



THE
NEWARS
OF
SIKKIM

*Reinventing Language, Culture, and
Identity in the Diaspora*

BAL GOPAL SHRESTHA

This monograph presents not only an ethnographic description but also a detailed analysis of the processes and ritual activities through which the Newar population in the state of Sikkim (India) (re-)constructs its socio-cultural identity in a diaspora context. Dealing with the history and the present socio-economic position of the Newars in Sikkim, the author discusses the various transformations taking place when observing religious rituals, feasts and festivals, performing life cycle and death rituals.



In this book Bal Gopal Shrestha provides a fascinating glimpse into a small diaspora within a diaspora. He establishes convincingly, using Robin Cohen's criteria, that ethnic Nepalese living in Sikkim as Indian citizens do indeed constitute a diaspora population. ... Newars have a deep tradition of long-distance trade throughout Nepal and up to the Tibetan plateau and they have long had a kind of diasporic consciousness, with folk songs evoking nostalgia for their heartland, the Kathmandu Valley.

This book, long in the making, provides important documentation of a little-known aspect of Nepalese history and society. As such, it is a significant contribution to the ethnography of the Himalayas. At the same time it may teach Nepalese in Nepal and around the world much that they didn't know about how Nepalese in the 'near' diaspora have survived and thrived.

—Professor David N. Gellner, University of Oxford, UK

Dr. Bal Gopal Shrestha, a Research Fellow at the University of Oxford (UK), earned a PhD in anthropology at the University of Leiden (the Netherlands). An Affiliated Fellow at the International Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS), Leiden, Shrestha has been Researcher and Assistant Professor at the University of Leiden (2006-08). Having conducted fieldwork in Nepal, India, the UK and Belgium, Dr. Shrestha has published widely on Nepalese religious rituals, Hinduism, Buddhism, ethnic nationalism, the Maoist movement, political developments in Nepal and on the Nepalese diaspora. He is the author of the monograph *The Sacred Town of Sankhu: The Anthropology of Newar Ritual, Religion and Society in Nepal* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing 2012, paperback 2013).



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With a foreword by
David N. Gellner



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*Front Cover: Traditional Newar lākhe and other masked dancers
on the main Gangtok thoroughfare, the M.G. Road, 2008.*

*Back Cover: Procession of Kūmārī during the Indra jātrā festival in Gangtok, 2013
(both photos by Surendra K. Pradhan).*

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*To the people of Sikkim
who are determined to revive, reinvent, promote and
preserve languages, cultures and identities in the diaspora.*

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Foreword

In this book Bal Gopal Shrestha provides a fascinating glimpse into a small diaspora within a diaspora. He establishes convincingly, using Robin Cohen's criteria, that ethnic Nepalese living in Sikkim as Indian citizens do indeed constitute a diaspora population. He also shows that the Newars – who comprise just 5% of the overall Nepal-origin community that makes up 74% of Sikkim's total population – are a kind of paradigmatic diasporic people. Newars have a deep tradition of long-distance trade throughout Nepal and up to the Tibetan plateau and they have long had a kind of diasporic consciousness, with folk songs evoking nostalgia for their heartland, the Kathmandu Valley.

The Newars played a key role in the development of Sikkim in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, as shown in the pages that follow. Two of the most important early figures were the traders and contractors, Laksmidas Kasaju and Chandrabir Maske. Their success and that of their descendants has led to the perception that all Sikkimese Newars are wealthy businessmen, which, as this book also shows, is in fact far from the case.

Dr Shrestha describes how rapid cultural change is taking place within the Newar diaspora in Sikkim. Within the lifetime of the oldest members of the community, large numbers of festivals and customs have been forgotten, only – in some cases – to be revived and reinvented in recent years as an aspect of the politics of cultural recognition in contemporary India. These politics take a particular twist in this small and strategic state of the Indian union that borders three other countries (Nepal, the PRC, Bhutan) and is simultaneously close to the tumultuous and equally strategic northeast.

The case study of the Svayambhū Bhimākālī temple, with its charismatic founder, Suryavir Tuladhar, provides us with fascinating insight into the hybrid cultural forms sometimes thrown up by diasporic living. The striking combination of Bhimākālī with Svayambhū would not be possible in the complex traditional Hindu-Buddhist culture of the

Kathmandu Valley (despite what some have written about as its easy syncretism). Back in the 'homeland' the inter-relation of Hinduism and Buddhism is tightly choreographed, with each side recognizing and attempting to encompass the other hierarchically; a straightforward combination of this sort would be considered very unusual, even heterodox. Suryavir combines in himself the roles of spiritual teacher, temple priest, and healer, and moves effortlessly between different religious registers.

This book, long in the making, provides important documentation of a little-known aspect of Nepalese history and society. As such, it is a significant contribution to the ethnography of the Himalayas. At the same time it may teach Nepalese in Nepal and around the world much that they didn't know about how Nepalese in the 'near' diaspora have survived and thrived.

David N. Gellner
University of Oxford

Preface

The anthropological research among the Newars of Sikkim, which formed the basis of this book, was conducted during the months of January, February and March 2004. During my sojourn in Sikkim I was able to gather a wealth of information on various aspects of the Newar diaspora community in Sikkim. More specifically, this fieldwork presented me with an excellent opportunity to meet people reviving the language, culture and rituals of the Newars in Sikkim. The observations of their religious and ritual activities provided me with an impression how the Newar people in the diaspora revise and preserve their culture and language. In October 2008, I visited Sikkim for the second time. On this occasion, shortly after participating in an International Conference to celebrate the Golden Jubilee Anniversary of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology (Gangtok), observed Dasain, one of the most important festivals of Nepalese people in Nepal and abroad. Although my stay covered less than 3 weeks, I had the opportunity to meet and interview many people and update my research materials.

Data on the Newars of Nepal were collected during several previous periods of field research related to my PhD research carried out at Leiden between 1996 and 2002. I began collecting material on the Newars of Sikkim through various contacts in Sikkim and Nepal. While preparing for fieldwork, I studied the available literature on Sikkim in Leiden (the Netherlands). I was fortunate enough to be able to make use the facilities of the then Kern Institute Library, Department of Languages and Cultures of South Asia. Studying the literature allowed me to widen my knowledge on the nature, culture, history, religion, and peoples of Sikkim. This was a good start. I was also able to collect published materials on Sikkim and make contacts in Sikkim through friends and acquaintances by e-mail and correspondence before travelling to Nepal at the beginning of January 2004. Prior to setting off for Sikkim, I interviewed prominent individuals in

Kathmandu who had played an important role in the cross-border contacts and cultural exchanges between the Newars of Nepal and Sikkim. I spoke with Malla K. Sundar, the then President of the Newar National Forum (Newāḥ De Dabū), Naresh Bir Sakya, the then General Secretary of the Newar Association (Nepālbhāṣā Maṅkāḥ Khalah), Ganesh Ram Lachi associated with the Cultural Council of Thimi (Thimi Kalā Pariṣad), Ram Krishna Duwal, a music teacher, and the late folklorist Kesar Lall Shrestha. All had visited Sikkim on several occasions not only to participate in programmes organized by the Newars in Sikkim but also to present courses on Nepal Bhasa and culture. Interviewing them was important for acquiring ideas the Newars in Nepal held on the Newars in Sikkim.

I had heard many stories about Sikkim, but had never visited it. I was also informed of the complications one would encounter in Sikkim. I was often advised to obtain a permit from the Indian Embassy at Kathmandu beforehand, while others said that would not be necessary for someone from Nepal. I decided to take the risk and not obtain permission from the Indian Embassy.

It was about 6 o'clock in the evening when I arrived at Kakadbhitta, the eastern boarder of Nepal with India. From here I took a taxi to Siliguri in an attempt to catch the last bus to Gangtok. On arrival at the Indian border checkpoint, I was sent back and ordered to obtain a receipt from the Nepalese authorities for my laptop and video camera. The reason remained unclear to me, but it led to losing about 1 hour and missing the last bus to Gangtok. Therefore, I had to take a taxi to Gangtok from Siliguri. The driver was a kind Nepalese man from Darjeeling who knew all the nooks and crannies of Gangtok, the capital of Sikkim. Having learned I was from Nepal, he advised me not to disclose this fact. I was to say I was from Gangtok if any policeman approached at the checkpoint between West Bengal and Sikkim. He even saw to it I practised a Gangtok street name to forward as my address there. In fact, he wanted to avoid any hassle I might have to face if identified as a traveller from Nepal. However, when we arrived at the border checkpoint, a policeman on duty stopped the taxi for a casual checking but did not bother me. In this way, I entered Sikkim without any trouble.

It was late in the night when I reached Gangtok. A relative of a friend of mine welcomed me here and arranged a room in a local hotel. As this was my first visit in Sikkim I started to explore Gangtok the next morning, soon after breakfast. The mountainous landscape of Gangtok is similar to that in Nepal, but the massive concrete buildings on the slopes and the

motor roads on the steep hills were spectacular. I had of course expected to hear Khas-Nepali, so to hear the Tamang, Rai and Limbu languages, too, on the streets of Gangtok was a pleasant surprise.

