

‘Nepalis in Diaspora’, 9-10 July 2012, University of Oxford

David Gellner

A two-day workshop considering the lives and movements of Nepalis in all parts of the world was held in Oxford as part of the AHRC project *Vernacular Religion: Varieties of Religiosity in the Nepali Diaspora*, co-directed by David Gellner and Sondra Hausner. The discussion circled the globe: the panel discussions started in India, continued east to Southeast Asia (Thailand, Burma, and Singapore), west to the Gulf, and across the earth to North America and Europe (UK and Belgium), in order both to draw out patterns of similarity among Nepali populations across the world and identify possible differences between locations. One overarching similarity was the strength of the associational life of Nepalis everywhere in the world (although there were apparent differences in the kinds of organizations that had the most popularity and momentum). And one paradoxical problem that emerged everywhere—but had seemingly different responses in different places—was whether Nepalis thought of themselves as a diaspora. In some cases, longer-standing populations no longer appeared to consider themselves as such, or found themselves required to deny diasporic connections (as in India), while in others, earlier migrants were the main forces behind self-consciously diaspora movements (as in the USA and the UK). Material from Southeast Asia at this workshop was particularly new and welcome, raising interesting questions of assimilation and diversity over the course of the last century in a region close to but culturally still quite distant from Nepal.

Papers

Tanka Subba ‘Is the Nepali Society in India Diasporic?’

Jeevan Sharma ‘Marginal Migrants? Migrant Associations and the Lived Experience of Nepali Migrant Workers in India’

Melanie Vandenheksen ‘The Gurung Association, the Gurungs and the State: Negotiations for the Making of Ethnic Boundaries in Sikkim’ [in absentia]

Sushma Joshi ‘Hindus and Buddhists in Myanmar and Thailand: Notes from the Nepali Diaspora’

Anil Sakya 'Nepalis in Thailand'

Kelvin Low 'Home, Belonging, and Not-Belonging: Experiences of Nepalese Gurkha Families'

Kathryn March 'Reproducing Tamang Gender in a World of Shifting Courage and Honor'

Anna Stirr 'Performing "Nepaliness" in Bahrain: Dohori Restaurants and the Nepali Diaspora'

Susan Hangan 'Transnational Politics in Nepali Organizations in New York'

Bandita Sijapati 'Imagined Secularisms: Perspectives from the Nepali Diaspora'

Bal Gopal Shrestha 'Invention and Tradition: Religiosity in the Nepali Diaspora, with special reference to the Limbus'

Florence Gurung 'Death and Society: The Performance of Gurung Death Rites in the UK'

Radha Adhikari 'Transnational Ties between the UK and Nepal: Family Rituals and the Role of the Internet'

Krishna Adhikari & Chandra Laksamba 'The Centre for Nepal Studies UK Survey (2008)'

Mitra Pariyar 'Prize and Prejudice: Nepali Dalits in England and Australia'

Chandra Gurung 'Martial People of the Himalayas'

Sondra Hausner & David Gellner 'Multiple versus Unitary Belonging: How Nepalis in Britain deal with "Religion"'