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COVER ART

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Artist Statement

Flows from the Kalapani heights to the lower fields,
And down the valley wind come the white horses:
Their manes the sudden gleam of foaming light,
Their hooves the thunder rising from water surges,
Their neighing sets the valley people's prayers onto the wind,
And nothing they cross remains untouched by rising fortunes.

And while many hands drew their lines upon the map,
Calling one slope their district and the far slope their foe,
And quarreling over the river's true origin,
As if that birthplace bound the whole valley to their claim;
The horses still roam wherever the wind will,
Flung out from the valley and borne into ten directions.

Lungta (wind horse) is a mythical Tibetan creature symbolizing the “inner air” (tib. *rlung*) that travels through the “subtle channels” (tib. *rtsa*) of the body’s psycho-physical systems; and it is also the practice of releasing prayer papers into the wind, trusting their movement to disperse aspiration and dispel obstruction. This work presents a figure wearing the “*chungbala chyukti*” attire of the Rang (or Byasi Sauka) Tibetan community living three valleys stretching between India’s Pithoragarh district and Nepal’s Sudurpashchim province. The Northern end of the three valleys lies at the center of the Kalapani territorial dispute and has been an unsolved consequence of the 1816 Treaty of Sugauli, which attempted to divide the land by locating the “true” source of the Kali River, resulting in Rang community divided under two administrations. I do not claim to represent them; rather, their circumstances open up a broader question: when powers assign bodies to cartographic positions, what forms of movement and meaning remain impossible to contain?

In this work, as the figure casts the lungta, they become not just prayer papers but horses riding on the wind. This wind has no borders: it recognizes neither colonial demarcation nor disputes over a river's origin, nor the claims of where it belongs; it roams and flows freely across the contested line. The work therefore seeks to show that the people of frontier land exceed the grids of governance, that remembrance, cultural inhabitation, and embodied existence always find paths across imposed

boundaries. For Asian bodies living within contested landscapes, belonging can be fluid and relational rather than determined by the cartographic lines that nations insist upon.



Yuhan Zhang, *Lungta (Wind Horse)* (2025)

Digital media

4500 × 8000 pixels (15 × 26.6 in. at 300 dpi)