In the afternoon, my acquaintance, Surendra Pradhan arranged a meeting with the Venerable Sri Suryabir Tuladhar, the founder of the Svayambhū Bhimākālī temple in Gangtok. I interviewed the latter, one of the most well informed persons with regard to the Nepalese culture, religion and rituals in Gangtok, on several occasions. I found him to extremely informative. Similarly, I am grateful to Bhanu Prakash Pradhan for his selfless assistance and support throughout my stay in Sikkim as well as for the information he provided in his capacity of the then General Secretary of the All India Newar Organization, Sikkim (Akhil Bhāratīy Newār Saṃgathan, Sikkim), previously known as Sikkim Newar [Newāh or Newā] Guthi, or the Association of the Newars in Sikkim. This organization had adopted a new name in order to link it to the Newars of other states in India. However, as soon as Khagendra Pradhan retired in 2010 its name was changed back to Sikkim Newar Guthi. Similarly, Rajiva Shanker Shresta, one of the early initiators of the Newar Organization in Sikkim, supported me in every possible way when gathering materials. His devotion to the Newar culture and language is immense. Throughout my sojourn, Tuladhar, Pradhan and Shresta remained instrumental in setting up meetings. Their contacts and support helped me hugely in collecting information on the Newars in Sikkim.

During my stay in Sikkim, I was able to visit all the major settlements where significant numbers of Newars reside. I travelled through North, South, East and West Sikkim in a short time thanks to its small dimensions, and the excellent transportation facilities available. On most occasions, Krishna Basnet of Gangtok, a true devotee of Sri Guru Suryabir, took me in his Suzuki jeep wherever I wished to go. I have no words to thank him for his generosity.

A cooperative network of the Newars in Sikkim made it easy for me to come into contact with people. I visited the following villages and towns: Aritar, Daramdin, Demtang, Duga, Gangtok, Gyalsing, Joretham, Legship, Mangan Bazaar, Namchi, Namthang, Pacheykhani, Pakyong, Pelling, Ramphu, Rhenock, Rumtek, Simtang, Sombare, Tadong, Tashidhing and Turuk Kothi. Everywhere the local people received me with great enthusiasm as soon as I disclosed my purpose. Now and again restaurants and guesthouses would not have me pay for food or lodgings.

Towards the end of my journey, I also went to Kalimpong (West Bengal) for a few days. Here a sizeable number of Newars has settled a long time ago. I felt it necessary to visit to Kalimpong because it is located on an important trade route to Tibet, which the Newars had travelled along until the 1950s. Many Newars still reside here and actively preserve their language and culture. The visit was important as it helped me understand the interrelations among the Newars in India. In Kalimpong, Yogvir Shakya, a well-known educationist as well as a writer in Khas-Nepali and Nepal Bhasa arranged several meetings, which enabled me to grasp the position of the Newars in Kalimpong. My desire to revisit Darjeeling could not be realized due to the limited time and resources. It may be added here that, besides in Sikkim and West Bengal, a large number of Newars can also be found in India (e.g., Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur, Uttaranchal, Chhattisgarh, Assam, Meghalaya, Mizoram). It would have been wonderful to include all these places in the present research, but this sadly lay beyond its scope.

I anticipate this monograph will be a modest but relevant contribution to global migration history, as it will sketch the just over 164 year long (1840–2014) history of Newar migration to Sikkim. It presents a detailed view on the rituals and identity of the diaspora Newar community in Sikkim. The study of Nepalese outside Nepal is still in its infancy. It requires detailed micro ethnographies, which this monograph aims to provide for Sikkim. We know little about the process of acculturation, or the differential effects of state policies on ethnic consciousness. This applies even more to the Newars of Sikkim than to those of Nepal or Darjeeling. Interesting studies on the Newars have been published but as yet no significant research has been conducted on the Newar diaspora (Gellner 1986; Kansakar Hilker 2005; Lewis 1990; Lewis and Shakya 1988; Tuladhar 2004). Therefore, this monograph does not only fill a gap in the literature, it also contributes to our knowledge of contemporary Sikkim. It is to be expected that scholars engaged in the study of global migration and diaspora in South Asia will benefit from the present monograph.

Notes

1. 'Shrestha' is a widely used surname in Nepal and written as such. Rajiva Shanker, Sikkim's prominent author nevertheless, writes 'Shresta' when referring to himself and his family members. Retaining 'Shresta' in this specific case, I have adopted 'Shrestha' in all other instances.

Acknowledgements

Long awaited but finally in your hands! I am grateful to Bidur Dangol of Vajra Books & Publications for publishing this book in its present shape. Many thanks are due to Rabindra Dangol at the Dangol Printers for his patience and the careful attention paid to this publication.'

At the outset, I wish to express my gratitude to the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (University of Cambridge, UK) for awarding a grant from the Frederick Williamson Memorial Fund. This enabled me to carry out field research in Sikkim during 2004. I am indebted to Professor David Gellner (Oxford University) for his tireless support from the initial stage of this research project to the very end. I am also grateful to him for his valuable comments regarding the draft chapters and for the Foreword. I was fortunate to be the first post-doctoral fellow at the Centro Incontri Umani (Ascona, Switzerland) between 2005 and 2006. Being the first residential postdoc fellow at Ascona provided me with the opportunity to write up a first draft. I am most indebted to the executive members of the Centro Incontri Umani, particularly to Professor Bruce Kapferer and Dr. Angela Hobart for their support. Thanks are furthermore due to Dr. Giovanni Simona and Mrs. Laura Simona for their untiring assistance and warmth. I thank Dr. Giovanni Scheibler and Nasma Scheibler-Shrestha (Zurich) for their care and affection during my Ascona residence. I am grateful to Professor J.D.M. Platenkamp (Münster University) for his inspiration and support of this research. I am indebted to the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) for awarding me with a visiting fellowship at the Department of History (University of Leiden, the Netherlands) between 2007 and 2008 in order to do further work on this book. I am grateful to Professor L.A.C.J. Lucassen (Department of History) for his kind support and valuable comments to an earlier draft of this book. I like to thank to Professor Max Sparreboom, the former director at the Institute for Asian Studies (IIAS) in Leiden for the much needed support. I

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The hospitality and the care I received in Sikkim were tremendous. With great respect I express my gratitude to all those who welcomed me, in particular: Sri Guru Suryavir Tuladhar, Bhanu Prakash Marmik, Rajiva Shanker and Ranjana Shresta, and Krishna Basnet (Gangtok), Keshab C. Pradhan (Tadong), Gajablal and Surendra K. Pradhan (Legship), Deepak Pradhan (Pelling), B.N. Pradhan (Demtang), and Yogvir Shakya (Kalimpong) for their kind hospitality and invaluable help during my fieldwork. I am also indebted to Kalpana and Deepak Pradhan, Dhruva Pradhan Bhansari and Pradhyumna Shrestha (Tadong) for forwarding copies of documents in their possession. Great thanks go out to Rajiva Shanker Shresta and Surendra K. Pradhan for kindly allowing me to publish the photographs they possessed.

I have had the chance to present a selection of the outcomes of my Sikkim research at (a) the international conference named *The Interface between Ritual, Theatre, and Film* (Monte Verità, Ascona, Switzerland (10-14 October 2005), (b) the *International Conference Facing Globalization: The Politics of Belonging in the Himalayas II* (Villa Clythia, Frejus, France (18-21 September 2008) and (c) the Golden Jubilee Conference of the Namgyal Institute of Tibetology entitled *The Buddhist Himalaya: Studies in Religion, History and Culture* (Gangtok, Sikkim, India (1-5 October 2008). Having presented my findings, I can recall fruitful discussions with the scholars present here. I am grateful to the Professors Gérard Toffin, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka and David Gellner for inviting me to the conference in Frejus, and to Dr. Alex McKay and Anna Balikci-Denjongpa for inviting me to the conference in Gangtok. I also had the opportunity to present a selection of my research at a regular seminar of the Nepal Research Group (University of Oxford, 2009).

It took much longer to finalise this book than originally planned, as I was constantly distracted due to other assignments that surfaced while writing. With gratitude I remember all my brothers, sisters and members of their families in Nepal who have remained supportive to my work. I must mention my wife Srilaksmi who persistently reminded to complete this book. Besides all her practical assistance, she commented on its content too. I would like to thank her, as well as our children Amu, Aju and Nugah for their love, tolerance and support throughout. Thanks to Aju also for designing the cover for this book. I dedicate this book to the people of Sikkim. Their determination with regard to reviving, preserving, promoting Newar language and culture in the diaspora for the future generations has inspired many.

I am solely responsible for any shortcomings and unintentional errors. The book now lies in your hands. Needless to say, I hope to receive your comments and criticism in order to improve a next edition.

1135 Nepal Samvat (2015 AD)
University of Oxford

Note on Transliteration

It has been attempted to include as few native terms as possible. However, whenever unavoidable, they are presented with their English equivalents and, in most cases, placed between brackets immediately after these equivalents. Diacritics are avoided in the case of personal names or the names of well-known places.

The Sanskritic tradition is followed when applying diacritical symbols in order to romanise the Newar, Khas-Nepali and Sanskrit terms. The Devanāgarī script has been transcribed and transliterated as follows:

a	ā			
i	ī			
u	ū			
ṛ				
e	ei			
o	au			
ṁ	ḥ			
k	kh	g	gh	ṅ
c	ch	j	jh	ñ
ṭ	ṭh	ḍ	ḍh	ṇ
t	th	d	dh	n
p	ph	b	bh	m
y	r	l	v	
ś	ṣ	s	h	

In Devanāgarī, the ā is pronounced as the *a* in *father*, ī as *ee* and ū as *oo*. Retroflex consonants are transcribed as *ṭ*, *ṭh*, *ḍ*, *ḍh* and *ṇ*. Similarly, *ṅ*, *ñ* and *ṁ* serve to represent nasal sounds. The differences between *b* and *v*, and *ś*, *ṣ* and *s* have also been maintained.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Sikkim is one of the smaller states of the Republic of India with a population of 610,577 and an area of 7906 square kilometres. The erstwhile tiny Himalayan kingdom of Sikkim lost its independence in 1975. It is situated to the north of the Indian state of West Bengal, to its west lies Nepal, to the north Tibet and to the east the Kingdom of Bhutan.

