary to keep technicians *Damai, Kami, Sarki, Badi, Gayne* etc. with their settlement. As the influence of Hinduism gradually affected the *Khas Aryas* of Nepal, the system of untouchability was also stated in the khasas. Because, after the development of Varna, the caste and untouchability system in India, its influence was felt on the Khasas of Nepal (Uparaty, 2009). Before that, there was no practice of untouchability and caste-based hierarchy among the Khasas. In every auspicious work of the Khas Aryas, the presence of these castes, who are considered untouchables in the present but have been a technical community since ancient times, is considered mandatory. In the Khas Arya community, the rules of not using earthenware more than once, not eating stale food, etc. are still there.

Almost a thousand years have passed since the influence of Hinduism and Buddhism on the Khas community. Even so, they still have their original rituals. Dhami and Jhakri are the traditional original culture of the Khas, who treat and consider the Masto god as the main deity (Subadi, 1999). The worshipping of the Masto god is also an original tradition of the Khas community. Khas who worship the natural deities Bhayar Masto, Dhade Masto, and Dudhe Masto celebrate Maghe Sankranti as an ancestral memory (Shrestha, 2017). It is a special tradition to perform *Diwali* in the barn, to burn incense with cow ghee, to worship *Lato Bhoot, Banskhandi, Jhankri, Jaldanuva*, etc., to worship big trees, big rocks, caves, water springs, serpent gods, etc. In Khas society, the practice of sacrificing goats has been going on for a long time (Karki, 2018). In this way, being able to keep their traditions even after being in contact with other communities and religious groups for a long time has become the basis of Khas Arya's identity today.

Over thousands of years, the Khas community residing in the West Karnali region of Nepal has naturally undergone profound transformations in knowledge, craftsmanship, technology, lifestyle, social structures, values, beliefs, and ideologies, evolving from ancient times to the present day. Variations and alterations in human customs and culture arise due to factors such as time, historical epochs, societal shifts, economic conditions, geographical regions, language diversity, writing styles, and interactions with other communities. In their early nomadic existence, the Khas people gradually acquired the skills of animal husbandry and agriculture. Given their independent and unique identity, the Khas community had limited interactions with other castes and communities, which resulted in their self-reliance for skill development over time. In contemporary times, cultural assimilation has become a requisite for individuals who have migrated, driven by the demands of changing times, circumstances, and constraints (Limbu, 2005). If they had not done so, the

Khasas would have remained in the form of poets similar to Raute even in the present (Koirala, 1997). While living in ancient Babylonia, the Kassites people used to worship a god named Maruttas. The same deity is considered to be the primitive form of the Masto deity of the Khasas. It is believed that Marut, Mautta, Matt and finally Masto were formed from the word Maruttas (Karki, 2018). In Babylonia, Maruttas was worshipped as the god of water. Therefore, there is no practice of making idols of Maruttas. As it has been believed since ancient times, the Khas Arya community of Karnali region has the practice of worshipping Masto as a deity even at present.

In various places of *Himawatkhand* such as Kumaon, Garhwal, Himachal Pradesh, Kashmir, Karnali etc., the Khas have been building places related to these very gods or goddesses. The deities of the same Khasa are present in the southern lap of the Himalayas. Such goddesses are *Tripurasundari*, *Sansarimai*, *Pathibhara Devi*, *Vindhyavasini*, *Barahi*, *Kalika*, *Matrika*, *Malikarjuna*, *Mastamadoun*, *Supadeurali*, *Digrovhavani*, *Badimalika*, *Budhinanda*, *Bhurichula*, *Jalpadevi*, *Baradadevi*, *Shodakshadevi*, *Shaileswari*, *Nandadevi*, *Jwalandadevi*, *Kankasundari* etc. (Karki, 2018 ). When studying in this way, it is found that their rituals and cultures are still alive in the Khasas from ancient times to the present day.

In the ancient Karnali region and its surrounding areas, the Khas inhabitants of the western and northern regions have long been free from the scourge of casteism and caste-based discrimination. This is why the Vedic Aryas considered them non-Arya. Vedic Aryas considered them as low castes because they did not follow a caste system and caste-based hierarchy. They used to look down on the Khas, hate them, and not consider them to be of their level. The Khas developed their original division of labour tradition. Based on the division of labour, they were divided into three categories. In some Vedic forms of the Hindu Arya caste system, some people performed the functions of the Brahmins, the rulers and others (Levies, 1987). In the early days of Khas' expansion into the *Himwatkhand*, there existed no formal state system. Many centuries later, Vedic Aryans migrated into the present-day Kumaon, Garhwal, Hind Kush, and Karnali regions of Nepal. Despite their coexistence, the Khasa Arya and Vedic Arya struggled to maintain matrimonial ties due to divergent rituals (Sharma, 2004). However, after centuries of shared living, the Khasa Aryas gradually adopted Vedic rites, facilitating matrimonial connections with the Vedic Aryas. As a result, the local customs and traditions of the two groups became intricately intertwined over time. The *Matawali Chhetri* in western Nepal, found in various areas of Jajarkot and Jumla districts, have a different culture compared to the Hindu Chheri who migrated from elsewhere.

Vedic Aryans are believed to have entered Western Nepal in the largest number during the Mughal invasion of India (Sharma, 2022). That time was the 14th and the 15th century. After that, the relationship of those castes increased not only with the Khas but also with the Kirats. Among the people of the Mongol community, the people of the Magar lived near the Khas and the Vedic Aryans for the longest time (Chemjong, 2003). Among them, marital relations were established between Magar, Gurung, Tamang and Newar rulers and Khas rulers (Adhikari, 2011). Due to this, a Khas culture or hill culture has been fundamentally maintained in Nepal. This culture is neither Vedic Arya culture nor Khas culture, nor *Magar, Gurung, Tamang and Newari* culture. This is just a mixed culture and can be referred to as Nepali culture. In which many things such as language, festivals, customs, traditions, rituals, etc. are preserved as living remnants of the special culture.

### Conclusion

The journey of the Khas Arya community through time and history reveals a remarkable story of resilience, cultural preservation, and adaptation. The word 'Khas' has evolved from ancient variations like 'Kakes,' 'Kakas,' or 'Kas' to represent an indigenous people with a unique identity. With roots stretching deep into the heart of western Nepal's Karnali region, the Khas have maintained their existence and culture for centuries, leaving a lasting impact on the broader South Asian landscape. Asia, as one of the cradles of human civilization, has witnessed the migration of early inhabitants over thousands of years. The *Khas Aryas*, among the earliest settlers in the region, trace their presence in Nepal back to ancient times, possibly preceding a thousand BC. They coexisted with other communities and even participated in events like the *Mahabharata* War, highlighting their deep historical roots. The Khas Arya community's journey from a nomadic state to embracing Hinduism and Buddhism while preserving their original rituals showcases their resilience and adaptability. Over time, they have developed a distinct language, culture, and set of traditions that remain integral to their identity. Despite influences from other communities and religions, the *Khas Aryas* continue to uphold their unique heritage, including practices like communal dining, nature worship, and a distinct social structure. The *Khas Aryas'* ability to maintain their cultural identity even in the face of external influences and changing times is a testament to their enduring legacy as an indigenous people of western Nepal. Their story serves as a valuable reminder of the rich tapestry of cultures and traditions that have shaped the history of South Asia.

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