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Sacred Flames Across Cultures: A Comparative Study of Fire Festivals in India and Japan

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Abstract: The current research is a cultural anthropological study of community fire festivals celebrated in India and Japan that highlights fire as a symbolic medium of renewal, protection, and communal solidarity in both cultures. It primarily focuses on fire festivals in India and Japan, such as the *Hālḍā Utsava* or the Hālḍā Festival observed in the villages of Lahaul and Spiti region in Himachal Pradesh, India and *Kurama no Hi Matsuri* (鞍馬の火まつり) or the Kurama Fire Festival observed in Kurama village, Kyoto, Japan. These festivals mark a significant shift in the season, where community members march together holding fire torches at night as these torches are believed to avert the presence of malevolent forces. Both *Hālḍā Utsava* and *Kurama no Hi Matsuri* are associated with Buddhism, yet they are characterised by the distinct cultural and religious frameworks in India and Japan. This paper is a qualitative, comparative study based on a cross-cultural approach that uses textual-visual analysis and oral history as its primary methods of research. Also, while both festivals exhibit fire as a symbol of transition, safeguard and cohesion, the methodology allows comparing these geographically distinct traditions and accentuates the shared human reliance on elemental symbolism, i.e., how distinct communities revere fire in a similar way; however, it assigns an indigenous cultural meaning to it. The analysis also suggests that cross-cultural understanding of ritual traditions between cultures is a rich material for intercultural research and collaboration that fosters joint learning between societies.

Introduction

“The world ... was, is, and shall be ever-living fire.”

Heraclitus, Fragment 30, in *The Fragments of the Work of Heraclitus of Ephesus on Nature*, trans. G. T. W. Patrick (1889)

Fire has long captured the human imagination and is not seen as a trivial, inert element of nature but a thriving, living force that has shaped human life since time immemorial. While fire is a dynamic process that does not belong to a single state of matter, it transforms whatever it touches. As also reiterated in the famous lines,

“The power of *Fire*, or *Flame*, for instance, which we designate by some trivial chemical name, thereby hiding from ourselves the essential character of wonder that dwells in it as in all things” (Carlyle, 1872)

It can be understood that reducing fire to scientific terminology hinders its primal, powerful, and mysterious nature that people in older cultures felt. Visible to the naked eye, it is both intangible and dangerous, but also life-giving at the same time. This duality makes it an appropriate natural metaphor for change, renewal and purification that has been recognised by ancient civilisations across cultures that consider it a sacred element of nature. However, it was not until the last two million years that the genus *Homo* could learn the prowess of igniting and preserving fires.

As a result, fire has deep symbolic meanings attached to it across cultures and civilisations that have witnessed it warming, protecting, purifying, and even transforming or destroying their surroundings.

Cross-cultural studies have highlighted the ritual use of fire in purification, protection and social regeneration because across cultures, fire has functioned as a medium to achieve these goals to avert the fear of pollution, vulnerability and social decay (Eliade, 1958; Turner 1969; Van Gennep, 1960/2019). It includes practices such as walking on burning coals, sacrificial burning, ritual flaming of old ritual objects, apart from torch procession and smoke cleansing, which form the focal point of the current paper. Fire in these rituals turns into a force that restores balance by marking boundaries that demarcate sacred time and space from the profane and mundane life. Ethnographic studies also mention that the intense collective nature of fire festivals observes a coordinated participation, processions and embodied engagement with heat, light and risk that gives birth to social cohesion and shared emotional intensity (Yanagita, 1989; Turner, 1969). Most Asian scholarship on fire rituals emphasises that although fire rituals display broadly comparable symbolic logics across cultures, their social organisation, spatial choreography, and ritual intensity vary according to various factors, including local demographic composition, ecological constraints, and economic organisation. As a result, the existing discourse on fire festivals suggests that they share several defining characteristics. They are symbolic of an array of meanings that range from ritual purification and protection to boundary-making between sacred and ordinary domains, as well as collective embodiment and sensory intensity. Moreover, the symbolic plurality of these festivals is rooted in religious syncretism as well as strong association with the ecology and season of the regions where they are celebrated (Fang, 2026; Arumugam, 2025; Yanagita, 1989).