Migration of the Newars from Nepal to the Himalayan Kingdom of Sikkim began in the middle of the 19th century. The migration of Nepalese to India had started since the early 19th century, first to Lahore in present-day Pakistan. Hence the word '*lahure*' became synonymous with Nepalese travelling to India in search of employment.¹ After the 1816 treaty between Nepal and the British East-India Company, a gradual increase in the Nepalese migration to India began, especially to the north-eastern region of India (e.g., Darjeeling, Assam, Meghalaya and the former Kingdom of Sikkim).² In India, Banaras has remained another destination for many Nepalese since time immemorial.³ Modern-day Nepal has witnessed a huge emigration. Number for Nepalese migrants reside in India is estimated between a few hundred thousand to a few million but actual number is unknown.⁴ The migration to countries another than India began only after India gained independence from the then East-India Company. The latter took several Gurkha regiments along with it to Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, Brunei, Fiji and most recently to the UK (see Nepal Migration Year Book 2010:43). Besides immigrating to India, the majority of Nepalese migrant workers currently head for the Gulf region (Bhadra 2007) and, in lesser numbers, to Malaysia, Singapore, Hong Kong, the U.S.A., the U.K. as well as to European countries.⁵

The Newars are the original inhabitants of the Valley of Kathmandu, Nepal. The term 'Newar' is derived from the name of the country 'Népal'

itself.⁶ Despite the 1769 Gorkha conquest of the above valley and a subsequent subjugation, the Newars managed to uphold their distinct culture and traditions. Both have remained highly preserved throughout the history of Nepal (Toffin 1984, 1993; Levy 1992; Gellner 1996). The Newars are considered to be the most skilled and successful trading community. Their involvement in trans-Himalayan trade had indeed been well established centuries ago. They have upheld this reputation in Sikkim (Subba 1989:134; Sinha 1981:192). As an educated community, the Newars occupy numerous important administrative positions.

The Newars in Nepal have been widely studied.⁷ Ample literature exists on the Nepalese diaspora both in India and Bhutan (Hutt 1994, 1997; Subba & Datta 1991; Timsina 1992) as well as on Sikkim as a state (Temple 1977; Nakane 1979; Jha & Mishra 1984; Bhasin 1989; Subba & Datta 1991; Dhamala 1991; Lama 1994; Sharma S.K. & Usha Sharma (eds) 1997). However, no research had yet been carried out on the Newar diaspora in Sikkim. This is partly due to the fact that Sikkim remained an isolated state for outsiders since it merged with India in 1975. Moreover, little research has yet dealt the Newar diaspora in general. Only a small number of studies refer to the Newar trade diaspora within Nepal (e.g. Lewis & Sakya 1988).

Although the Newars are a minority in Sikkim they have played an important role in Nepalese ethnic politics. Moreover, they are active in seeking to promote Nepal Bhasa (the Newar language) as well as the Newar culture, rituals, traditions and religions in Sikkim. Newars in Nepal are nowadays largely indifferent to the fate of Nepal Bhasa and Newar culture, and the Government is too weak and preoccupied to concern itself with supporting minority cultures and languages. However the situation in Sikkim, where the Newars are full participants in a Government-backed process of language and culture preservation, presents us with a striking contrast. In 1998, the State Government of Sikkim introduced several laws and reserved part of the state budget in order to facilitate the promotion of the languages and cultures of Newars and other groups (Pradhan & Josee 1998). The Newar language was introduced into the school curriculum.⁸ In addition, language interpreters were employed in the State Parliament to translate speeches delivered in Nepal Bhasa⁹ into other languages. In 2003, the State Government of Sikkim recognised the Newars as one of the Other Backward Communities (OBC). This means that Newars may also now benefit from the 14% of Government jobs and 14% of places in tertiary education that are reserved for OBCs; however, in order to benefit from them one must demonstrate he or she belongs to economically deprived

family but not to an affluent one.¹⁰ In their homeland Nepal, the Newars and other ethnic groups have so far achieved little recognition with regard to their cultural or linguistic rights (Kraemer 1996; Gellner 1997; Shrestha 1999, 2007). Against this background, the Nepalese minorities' achievements in Sikkim are indeed remarkable.

Purpose of the study

The purpose of this study is to present an ethnographic description and a detailed analysis of the cultural processes and ritual activities through which the Newar population in the state of Sikkim (India) is able to (re-)construct its ethnic identity in a diaspora context. The major focus of this research concerns the ritual practices of the Newars in this diaspora. Traditional *guthi* institutions (i.e., socio-religious associations and especially the *sī guthi*: the traditional funeral association responsible for fulfilling funeral duties in Newar society and crucial with regard to determining the caste status of an individual) have been abandoned in Sikkim. This raises the following questions: (a) how do ritual traditions function in a new historical and social context?, (b) how are rituals invented under altered circumstances? and (c) how is identity constructed through transnational linkages over long distances?

The processes under investigation can be considered in various ways. On the one hand, they may be seen as the redefinition of the specific ethnic identity, which the Newars of Sikkim have constructed (and partly invented) within the context of the Indian nation-state. On the other hand, the processes of reinvention of identity evolve due to an intensified transnational communication with the Newars living in Nepal. This study (a) elucidates the role of ritual and its transformation in a South Asian diaspora, thus raising theoretical issues relevant to anthropological diaspora studies and (b) examines how the adherence of Newars in Sikkim to two nation-states (i.e. Nepal and the Federal Republic of India) has influenced the (re-)construction of a ritual tradition perpetuated across boundaries.

The theoretical perspective

On a theoretical level, the research has raised a number of issues, relevant to present debates in the anthropological diaspora studies. The introduction and definition of the diaspora concept (cf. Cohen 1997; Vertovec & Cohen

1999) is indeed significant. Newar have since long felt the need to establish 'trade diasporas' outside the Kathmandu Valley, and developed a tradition of 'diasporic culture'. It can clearly be observed that these trading diasporas included a certain kind of diasporic consciousness, as proven by the fact that the bazaar settlements created outside the above-mentioned valley often adopted the neighbourhood names of Kathmandu.

Under the changed political circumstances, especially after 1975 (India's annexation of Sikkim), the citizenship issue became important (cf. Ong 1999). A central aspect studied here is the role of ritual within the diaspora context via a specific form of identity. This aspect is only partly covered by modern diaspora studies (cf. Rudolph & Piscatori 1997). Many authors focus on the hybridity of newly constructed identities (e.g. Brah 1996). However, traditional rituals may also serve as a resource for continuity and for the maintenance of transnational linkages with the home communities, as in the case presented here.

For our purpose, it is interesting to look at the major features of diasporas as outlined by Cohen: (a) an often traumatic dispersal from an original homeland, (b) alternatively, a departure from a homeland in search of work, in pursuit of trade or to further colonial ambitions, (c) a collective memory and myth concerning the homeland (d) an idealization of the supposed ancestral home, (e) a return movement, (f) a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time, (g) a troubled relationship with host societies, (h) a sense of solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries and (i) the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life intolerant host countries (Cohen 1997:180).

If we are to consider these nine features in the context of Nepalese diasporas in India it will be appropriate to take into account the 1769 Gurkha conquest of Nepal which meant a turning point in the history of Nepal as it lost its territories to a Gurkha king named Prithivi Narayan Shah. The Gurkha invaders severely tortured and punished the inhabitants of the Valley of Kathmandu because they feared a revolt against the Gurkha occupation.¹¹ Many Newars went into exile in order to escape the torture and save their lives. They set off to various places in India. Many chose to settle in Darjeeling and the former Kingdom of Sikkim (Pradhan 1982). The Gurkha rulers systematically expelled all the Christian Newars from the country. The latter found shelter in the village of Chuhari (Champaran District, State of Bihar, India). Their descendants residing today here identify themselves as Newars.¹²

The above-mentioned feature (a) suits those Nepalese dispersed in India who escaped their homeland immediately after the Gurkha conquest of Nepal. This feature also fits the situation of the legendary Laksmidas Kasaju of Sikkim who left Nepal to save his life once Jung Bahadur Rana risen to power after committing the Kot massacre in 1846. As Nepal suffered a defeat in the war waged with the British East-India Company (1814-16), the latter began to recruit Gurkha soldiers into its regiments. At the same time, the British East-India Company started encouraging the migration of Nepalese into the Darjeeling foothills as the potential of developing tea estates by employing them here was seen. These migrants, though they did not have any colonial ambition, managed to seize land without much effort, as Darjeeling was still barren with few established property titles. Several migrants such as Laksmidas became successful traders, as will be discussed in detail below.

We regard the above-mentioned feature (b) to be partly applicable here. Since the early 19th century, Nepal has witnessed a migration of its people to India in search of employment. Some travelled as far as to Lahore. The Nepalese who migrated from Nepal to India began to adopt Khas-Nepali (formerly also known as Khas, Khaskura, Parvatiya, Gorkhali) as *lingua franca* (Samanta 2000:23).

In spite of their dissimilar ethnic backgrounds, they shared a collective memory and myth concerning their homeland 'Nepal' as Cohen describes in feature (c). Similarly, feature (d) applies to these migrated Nepalese. They vividly 'idealize the supposed home in the diaspora'. This phenomenon can be most remarkably noticed in the numerous Nepalese literary documents they produced here.

Feature (e), 'a return movement', was not possible for many Nepalese migrants. However, they always kept the dream alive, even among the 2nd and 3rd generations who grew up in a foreign land (*pravās*). Celebrities (e.g., the late Surya Vikram Gwayali, Lainsingh Bangdel, Parijat, Nirmal Lama, Gopal Yanjan, Ambar Gurung) returned to Nepal while others including Agam Singh Giri, Parasmani Pradhan and Indra Bahadur Rai chose to stay in the land their forefathers had migrated to in search of gold and glory.

The Nepalese people of diverse ethnic backgrounds have maintained 'a strong ethnic group consciousness sustained over a long time' as expressed in feature (f). This has resulted in the emergence of various ethnically based organizations beside their collective 'Nepalese' identity. At times, complying with feature (f), the Nepalese migrants in Sikkim faced 'a troubled relationship with the host society' because they outnumbered

the original inhabitants of Sikkim: the Bhutias and the Lepchas, whom the Nepalese pushed into a minority position. For this reason, the Sikkim Government treated the Nepalese immigrants as second-class citizens denying them the right to vote. The outcome of feature (g) forced the Nepalese to revolt against the rule of the Chogyal of Sikkim. This led not only to the end of the monarchy but also to the loss of Sikkim's sovereignty when they succumbed to India in 1975.¹³

At the same time, the Nepalese in Sikkim carry 'a sense of solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries' (i.e., in Nepal, the original homeland and elsewhere) as described in feature (h). These migrants have maintained regular contacts with their motherland and people. Cross-country visits, marriages, cultural and business exchanges are kept alive. Because the Nepalese reside in a foreign country and are still not accepted as natives of Sikkim, their status is unique as a diaspora. This situation has provided the Nepalese migrants with 'the possibility of a distinctive creative, enriching life intolerant host countries' as stated in feature (i).

Regarding the above-mentioned features, the story of Laksmidas, who is believed to be the first Newar to arrive in Sikkim, is interesting in many ways. As the story goes, he left his homeland due a traumatic event. A well-established trader from Bhaktapur, his network was widespread in Kathmandu and elsewhere. He even supplied essential goods to the Palace and to royal courtiers. In 1847, however, when Jang Bahadur Rana staged the Kot massacre killing many courtiers, Laksmidas' life was in danger, due to his close links to the opponents of Jang Bahadur. Therefore, he had to flee overnight. His wife, who was 4 months pregnant, chose to accompany him although he tried to prevent her. After several days' walk, they arrived at a place called Bhojpur in east Nepal. Having spent many days here, they ran out of food and money. One day, tormented by hunger, his wife saw a radish field she could not resist. Next, she dug out as many radishes as possible and began to fill her empty stomach. This resulted in severe convulsions, delivering her baby prematurely: a tragedy that disheartened them both. In their sadness, Laksmidas remembered the horoscope his astrologer had made informing him that one day he would own a huge plot of land and live the life of a king. Experiencing the opposite of what the astrologer had foretold, Laksmidas thought that this prediction must be complete nonsense. Next, in utter disbelief, he wrapped the horoscope around the tail of a stray dog, and let it walk around the village. A sage passing through the village saw this, removed the horoscope from the dog's tail, studied it and began to search for the person to whom this horoscope

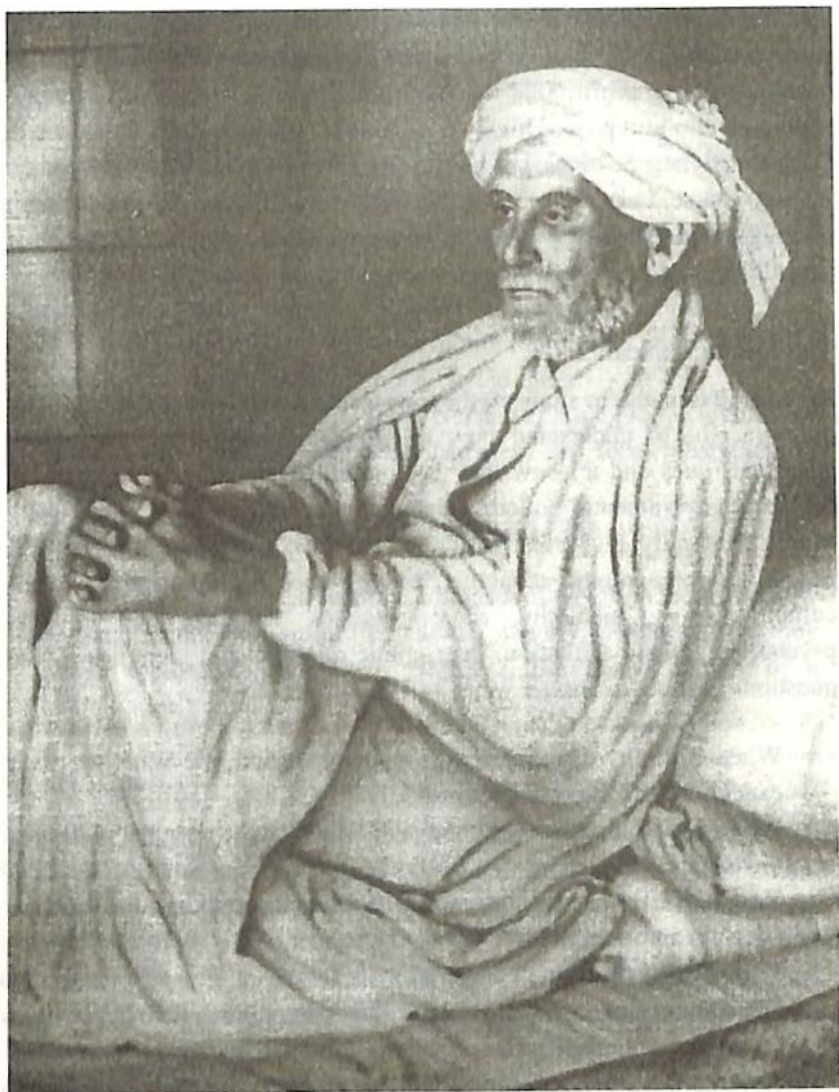


Photo 1. The legendary Newar in Sikkim: Laksmidas Pradhan (Kasaju), 1816–1894. (Courtesy of Keshab C. Pradhan)

belonged. Upon meeting Laksmidas, the sage consoled him and repeated a similar prediction. With no trust in the sage, however, he decided not to discard his horoscope. Leaving Bhojpur he continued further east.

One day Laksmidas came across a place where people had gathered to sell and buy things. After observing them for a while he decided to test his

luck. However, except for a sword taken from home, he had nothing to sell so he exchanged the sword for fermented spinach (*gundru*) which he then sold with a large profit. This was the beginning of his luck. He continued selling *gundru* as it proved highly profitable (Pradhan 1993:9). The place in Darjeeling where he did so became known as Gundri Bazaar, as it is today. In due course Laksmidas made his fortune in Darjeeling and Sikkim inviting people from Nepal to help him expand his business. At the same time this served to create a Nepalese diasporic community in Sikkim.

The research questions

My overall aim was to study (a) the transformation of Newar culture in the diaspora, (b) to understand how religious practices have changed in historical times and (c) how they are presently changing in response to Sikkim's governmental policies, global trends, and contacts with Nepal. More specifically, this research sought to address socio-economic factors, migration, demography, economy, long-distance communication, socio-cultural factors, hierarchy, ritual practices, language and ethnical psychology, ethnic affiliation, inter-ethnic relations and identities. Some questions I set out to answer were:

- When and why did the Newars migrate to Sikkim? What are their exact numbers in present-day Sikkim?
- What was their socio-economic position when they or their ancestors arrived in Sikkim?
- How did they manage to retain regular contacts with their Nepalese relatives and friends?
- What is their position in present-day Sikkim?
- What does it mean to them to be a Newar?
- Do caste hierarchies exist or play a role in their society?
- Are they able to preserve the Newar culture and traditions in their original form? Have these undergone changes and influences?
- How do the Newars in Sikkim maintain or reinvent aspects of traditional Newar *guthis*?
- Have the *sī guthis*, responsible for carrying out funerals, changed? How are the social status and group membership defined in the diaspora context?
- Have new rituals and festivals been established and to which purpose?

- Who decides on issues of ritual practice in the diaspora? Which internal conflicts are visible?
- What is the ritual cycle of the Newars in Sikkim? How is their ritual calendar formulated?
- What is the impact of the (re)construction of Newar identity on the formation and practice of rituals?
- How does one view the changed conditions, whether they speak Nepal Bhasa or not?
- Have Khas-Nepali, Hindi and English influenced Nepal Bhasa?
- Do the people affiliate themselves in order to present ethnic activities launched by their leaders or do they avoid them?
- What do the Newars think of other Nepalese ethnic groups in Sikkim?
- What is their relation with other Nepalese and local inhabitants in Sikkim?
- What kind of hierarchies and competition are there among these ethnic groups?
- Do they feel they have a separate ethnic identity within their Nepalese national identity or within the national identity of Sikkim? Do they define themselves as Newar, Nepalese, Sikkimese, Indian, or a combination hereof?

The methodology

The present study has combined anthropological methods, including ethno-historical approaches, the documentation and analysis of ritual performances, and the study of institutions. Its main bases were fieldwork, in-depth interviews, ritual analysis, and the study of written sources. In-depth interviews with local members and leaders of the Newars helped me to understand their position. Formal and informal interviews were important to comprehend the socio-economic status, cultural, religious, ritual, linguistics as well as political views and actions. Written sources such as historical documents, pamphlets, bulletins and newspapers were acquired. Archival and library sources served the reconstruction of historical developments. Video recordings of relevant events documented the supplementary data and included additional information as well as feedback.