In Iran and Central Asia, Chaharshanbe Suri, also known as the Persian New Year, involves jumping over bonfires as a seasonal rite of renewal. Also, European traditions include Beltane fire festivals in Celtic regions and Bonfire Night in Britain, which observes communal fires. These traditions also mark calendrical transitions. Moreover, in Greece, the fire-walking ritual of Anastenaria that is observed even today survives as a remnant of older ecstatic practices. In ancient Athens, torch races known as Lampadedromia were a form of sacred fire rituals in ancient times.

India and Japan are no exceptions to such cultures that have recognised the versatility of fire and hence, revere it in both ritual and belief. Fire is deeply embedded in the cosmology of these two traditions, which also finds expression in their communal festivals. The primary objective of the current paper is to explore the fire festivals of India and Japan and highlight how fire acts as a shared symbolic medium of renewal, protection, and communal solidarity in these celebrations. It also attempts to understand cultural distinctiveness within this shared symbolism. The study is significant to understand how communities express universal human concerns such as safety, purity, and continuity in their respective unique ways. Moreover, the study also contributes to intercultural understanding that serves as a thread that connects various disciplines such as anthropology, religious studies, and

comparative research. Consequently, the study promotes a global collaborative understanding through its cross-cultural study of rituals. The scope of the current paper primarily focuses on the *Hālḍā Utsava* or Hālḍā Fire Festival in India and *Kurama no Hi Matsuri* (鞍馬の火祭り) or the Kurama Fire Festival in Japan, while briefly referring to similar regional practices of fire rituals, including local fire festivals in India and Japan. Therefore, the study adopts a comparative, cross-cultural approach to study fire rituals in India and Japan and uses the following research methods:

- A) Textual-visual analysis: studying images, rituals, and local narratives in books, newspapers, articles and journals.
- B) Oral history: collecting local interpretations, folk stories, and community memories through published interviews and research materials.

The theoretical framework is based on symbolic anthropology as suggested by Clifford Geertz, which becomes central to interpreting *how fire functions symbolically* in each of these respective traditions. In other words, the study applies a cross-cultural comparative framework inspired by symbolic anthropology that views *rituals as cultural texts* (Schneider, 1993). In an attempt to do so, the festivals in focus are interpreted first within their own socio-religious background. This is followed by a comparative analysis to identify shared symbolic meanings and cultural functions.

1. Fire Symbolism in India

Fire has held a great significance in Indian culture. Since the Vedic times, it has been revered as a sacred element of nature and deified as *Agni Deva* where *Agni* is the Sanskrit word for fire, and *Deva* is the term used to denote divine beings. In the Vedas, particularly the *R̥gveda*, *Agni* is referred to as *Purohita* or the high priest who acts as a “sacerdotal” messenger between the Vedic gods and men that made its presence inevitable during a *Yajña*, a Vedic tradition of making *ritual offerings (into the fire) accompanied by chanting of Vedic mantras* for it was believed to carry the offerings made into it (the holy fire) to the heavenly gods (Skorupski, 2016). In other words, when people performed *Yajña*, offerings such as *ghī* (or clarified butter) and other grains into the fire were conveyed to the gods. As a result, fire or *Agni* is considered the bridge between heaven (where the gods reside) and earth (where the men reside).

Moreover, fire is said to be a purifying agent as it burns away impurities and transforms into smoke and light that is considered a higher and subtler state of being. For this reason, it plays a crucial role in the three major rites among others in Hinduism such as *Yajña*, *Vivāha* or marriage, which involves seven rounds around the fire and *Antyeṣṭi* or cremation, where the funeral pyre is lit. Therefore, it can be said that fire accompanies a person from the beginning to the end of life. Buddhism and the Buddhist path to *Nirvāṇa*, on the other hand, also emphasises fire as an inner metaphor for desire, craving, attachment, and ignorance since the term *Nirvāṇa* literally means “blowing out”. The word goes beyond the description of a physical flame to mean the cessation of inner defilements. The extinguishing of

these “fires” leads to liberation from suffering and eventually, the end of cyclic rebirth (Kuan, 2020). Together, both Hinduism and Buddhism accentuate the ideas of external, ritual flame as well as internal, spiritual fire that carries a deep symbolic meaning in its respective philosophies, where fire acts as a sacred medium of consecration and divine communion (as seen in Hindu rituals) and also as a metaphorical symbol for inner purification and spiritual liberation (as seen in Buddhist philosophy).