My earlier studies on the Newar society provided a solid base for the present research. Fundamental aspects of this society are unveiled in my thesis (Shrestha 2002; 2012). The ability to communicate in Khas-Nepali,

the *lingua franca* of Sikkim, and being a Newar was of significance. I was able to include a vast number of publications on the issues in question, which are available in Khas-Nepali and Nepal Bhasa. Access hereto was indeed of great advantage.

The interviews

Interviews served as the main tool for acquiring data. I tried to include in the choice of respondents those with widely varied perspectives. They counted laymen, parliamentarians, high-ranked governmental officers, low-level peons, shopkeepers, hoteliers, traders, priests, teachers, students, peasants and workers. I also interviewed members of other communities than the Newar community in order to understand their positions and views on the Newars. I was not able to meet all the people I intended to. Nevertheless, more than 100 interviews were held within a short time.

The majority of these interviews were structured and formal, while others were informal as to extract views on specific topics. For the structured interviews I utilized a questionnaire including questions aimed at comprehending the position of the Newars as one single ethnic Nepalese community in Sikkim. Other questions served to understand the ritual practices among the diaspora Newars. They were asked to people who were in one way or another engaged in forming Newar ethnic organizations and active in achieving ethnic rights for the Newars. The question most frequently put to all Newars was: are they engaged in any movement or not? During informal interviews I did not make use of a questionnaire but asked questions in order to extract specific information.

The acquisition of documents

One of my objectives was to acquire historical documents on the Newars in Sikkim. This succeeded to a certain extent. Significant help came from Kalpana Pradhan, Bal Krishna Pradhan, Dhruva Pradhan, Dharma Pratap Kasaju, Pradhumna Shrestha and Rajiva Shanker Shrestha who allowed me to copy historical documents in their possession. These items were related to the early Newar immigrants in Sikkim and activities of the Newars here before and after the merge between Sikkim and India in 1975. I was also provided with their family genealogies, useful records with regard to these families' migration from Nepal to Sikkim. I was able to obtain manuscripts and published documents related to the Newars and the Association of Newars in Sikkim (Sikkim Newar [Newāh] Guthi). Moreover, the

'Proceedings of the Sikkim Legislative Assembly' translated into Nepal Bhasa and Newar script was acquired. This important document tells us how the State Government of Sikkim supports the languages of various communities. *The Sikkim Herald*, published by the Sikkim Government in Newar and other languages is another source of information on the liberal policy towards the languages spoken in this State.

Carrying a portable Hi8 camera, I recorded all the major events and rituals totalling more than 8 hours of footage. They included the morning worship (*nitya pūjā*) and evening worship (*ārati*), the Śivarātrī fire sacrifice performed at the Svayambhū Bhimakālī temple, as well as several relevant parts of the Sikkim Mahāśānti Pūjā (Sikkim Great Peace Worship). Certain interviews were recorded. This material enabled me to enrich the footage. All this material can be turned into short documentaries in their own right whenever resources and time permit.

The data collection process

My main goal was to investigate the Newars living in Sikkim while concentrating on their language, culture and religion. The plan was to obtain ethnographic data on the Newars by understanding the contemporary evolution of their social and cultural identity. The number of interviews recorded during my fieldwork, the observations concerning certain rituals and the acquired historical documents provided me with relevant information. The research was unique: the first time a study on the Newars in Sikkim was carried out. Therefore, the Newar community received me with great curiosity providing all the support I needed.

As intended, I met and interviewed many people in order to gather as much information as possible. In a short time, I was able to interview almost 100 individuals in Sikkim alone. Each interview lasted between 1 and 3 hours depending on the questions and the time available. Most of the time was spent in Gangtok, the State capital, where it was possible to meet people from a number of districts and provinces. A tour through all the major Newar settlements allowed me to understand to which degree people were (a) engaged in ethnic movements or (b) able to preserve their language and culture in the diaspora. Meeting and interviewing them provided a broader view on the Newar community and their interrelations with other Nepalese, Bhutia and Lepcha communities.

I was fortunate to witness certain religious/ritual activities. This resulted in a clear idea on how they were practiced. The video recordings,

documents on the Newars and their organizations will be useful to the future studies on Sikkim.

The analysis

The analysis of the data was carried out by way the of 'triangulation', i.e. comparing information derived from (a) literature and written documents, (b) interviews with Newars and non-Newars, and (c) conversation with resource persons on specific subjects. All this was supplemented with observations and sometimes even with participatory observation (as in the case of rituals). These varied data were compared to establish if they confirmed, reinforced or contradicted each other. In case of contradiction, the reasons hereof were traced. Now and again, supplementary study served to arrive at coherent and valid conclusions. Feedback on photographic and film material also provided a source of triangulation.

The arrangement of the chapters

This publication counts nine chapters. Chapter 1 aims to provide a discussion on the objectives and relevance of this book. Chapter 2 presents a view on Newar society and its structure including a detailed view of the Newars of Sikkim. It deals with the history and the present socio-economic position of the Newars in Sikkim. Chapter 3 discusses the caste divisions and social hierarchies as well as *guthi*, the socio-religious associations of the Newars, presenting a comparative view (Nepal and Sikkim). This chapter also describes how the caste hierarchies in Sikkim have disappeared and the changes this has brought about in the Newar society. Moreover, it discusses how the Newars in Sikkim maintain or re-invent aspects of traditional Newar *guthis*.

Chapter 4 presents the role of the Sikkim Newar National Organization (Sikkim Newar Guthi) in reviving Newar identity in Sikkim. It also discusses the benefits produced by the positive discriminatory policy of the State Government of Sikkim and the Central Government of India. It further deals with the competition and hierarchies that exist among the various nationalities (Bhutias, Lepchas) and goes on to describe the impact of the (re)construction of Newar identity. At the same time, it sheds light on how cross-border communication between the Newars of Nepal and Sikkim plays a role in the forming of a Newar identity.

Chapter 5 discusses the ritual calendar of the Newars in Sikkim. A comparison with Nepal is presented here in order to assess how the Newars in Sikkim changed when maintaining the Newar culture and traditions in their original form, and which changes and influences occurred. Many Newar feasts and festivals have disappeared, but the Newars in Sikkim are now enthusiastically trying to revive and reinstate them. This chapter also observes the ways in which the Newars of Sikkim maintain or reinvent aspects of traditional Newar *guthis*, and which new rituals and festivals have been invented and to which purpose.

Chapter 6 presents aspects of the Newar society in Sikkim by providing data from Nepal. The life cycle rituals in Nepal and Sikkim are compared, and the changes analysed. Chapter 7 concerns rituals related to death that are crucial among the Newars. Their households and family members must be purified because it is believed that death defiles them. The Newars in Sikkim have faced many alterations in performing death rituals as they lack their own religious specialists. This chapter, included the variations in performing death rituals among the Newars in Sikkim, comparing them with rituals performed in Nepal.

The purpose of chapter 8 is to discuss the history and structural details of the temple of Svayambhū Bhimākālī. Presenting a detailed description of the daily and occasional rituals performed here, it forwards empirical evidence with regard to how the processes of reconstructing Newar religion and rituals take place in Sikkim. This chapter also portrays the personality of the Newar religious *guru*, Suryavir Tuladhar. Focussing on his life and healing rituals, it will illustrate his commitment to the revival of the Newar language, culture, rituals and religion in Sikkim. Chapter 9 presents the concluding remarks with a recapitulation of the major points dealt with in the previous chapters. Current trends and the future course of Newar society in the diaspora in comparison with the Newar society in Nepal will be explained. This chapter also examines the impacts of the trans-border communications between the Newars of two countries including a discussion on the changes the society is experiencing and how relevant they are to the Newars. Moreover, this chapter discusses identity question in the diaspora pertaining to the Newars and their relations with other ethnic nationalities in Sikkim.

Notes

1. I have applied the term 'Nepalese' to indicate collectively the people of Nepal of various ethnic-national backgrounds and the term 'Khas-Nepali' to refer to the 'Nepali' language. With the exception of Khas-Nepali speakers, all others are strongly against the interchangeable usage of the word 'Nepali' with regard to both the 'people of Nepal' and the 'Khas' language in English. They also demand recognition of their languages as 'Nepali' against the present position of the Government of Nepal that only refers to the 'Khas' language as 'Nepali'.
2. See Bruslé (2010 and 2008). See Pradhan (1982) for his accounts of early-migrated Nepalese in India. Lucassen and Lucassen (eds), (1999) *Migration, Migration History, History: Old Paradigm and New Perspectives* extensively examines transnational migration history in global context (1999). It carries wide range of discussions on migration history.
3. Martin Gaenzle discusses emergent nationalism, citizenship and belonging among the Nepalese in India, presenting the case of Kashi Bahadur Shrestha (1911-89) of Banaras (Gaenzle 2011).
4. In a recent study Sharma and Thapa (2013:2 and 6) have discussed the number of Nepalese in India from various sources; see also Thieme, et al. (2005).
5. See Gellner (2013) for a succinct discussion on the Nepali/Gorkhali Diaspora since the 19th century.
6. See Malla (1983) for the historicity and etymology of the term 'Nepal'.
7. See for example Allen 1975; Doherty 1978; Gellner 1996; Gutschow 2011; Gutschow & Kölver 1975; Iltis 1985; Ishii 1988; Levy 1992; Löwdin 1998; Manandhar 1998; Michaels 2008; Michaels & Gutschow 2005; Nepali 1965; Owens 1989, 1993; Parish 1997; Pradhan 1986; Quigley 1984; Rosser 1966 and Shrestha 2012. Gérard Toffin must be especially mentioned here for his invaluable contributions to the Newar studies. From the early 1970s on, his studies have presented us with very detailed data and analyses of Newar culture, rituals and traditions including characteristics of recent changes in Newar society and in Nepal (e.g. 1975, 1976, 1977, 1979, 1984, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1996a, 1996b, 2004, 2007, 2013, 2014).
8. M. Turin carried out a linguistic survey of Sikkim between September 2005 and November 2006. The results are an extensive examination into the circumstances surrounding the education in mother tongues in Sikkim (Turin 2011).
9. People in Sikkim often refer to this language as 'Newari' or 'Newar bhasa'. Among non-Newars and western philologists, too, it is known as 'Newari' or 'Newar bhasa'. However the Newars in Nepal, especially those active in literary movements or language and ethnic movements prefer to call it 'Nepal Bhasa', its original name. Colloquially the Newars may call it 'Newāḥ bhāy' (Newar language). In 1996, the cabinet led by Prime Minister Man Mohan Adhikari recognised its original name 'Nepal Bhasa' with regard to official

use. A month later the then Information Minister, Radha Krishna Mainali, proclaimed that the term 'Nepal Bhasa' not 'Newari' must be applied in all governmental media. See *The Rising Nepal* of 9 August 1996 and the *Gorkhapatra Daily* of 28 Kartik 2052 VS. In the present publication I will adopt the term 'Nepal Bhasa' and 'Newar'.

10. Vibha Arora presents an interesting discussion on politics of identities and recognition of tribes in Sikkim by means of the case of the Bhutias, the Lepchas and the Limbus (2007). On the issue of tribalism in Sikkim, see Vandenhelsken (2011:105-8).
11. Riccardi presents a translation of a part of Da Ravato's letter written in Italian. It describes the accounts of gruesome torture and terror the Gorkha invaders inflicted upon the people of Nepal after they took control over its territories. In the same letter Da Ravato explains how he and local Newar Christians managed to escape from Nepal and settled in Chuhari (Riccardi 1990:296-301).
12. See Riccardi (1990) for the account on his field visit. For a recent field report on Chuhari see Duwal (2013).
13. The Lepchas-Bhutias blame Nepalese for the annexation of Sikkim by India (Arora 2007:203). When the Government of Bhutan felt threatened by the Nepalese migrants, it found a solution by expelling more than 100,000 Nepalese from Bhutan, see Hutt (2003, 2005).

CHAPTER 2

Away from the Ancestral Land: History and Present Position of the Newars in Sikkim

Introduction

The migrations of the Newars from Nepal into the former kingdom of Sikkim began almost 2 centuries ago. In the early days, their number was not large but it has remained one of the most influential groups in Sikkim since then. As noted above, the reason hereof was that Laksmidas Kasaju and Chandrabir Maske, who arrived in Sikkim during the 19th century, were traders with close contacts with the Government. They succeeded in acquiring important positions in Sikkim thanks to their relations with the British authorities in India and those in Sikkim. Having been granted the lease of lands, they received permission to mine copper and to mint coins for the Sikkim Government. Several of their descendants continued this legacy in a later period of Sikkimese history. In this chapter, I will examine the history and present position of the Newars in Sikkim. Attention is hereby paid to: (a) the dates when and the reasons why the Newars migrated to Sikkim, (b) how and to which extent the local people accepted them, (c) how influential they were and (d) their contributions to the history to Sikkim.

Historical background

It is believed that Newar people began to migrate to Darjeeling and Sikkim soon after the Gorkha conquest of Nepal (1769 AD) in order to escape the atrocities of the invaders. Professor Tanka Subba writes, 'A few family histories of the Newars of Sikkim reveal that their ancestors migrated to Sikkim at the time of consolidation of Nepal by the Gorkha King Prithivi Narayan Shah.' (Subba 1989: 1). Many people in Sikkim believe that due to the frequent wars between both kingdoms, certain Nepalese travelled to

Sikkim to settle here permanently. In 1780, Nepal overran Sikkim occupying its territories as far eastward as the Tista and Tarai belt, along the foothills between the Tista and Mechi Rivers.¹ Nepal continued to occupy these territories until forced to sign the 1816 Seagull Treaty with the East-India Company after it had lost a war (1814-1816) against the British. Subsequently, the latter concluded a treaty with Sikkim in 1817 returning to Sikkim the land (Nepal had formerly occupied) located east of the Mechi River and west of the Tista River.²

Generally, people agree that with the arrival of Laksmidas Pradhan (Kasaju), a Newar from Bhaktapur, many Newar people migrated to Sikkim. The stories about Laksmidas leaving Nepal are numerous. Many believe he escaped from Nepal immediately after the Kot massacre (1846) in order to save his life, while others believe he left Nepal a long time before that incident. According to Bhuvan Prasad Pradhan, Laksmidas and his family first moved from Bhaktapur to Kathmandu where they were engaged in business and then escaped from Nepal.³ Cakraraj Timila writes that Laksmidas and his family were living in the Inaycho quarter of Bhaktapur when he left Nepal.⁴ Both Cakraraj and Bhuvan Prasad provide vivid accounts of his sufferings after leaving home and before ending up in Sikkim. Later, Laksmidas succeeded in establishing himself as a thriving businessman in Darjeeling.

On 1 February 1835, the East-India Company annexed the Hill of Darjeeling from Sikkim. This Company began to encourage Nepalese to migrate to Darjeeling by providing land at a cheap price expecting their support for this occupation. The British Government also appointed Laksmidas the first Municipal Commissioner of Darjeeling. In 1839, it counted only 100 inhabitants but within 10 years its population had reached 10,000. During the following 30 years Darjeeling saw a rapid increase in its number of inhabitants with the continuous influx of Nepalese migrants. In 1901, the Newar population in Darjeeling counted 5,880 souls out of a total population of 249,117.⁵

Daya Prasad Pradhan writes that Laksmidas and his brother Chandravir arrived in Sumbuk towards 1850.⁶ Similarly, Pranab Kumar Jha writes, 'Laksmidas Pradhan with his uncle Keshav Narayan came to Darjeeling in 1853 from Nepal and probably no other Newar had come to Darjeeling before them.'⁷ He further says that they settled in Sikkim in 1867 to working in a copper mine in Tuk Khani (Southern Sikkim) and later worked in several other copper mines. People in Sikkim say that the then king

(Chogyal) of Sikkim invited Laksmidas to Sikkim to collect land revenues, as Laksmidas was well-known in Darjeeling as an efficient businessman.

After the 1861 treaty was signed between the British government and the Sikkimese authorities, the former began encouraging Nepalese to settle in Sikkim.⁸ This certain Ministers, Lamas and Kazis (including Chebu Dewan, Maharaj Sidkeong Namgyal and his sister) opposed. However, Pranab Kumar Jha writes that, during the reign of Maharaj Sidkeong Namgyal, the Sikkimese authorities accorded a formal land lease to Laksmidas Pradhan in 1867. In an appeal dated 1889 Laksmidas requested the Government of Bengal to protect his rights and the possession of the lands in Sikkim he had received in 1867 in lease from the Lama Shahib of Phedong and the Rajah of Sikkim. The letter states:

To,
Sir John Edgar, E.C.S.I.C.I.E.,

Sir,

I beg most respectfully to approach your worship with the following humble prayer, which, I hope, will receive kind consideration at your worship's hand.

Your worship has known me for the last 18 years during which period my humble self has always served the Government, to the best of my capacities and due obedience to the orders of your worship and those of other high officials, who have, I am proud to state treated me with usual favour.

Your worship is well aware that about 22 years ago I have received some lands in Sikkim for which a lease was granted to me and my posterity by the Lama Shahib of Phedong and the Rajah of Sikkim.

When I received the land they were full of jungles and without any habitation but I have done my best to have them well inhabited and cultivated. It is needless to state that I have been paying the due rents regularly.

Considering my humble services done before and in the last Sikkim affairs, your worship who is my old patron would kindly see that I and my posterity may not be put unto any difficulties as to the right and possession of the lands in Sikkim, and that the terms of the said lease may hold good in future.

As your worship knows me and my affairs full well and has always treated me with kindness, it is my humble prayer that your worship would kindly see so that I may not suffer in any way.

24/10/89

Your worship's obedient servant,
Sd/-Luchmidas Pradhan⁹

Lal Bahadur Basnet also mentions a formal lease forwarded in 1867 to two Newar brothers (Basnet 1974:44). Daya Prasad Pradhan published a family note mentioning the distribution of lands they had received in 1867 as well as other plots divided among Laksmidas and his son Laksminarayan Pradhan, Chandravir Pradhan and his son Maheshwor Pradhan, Kancha Chandravir Pradhan and his son Laksminarayan Pradhan, Lambodar Pradhan and his son Laksmidas Pradhan.¹⁰

Khansa Dewan and Phodung Lama, who were considered pro-immigration leaders, continued the lease of land to Laksmidas in later years. A deed dated 1874 records that Phodung Lama and Khangsa Dewan leased lands to Laksmidas, Chandrabir, Jitman and Lambodar for a payment of 500 Rs to the Rajah and 700 Rs to Phodung Lama and Khangsa Dewan. The full text of this deed runs:

We the Phodung Lama and Burra Dewan both brothers of Sikkim Estate, hereby give the Sedam Land (which we have received from the Sikkim Rajah as per Lal Mohars or red Seal) within the following boundary and conditions to Latchmi Dass, Chandrabir, Jitman and Lambodar on a lease of context to hold power upto your descendants after descendants.