Fire festivals are observed throughout India from the northern tip of Kashmir to the southern end of Tamil Nadu. These festivals are marked by dramatic displays of fire torches besides ritual processions, symbolic offerings, and community participation. The festivals express themes of purification, protection, renewal, and the triumph of light (or good) over darkness (or evil) (Sen Gupta, 1984). Most of these festivals are celebrated at crucial stages of the year, such as harvesting season, or the beginning of a year as per regional calendars. Some of these festivals include *Holikā Dahana*, a bonfire kindled during the celebration of Holi and *Thootedara* or *Agni Keli* celebrated in Karnataka every year. *Holikā Dahana* includes a bonfire in the evening of the day before Holi, a festival that marks spring and the end of gloomy winters. The bonfire on this occasion is also symbolic of marking the end of malevolent forces as fire purifies the region. Similarly, *Thootedara* or *Agni Keli* is celebrated in the Dakshina Kannada and Udupi districts of Karnataka in the month of April by devotees throwing burning palm fronds at each other that marks a period crucial for devotion towards the local deity.

2. *Hālḍā Utsava* or the *Hālḍā* Festival

Hālḍā Utsava is celebrated every year in the Gahar, Chandra, and Pattan valleys of Himachal Pradesh in India. The region lies in the northern Indian Himalayas at a high altitude and is bordered by the Chandra and Bhaga rivers that form the Chenab River downstream. It experiences extreme cold winters. Since the economy is largely agrarian and pastoral, the heavy winter every year offers a short period of growing seasons. The region has a sparse population with a few thousand people, including ethnic groups such as Bodh people, also known as Khas Bodhi, who follow Buddhism along with local tribal or animistic traditions, yet Hinduism is also prevalent.

Hālḍā or torches made of cedarwood are lit, and the cries of *Hālḍā Ho! Hālḍā Ho!* (or its *Hālḍā! Its Hālḍā!*) echoes the mountains. In many areas of Lahaul-Spiti, people practice both Hinduism and Buddhism so *Hālḍā* is rooted in the local Lamaistic culture (a form of Tibetan Buddhism that is a unique form of Mahayana Buddhism blended with Indian Buddhist traditions and the indigenous belief system) of the district. This tradition has been prevalent for centuries and is also reflected in the local culture and festivals. A Lama, an honorary title conferred to a spiritual leader in Tibetan Buddhism, determines the date of *Hālḍā Utsava* for each region based on the Buddhist calendar, and the festival is celebrated accordingly. The festival is celebrated based on an ancient belief that due to the extreme snow and cold in the mountains during this time, their folk deities have ascended to heaven, leaving their region unattended and taking advantage of their absence,

demons and negative spirits have taken control over their region. On this day, local deities are worshipped through various rituals that are typically carried out late at night (Manta, 2025). Also, since the festival is celebrated at the beginning of the year, it is also believed to be a way of welcoming the new year; however, some people equate the festival with another significant festival, *Dīpāvalī*. *Dīpāvalī* is usually celebrated sometime between October and November as per the Gregorian calendar. It commemorates a mythological episode mentioned in the Hindu epic, *Rāmāyaṇa* that marks the return of the Hindu deity, Lord Rāma, from Lanka after rescuing his wife Goddess Sītā. *Dīpāvalī* as a festival in India also marks the victory of Lord Rāma (the truth), defeating Rāvaṇa (the evil), king of Lanka, who had abducted Goddess Sītā. The people of Lahaul believe that the news about Lord Rāma's homecoming reached them late; therefore, they celebrate *Dīpāvalī* sometime between January and mid-February by lighting torches on this day.

While the *Hālḍā Utsava* is originally based on Buddhist beliefs and dedicated to *Shiskar Apa* who is the Goddess of Wealth as per the Lamaistic Pantheon, however, the rituals of the festival incorporate various elements from Hinduism. People dress in their traditional costumes and hats. All members of the community residing in the valley gather at a temple dedicated to their local deity to pray for their return to provide protection to the community. Moreover, in some villages such as Goshal village in Lahaul, a host family is decided in advance whose house becomes the meeting-place for the community on the day of the festival every year. Everyone gathers there for midnight rituals where they sing and dance on spiritual songs remembering Hindu deities such as Lord Rāma, Lord Śiva, Lord Kṛṣṇa, and Lord Gaṇeśa etc. The whole community comes together on this festival with full enthusiasm, often singing folk songs. Therefore, the festival promotes tribal culture and has kept the traditions of the community alive.