Boundary of land on the North-East from Rooe Naddi to its confluence to the Tista River, on the South-East all along the Tista river, on the South and West all along the Burra Rungit upto its suspension Bridge over the Rungit river, on the North-West from the Rungit suspension Bridge along the old road upto Pukka village along the Government Road to Koolow Ektompani, from the Jhora of Koolow Ektorppani upto the Manfur river, on the East from the North of Manfur all along the Manfur Jhora upto its source.

All the land within the boundaries as mentioned above has been given to you and to enjoy by your descendants as well on paying Rs. 500/- (Five hundred) to the Rajah and 700/- (Seven hundred) to us both

brothers, later Rs. 1,200/- (Twelve hundred). Whatever income you may derive above this amount may be enjoyed by you and your descendants.

All the forests, trees, bamboos, canes etc. within the boundary of this was and are yours and you may do whatever you like with them.

With the exception of murder cases you may have power to decide and investigate and fine according to your Nepaly customs. Should the revenue be below Rs. 1,200/- you are to pay this sum out of your own pocket and take yearly receipt of this sum from us.

Signed and sealed,
Phodung Lama (Seal)
Khangsa Dewan (Seal)
Sumbat 1931, 12th Mangha, Friday¹¹

Apparently this deed authorised them to investigate and fine, according to the Nepalese custom, with the exception of murder. The Newar migrants in Sikkim also started the introduction of new technologies and crops in the local agricultural sector. Laksmidas invited his brother Kancha Chandrabir Kasaju-Pradhan (1837-1905) from Nepal in order to assist him as his responsibilities increased. Many stories speak of Chandravir who, according to Bhuvan Prasad Pradhan, was a wrestler. People in Sikkim tell how he physically overpowered those who acted against the rules, did not pay due revenues, or attacked Nepalese settlers.

As head of the Nepalese settlers in Sikkim, Laksmidas began to invite hundreds of Nepalese to look after the lands he controlled in Sikkim. They included Magars and Newars from Bhaktapur of various castes. In this way, at around the start of the 1870s, a large number of Newars had begun to settle in Sikkim.¹² In their unpublished *History of Sikkim*, Maharaj Sir Thutob Namgyal and Maharani Yeshay Dolma describe how Sikkim saw the influx of Nepalese Gorkhals as from 1871 on.¹³

During the 1870s, Laksmidas also received the responsibilities for mining copper. The Tibetan faction at the Sikkimese court never appreciated the influx of Nepalese in Sikkim. The British, the Lepcha, the Phodang Lama and Khansa Dewan, however, supported the Nepalese migrants. The Phodang Lama and Khansa Dewan were influential within the Chogyal's court because of their support from the East-India Company authorities. Jha writes that, due to these settlements, riots occasionally broke out. This led to trouble between Laksmidas Pradhan, the head of the Nepalese, and

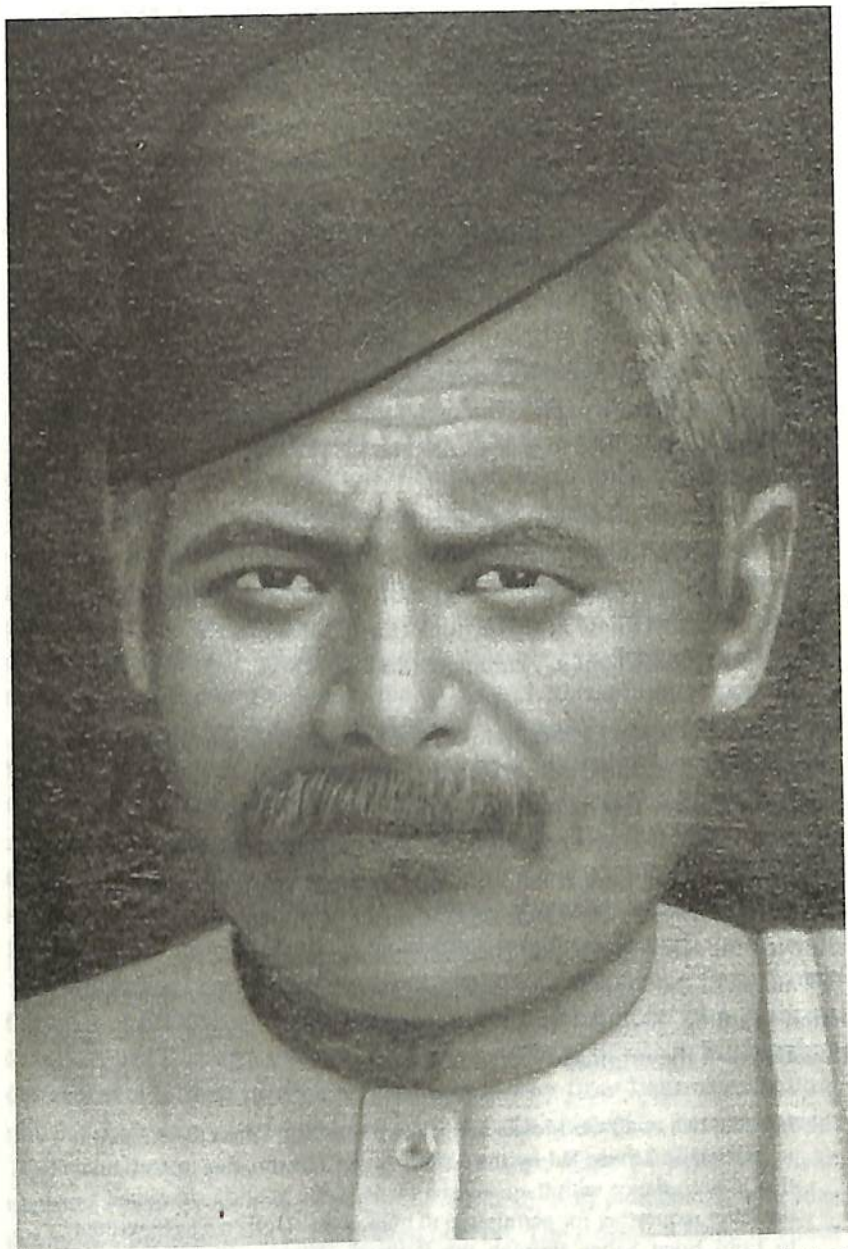


Photo 2. Chandrabir Pradhan (Kasaju), 1837-1905. (Courtesy of Keshab C. Pradhan)

Lasso Kazi, the Sikkim Vakeel i.e., a representative or agent of the Chogyal (in 1872¹⁴). In his document dated the 3rd day of the 3rd month of the Tibetan Iron Dragon Year (1880 AD) King Thutob Namgyal describes a riot in Rhenock between pro and anti Nepalese settlers. It also mentions the fines imposed on those who disobeyed the Newar leader who, as mentioned above, had been given the authority to collect taxes and dispense justice.¹⁵

In his memoir, Keshab C. Pradhan suggests Laksmidas Pradhan (Kasaju)'s year of birth to be 1816, and 1894 to be the year of his demise.¹⁶ The dates of Laksmidas' birth and death had remained obscure prior to the publication of this memoir. Laksmidas's son Lambodar Pradhan owned the largest quantity of land in Sikkim, and the British authorities honoured him with the title of Ray Shaheb as a reward him for his service and loyalty to them. Quoting family papers, Jha mentions that the government leased the following copper mines to Laksmidas and his family:

1. Tuk Khani near Turuk (Southern Sikkim);
2. Rinchi Khani in Rinchinpong (Western Sikkim);
3. Bhotang Khani near Rangpo Bazar (Eastern Sikkim);
4. Pachey Khani near Rhenock (Eastern Sikkim);
5. Rathok Khani in Namthang (Southern Sikkim).¹⁷

In the past, the traders in Sikkim practised a barter system. Here the British authorities later granted permission to circulate Nepalese currency once the Nepalese traders had requested this in 1849 in order to facilitate their trade.¹⁸ In 1881, following this request, the King of Sikkim formally sought approval from the British authorities in India to grant permission to mint Sikkim's own coins. On 4 June 1881, the Bengal Government wrote a letter allowing the King of Sikkim to do so.¹⁹ Subsequently, on the 3rd day of the 10th month of the Tibetan Water-Sheep Year, the Sikkimese palace wrote a letter granting permission to Laksmidas to mint coins. The English translation of the original Tibetan text runs:

Be it known to all the Monks and laymen residing within the Kingdom in general and those led by the Newar trader Lakshmidar in particular that in accordance with their request made in the petition submitted by the latter requesting for permission to mint coins (Doli) we have written to Lord Eden Saheb through the Political Officer and obtained his permission. In pursuance thereof order has been issued to Lakshmidar, the Newar Trader, and others communicating the granting to mint coins. Recently, an application has been received through Garzong requesting

permission to mint Chepte (flat) coins and in this connection order has already been passed granting permission for a period of 5 years subject to the condition that there should not be any hindrance to or failure in payment of the Government dues and that there will be no disturbance of the friendly relations existing between the neighbouring Kingdoms. This should be borne in mind by all.

From the Palace on the third day of the tenth month of the Water-Sheep Year (1883 AD).²⁰

In 1883 Laksmidas was the first to be granted the right to mint coins for a period of 5 years.²¹ However, the minting of coins in Sikkim was abolished in 1887.