Each male member of the community possesses an unlit stick of *Hālḍā* that they carry along with them to the host family's house when they visit them. They leave them outside the house of the host family and after the singing and dancing at the host's family is over, they all come out and light their *Hālḍā(s)*. Then, they all start marching towards their local deity's temple, loudly shouting *Hālḍā Ho! Hālḍā Ho!* The purpose behind such loud noise is to drive away the evil spirits. In the Goshal village, it is said that in ancient times, a Buddhist Lama of the nearby temple who lived on the top of the mountain and could be seen from the village signalled the community to march with their *Hālḍā(s)*. Also, the smoke that emerges out of *Hālḍā(s)* are believed to restore warmth and purify the village, ousting all negativity. Once the community reaches the local temple, outside the temple, they all throw their *Hālḍā(s)* in one place at the centre, forming a bonfire. They again sing and dance around it for some time. Then, they enter the temple, pray to the local deity and finally take the remaining charred pieces of wood of *Hālḍā* back home as a talisman to protect their families from evil eye and inauspiciousness.

Fire Symbolism in Japan

Fire or *Hi* (火) in Japanese is a revered *kami* in Japan, a culture where dwellings were classically made up of wood and paper that could catch fire. As a result, fire

was viewed as a force that required appeasement from time to time. The *Kojiki* and *Nihonshoki* name the *kami* as *Kagutsuchi-no-kami*. Fire is one of the first eight gods born to Izanami and Izanagi, the *kami*-couple believed to have created the Japanese islands and, by extension, the entire archipelago. The fierce power of fire makes it both a constructive and destructive force in Japan. Consequently, fire carries deep symbolic meaning in the Japanese religious thoughts of both Shintoism and Buddhism.

In Shintoism, fire is believed to dispel *kegare* (穢れ) or impurities through *harai* (祓い) or ritual purification and further protect the community from any harm or misfortune they could bring. Later, fire symbolism was further strengthened with the advent of Buddhism in Japan, especially Esoteric Shingon practices, where fire was considered a force that “burns away” ignorance and karmic defilements (Nitta, 2016). Moreover, the symbolism reaches its most elaborate form in the *Goma* (護摩) ritual. The *Goma* ritual finds its roots in *Homa* rituals (as they are referred in Sanskrit) that are a form of fire ceremony with ancient Indian origins, which became central to practices like Japanese Shingon Buddhism. During a *Goma* ritual, wooden sticks that represent obstacles and impurities known as *gomagi* (護摩木) are kindled, and the sacred flames consume them, thus signifying the conquest of purity (Maku, 1974).

Most fire festivals in Japan exhibit an amalgamation of Shinto and Buddhist beliefs where fire is seen as a cleansing, protective and transformative force. Some of these festivals include the annual *Shuni-e* (*Omizutori* or water-drawing) ritual at Todaiji temple in Nara that involves massive fire torches as a *rite of purification for people and repentance to Eleven-headed Kannon*, and the *Gozan no Okuribi* (五山送り火) Festival in Kyoto, an annual summer bonfire ritual where massive fires are lit on mountains to guide the ancestral spirits back to the other world after Obon, a festival that invites ancestral spirits to descend to earth and meet their loved ones. These fire festivals are rooted in the belief that fire purifies the entire community, wards off harmful spirits, and renews the spiritual environment, especially before important times such as before a new season or year begins.

***Kurama no Hi Matsuri* or Kurama Fire Festival**

Kurama no Hi Matsuri, or the Kurama Fire Festival, is the annual grand festival celebrated at the Yuki Shrine (由岐神社) located in the town of Kurama in Kyoto. The festival illuminates the mountain village of Kurama, which lies on the rural yet accessible slopes of Mount Kurama, which possesses a forest and mountainous geography. The socio-economic life of the people of the region revolves around forestry, mountain resources and local trade, along with seasonal tourism that peaks in October when the festival is celebrated. The festival is celebrated annually on 22nd October and is also popularly called *Kuramasai* (鞍馬祭) and rooted in Shinto tradition and local history. The original population of the village is small with a few hundred to couple thousand people living within the larger area as there are only a few permanent residents who are joined by people across Japan and abroad, especially during the festival to witness the fiery and sacred procession.

Kurama no Hi Matsuri is believed to have originated in the year 940 in the Heian Period. The festival features many fire torches or *Taimatsu* (松明) in the present time; however, in its most ancient form, two *Mikoshi* (神輿) or portable shrines, eight *Kenhoko* (剣鉾) or sword spears, and numerous *Taimatsu* were seen together during the festival. Today, only the *Taimatsu* is the highlight of the festival, unlike in the past when the *Mikoshi* and *Kenhoko* were the main attractions of the festival, and the *Taimatsu* were probably not as important. This origin and augmentation in significance of the *Taimatsu* is believed to have come from the incident that occurred on the night of September 9th in 940. It was the reign of Emperor Suzaku (朱雀天皇) when Yuki Daimyōjin (由岐大明神), who had been enshrined at the Imperial Palace until then, was enshrined at Kuramadera (鞍馬寺) or Kurama Temple. The villagers came together to welcome him with the local deity, Hachishō Myōjin (八所明神), in a *Mikoshi* carrying countless *Taimatsu*. The reason behind the two *Mikoshi*(s) being still carried out today is that the two deities, Hachishō Myōjin and Yuki Daimyōjin, are enshrined there.

As dusk approaches, the sound of clappers and the voices calling out *Shinji ni Mairasshare* (神事に参らっしゃれ), which means come and join the ritual, echoes throughout the town, and bonfires begin to light under the eaves of houses. These small bonfires are made up of wood along with few branches of *Matsu* and *Sakaki* which are soon lit. Children dressed in their best festival attire and carrying *Shōtaimatsu* (小松明) or small *Taimatsu* appear from all over the place, and parade through the town. Gradually, the young male volunteers known as *Wakamono* (若者) join in, and they parade down the Kurama Highway carrying about two hundred *Taimatsu* of varied sizes. As they do so, they continue to chant *Saireiya Sairyō!* (サイレイヤサイリョウ) which is both a boast of the quality of the Kurama Fire Festival and an invitation for the *kami* to come and join (Swinger, 2024). All gather at the stone steps of the Niomon gate of Kuramadera. Thereafter, a drumbeat signals the cutting of a *shimenawa* (しめ縄) rope that is already set up at the bottom of the stony steps. As soon as the *shimenawa* is cut, *Wakamono* rush towards the *Mikoshi* of Yuki Shrine.

At the Yuki Shrine, the divine spirits are transferred to the two *Mikoshi*(s), which are then carried to the temporary shrine. Both of these *Mikoshi*(s) are carried down the stone steps by the *Wakamono* in one go. They are paraded across the town, being pushed around by the crowd of people, eventually shaking them. At the end of these *Mikoshi* that are being violently shaken, two *Wakamono* who have just reached adulthood hang from a pole in an upside-down position, and both their legs are extended high. The act is symbolic of a coming-of-age ritual known as *Choppen no Gi* (チョッペンの儀) or simply *Choppen*. People with *Taimatsu* in their hands run back and forth, and the entire mountain seems to have transformed into a sea of fire. The festival continues till late at night.

Comparative Analysis of Fire Festivals of India and Japan: *Hālḍā Utsava* and *Kurama no Hi Matsuri*

An analysis of the role of fire in the religious traditions of India and Japan provides deep insight into the rationale behind communities turning towards it during crucial stages of transition and renewal. Especially, when these are viewed in parallel, striking convergences in their meanings are revealed besides distinctive cultural expressions that stem from indigenous local history, belief systems and surroundings.

In the world of shared cultural values, *Hālḍā Utsava* and *Kurama no Hi Matsuri*, though practiced in geographically distant regions, reveal the following notable parallels concerned with the utility and significance of fire during their respective celebrations:

- A. Socio-Religious Origin: While the *Hālḍā Utsava* is a blend of Buddhist and local Himalayan traditions with Hinduism and animistic beliefs, the *Kurama no Hi Matsuri* stems from deep-seated Shinto-Buddhist syncretism in Japan and is closely tied to Yuki-jinja Shrine and mountain deities. Therefore, despite differences in the manner these festivals are celebrated, both traditions reflect a fusion of indigenous and Buddhist belief systems (in the case of India, Hinduism and animistic beliefs and in Japan, Shinto beliefs) wherein fire as a ritual instrument connects humans with protective forces that they believe are present in the form of the divine, especially local deities.
- B. Socio-Religious Symbolism: The fire torches in *Hālḍā Utsava* are symbolic of purity as the legend behind its celebration accentuates the return of their guardian deity to their homeland which also marks the end of malevolence. Moreover, people start marching from their houses with individual family flames, and they are all merged into a single, shared bonfire at the end of the festival. It represents communal unity and solidarity, and the idea resonates with the Mahayana Buddhism philosophy of *Sangha* or community. In a similar vein, fire in the *Kurama no Hi Matsuri* celebrated in autumn represents purification and divine protection in gratitude for the seasonal harvest and upcoming winter, as the torches are carried through the town in a procession that is meant to cleanse the community. Therefore, across both festivals, fire functions as a unifying and protective force that reflects the shared human need for safety, order, and predictability. Also, fire in both these festivals marks seasonal transition and communal renewal that also serves as a ritual response to the cyclical rhythms of nature.
- C. Ritual Performance and Spatial Meaning: *Hālḍā Utsava* involves a procession with fire torches in hands where movement takes place from private hearths to a central community temple. Also, each male member of a household participating in the festival carries an individual torch for themselves. Similarly, *Kurama no Hi Matsuri* also features a procession with fire torches in hand, from homes to the shrine, led by men known as *Wakamono* and priests of the shrine where they act according to their structured ritual roles. Therefore, in both festivals, as men take the lead of the fire torches, a deeper cultural psychology is observed where the responsibility to carry fire torches is

entrusted to those who are also socially designated as guardians of communal well-being in the respective cultures. Also, during the ritual enactment of the journey from domestic spaces to sacred spaces, fire becomes an element that charges the profane environment into a divine one.

D. Seasonal Association: The seasonal background of these festivals adds another layer of meaning to the significance of fire where *Hālḍā Utsava*, celebrated in the harsh Himalayan winter, typically in January or February, marks new beginnings and symbolises the community's endurance and survival. The communal fire sustains warmth, solidarity and hope. Similarly, the *Taimatsu* of *Kurama no Hi Matsuri* held in autumn, on 22nd October precisely, besides marking harvest gratitude and ritual purification in the agrarian landscape of Kyoto also seeks the similar merits.

Some common points of cultural distinctiveness were also observed during the discourse:

A. Regional Names: In India, fire torches have regional names because of language variation such as *Hālḍā* during *Hālḍā Utsava*, and *Thootedara* during *Agni Keli* festival of Karnataka, where “*Thoote*” means dried leaves bundles and “*Dhara*” means fight. On the other hand, fire torches are generally called *Taimatsu* all over Japan, with little variation in their name depending on the sizes. The massive torches are known as *Ōtatsu* (大松明) while the small ones are called *Shōtatsu* (小松明).

B. Aesthetic Expressions: While fire torches are handmade from local wood and are simple and organic in their forms, in India. *Taimatsu* of Japan is not only visually striking but also symmetrical and ritually standardised.

C. Ecological Influence: Also, the fire of *Hālḍā Utsava* is a part of a ritual that emerges from a survivalist ecology amid the cold Himalayan winters while the fire of *Kurama no Hi Matsuri* is more closely associated with the seasonal ecology that expresses gratitude for harvests and the protection of natural balance.

Nevertheless, the flames of fire festivals in India and Japan, especially in association with the *Hālḍā Utsava* and *Kurama no Hi Matsuri* carry a shared human impulse that marks transitions, endows protection, unites communities, and creates a bond not only between all humans but also man, nature and the divine. Therefore, these festivals turn into compelling examples of elemental symbols transcending into regional boundaries where fire, in its many cultural permutations, continues to anchor human communities in ritual, belief, and collective identity.

Conclusion

Together, the selected fire festivals, *Hālḍā Utsava* of India and *Kurama no Hi Matsuri* of Japan reveal fire as one of the universal symbols for purification, transformation, connection and protection. Although varied cultures make use of fire based on their respective cultural and geographical setting, similar expressions of human concerns, such as that of safety, continuity and communal well-being, emerge as the rationale behind these fire festivals. As a result, the comparison

observed in the current paper supports the theoretical idea that reads rituals as cultural text. This is because even when traditions are not literally jotted down in writing, their meanings are preserved and transmitted through repeated performance and continuous observation. In this way, they leave a strong impression on the collective memory of the whole community, who are reminded of the significance of these rituals, especially in relation to shaping their social values and identity. Also, the persistence of fire festivals indicates how different cultures may similarly respond to their fundamental needs that reflect shared symbolic patterns, often described as the collective unconscious. In this sense, the study of fire and its role in religious tradition across cultures also becomes a discourse for global collaborative learning that delves into how distinct traditions illuminate shared human essence and fire, in this sense, becomes a metaphor for collaboration itself, a flame that is carried between cultures.

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