There are similar stories concerning Chandrabir Pradhan (Maske), another Newar in Sikkim. He is believed to be one of the earliest Newars to settle in Sikkim. According to Daya Prasad Pradhan, the 5-year-old Chandrabir Pradhan (Maske) travelled from Nepal to Darjeeling with his father in 1830 AD, and later moved to Sikkim for business in 1845.²² In contract (*thekedāri*) work he frequently cooperated with Laksmidas when mining copper and minting coins for the Sikkimese Government. It awarded the title of *taksāri*, or minter, to Laksmidas and Chandravir Kasaju, Chandravir Maske, Jitmansing Pradhan, Marghoj Gurung and Pratapsing Chhetri for their contributions to the minting of coins for the Sikkimese.

British officers found Laksmidas and Chandravir as well as their families extremely reliable as proven by the many testimonials the British Government officers wrote to Laksmidas and Chandravir between 1875 and 1895 AD. A testimony dated 31 May 1875 states that the Lieutenant Governor of Bengal is satisfied with Chandrabir's performance at copper mining at Katong Ghat (Sikkim). A testimony dated June 1895 praises Laksmidas for his contributions to building roads in Sikkim.²³

Laksmidas was also engaged in lending money to the Government Officers of Sikkim. A manuscript dated 1882 procured by Mrs. Kalpana Pradhan of Tadong informs us that Yamthang Kaji, a high-ranked Government Officer of Sikkim borrowed money from Laksmidas but did not pay him any interest nor did he return the money he had borrowed. Thus in a letter Laksmidas requested the then King of Sikkim to take necessary actions in order to see to it Yamthang Kaji paid back Laksmidas the money including the accumulated interest. The letter is written in Hindi language. Laksmidas and his family owned numerous estates in Sikkim. Jha provides us with this list of estates they possessed in 1913:

1. Kitam, Chidam, Namthang, Singtam and Chakung. Owner: Shaheb Lambodar Pradhan;
2. Pakyong, Rungpo, Pedang, Rigoo, Pathing and Temi. Owner: Ray Shaheb Laksminarayan Pradhan;
3. Ney and Broom. Owner: Suriman Pradhan;
4. Pachey Khani and Taza. Owner: Dalbahadur Pradhan;
6. Rhenock. Owner: Ratnabahadur Pradhan;
7. Marming. Owner: Sherbahadur Pradhan.²⁴

Many descendants of Laksmidas, Chandravir Kasaju and Chandravir Maske received the prestigious title of Ray Shaheb from the Anglo-Indian Government. They were also renowned as landlords (*zamindar*), or contractors (*thekedār*), among them the Ray Shaheb, Balkrishna, who was popular and named 'Baburam'. This grandson of Laksmidas built the well-known *baunna dhokā darbār*, the palace with fifty-two doors in Namthang. However, the King of Sikkim found that embarrassing, as he believed that only the kings in Nepal had the right to construct palaces with fifty-two doors. Therefore, the King fined Baburam with 1 Rs, a large sum for that time. However, the wealthy landlord Baburam happily paid 1000 Rs instead and closed one of the doors of his palace.²⁵ The historic mansion of Baburam still stands in Namthang, where his grandson Dharma Pratap Kasaju and his family reside. It is noteworthy that, at this same site, the Chief Minister Pawan Kumar Chamling inaugurated the first Institute of Newar Language and Culture in Sikkim in 2000. It is said that whenever Baburam left his house a music band would accompany him. Moreover, any British officer visiting the area would also be welcomed by this band which for that reason the band carried his name. Even a song was composed: '*kasko bājā kasko bājā Baburamko bājā*' (lit.: whose band is it? whose band is it? it is Baburam's band), which is still popular among the people of Sikkim.

A descendant of Chandravir built a similar house with fifty-two doors in Pachey Khani (lit. Five Mines), in an area located in the east of Sikkim and mainly inhabited by people of Nepalese origin.

A Newar-style Jhingate Ghar, a tile-roofed house built in Duga, is another spectacular site in Sikkim built by descendants of the late Chandravir and now in a dilapidated state. In 2004, the then Chairman of the Sikkim Newar Organization pledged it would be renovated as an important heritage site of the Newars but this plan has not been realized as yet.

well as his uncle had married the daughters of Sikkimese Newars and settled down. Another family history may be mentioned here. Maniklal Pradhan (63) of Tashiding told me that he, aged only 5, had travelled to Sikkim with his father and that he had continued to go back and forth to his ancestral home in Banepa (Nepal). Many, however, do not remember when their ancestors moved to Sikkim and from which part of Nepal they hail. Some just know vaguely from which part of Nepal their forefathers moved to Sikkim, but have never returned in order to trace their ancestral home or relatives.

The Newar people in Sikkim were not only engaged as traders and landlords. They also worked directly as employees of the Sikkimese Government, and in the royal palace. In various capacities they began to serve at the court of the Chogyal from as early as 1910 on. Some became the Magistrate of towns and villages, authorised with having to take decisions on disputes. A small number became Councillors, a post similar to that of a Minister during the rule of the Chogyal to whom they were considered loyal. In 1970, during the time of the Chogyal, for example, Krishna Chandra Pradhan, who initiated the Sikkim United Front, launched protests against the Indian domination of Sikkim.²⁶ The Chogyal's rule in Sikkim ended with the merger of Sikkim and India in 1975. Patriotic Newar writers, such as Bhuvan Prashad Pradhan, expressed their deep sorrow at losing the sovereign Kingdom of Sikkim to India. However K.C. Pradhan cooperated with Kaji Lhendup Dorji in overthrowing the monarchy. Prior hereto K.C. Pradhan had officiated as the Chogyal's courtier and been his business partner. He later turned against the Chogyal as the latter defeated him in a 1973 election. B.S. Das (2002: 73), who served as Chief Executive in Sikkim between 1973 and 1974, described the situation thus;

He (the Chogyal) made a fatal error in manipulating the Sikkim elections in 1973, ... He did not even spare his erstwhile business partner, K.C. Pradhan, the leader of Janata Congress whom he arrested in March 1973. Thus, all his earlier political loyalists like B.B. Gurung, Nakul Pradhan and K.C. Pradhan, who also suffered in the rigged elections joined hands with the Kazi.

After the above-mentioned 1975 annexation, several Newars succeeded in occupying⁴ Ministerial posts within the Sikkimese Government. Many Newars are known as social reformers and educators. In their honour, the State Government of Sikkim has named roads. For instance, the Kashi Raj

Pradhan Marga (Road) in Gangtok is named after Kashi Raj Pradhan whom is remembered as a reformer and an educationist.

The 1891 Census of Sikkim records 727 Newars out of a total population of 30,558.²⁷ In 1994, the numbers of the Newars counted c.20,000 of which 10,650 were male. At present, the total number is estimated between 30,000 and 35,000. The total area of land in Sikkim measures 7096 square kilometers (2740 square miles). The Population Census of India 2011 calculated the total population of Sikkim as 610,577. In 2014 it is estimated to be 632,820.²⁸

The present position of the Newars

The Newar people in Sikkim are engaged in Government service, politics, teaching, agriculture, trade and business. According to Keshab Chandra Pradhan, the Newars occupied many important administrative posts between 1910 and 1980. However, their number has since dropped as others gradually replaced the Newars. Rajiva Shanker Shresta and Mrs. Jayshree Pradhan served as Principal Secretaries. They were among those Newars who occupied high Government posts. During my 2004 field research, two Newars, Tulasi Pradhan and Narendra K. Pradhan, were elected members of the thirty-two seat Legislative Assembly of Sikkim. Both were members of the ruling Sikkim Democratic Front. For some time Tulasi Pradhan had officiated as a Cabinet Minister. In the May 2004 election and in 2009, however, only Narendra K. Pradhan had the chance to participate in the elections. On both occasions he returned as MLA on behalf of his Arithang constituency. Narendra K. Pradhan served as a Minister in the Pawan Chamling led Cabinet of Sikkim. In the election of April 2014, however, the Sikkim Democratic Front presented a new young Newar, Bikram Pradhan in the place of Narendra K. Pradhan. Bikram Pradhan won the election over the Chujachen constituency. The newly formed opposition party, called the Sikkim Krantikari Morcha (Sikkim Revolutionary Forum), also succeeded in electing another young Newar candidate Shyam Pradhan from the Arithang constituency to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim. The Newars in Sikkim are glad to have elected two Newars to the Legislative Assembly of Sikkim though they represent two dissimilar political parties. They believe both will work for the benefit of the Newar community despite the fact they represent rival political parties.

The Newars are especially renowned for their skillful engaging in multiple businesses and industries e.g., tourism, hotels, handicrafts, bakery,

transportation, printing, etc. The Bhansari family's Tripti bakery is one of the prominent industries in Sikkim. Babu Kaji Shakya, a sculptor in Gangtok, has won many prestigious Indian national awards for his contributions to the handicraft industry of Sikkim. Producing traditional Nepalese-style Buddhist and Hindu images and jewellery, he in fact follows the artisan tradition of Patan, Nepal. Babu Kaji Shakya owns a workshop (Rumtek) and a showroom (Gangtok). One of his sons has followed in his footsteps.

Many Newars in Sikkim made their name in the nursery business. The late Chandrabir Kasaju's son Ray Shaheb Ratnabhadur and his brother Babu Durga Shamsher Pradhan initiated a nursery in Rhenock under his father's name in 1910 AD. The 'Chandra Nursery' is well known in Sikkim and beyond. Rajiva Shanker Shrestha has presented a fine account of the glory of the Chandra Nursery as well as an account of the nursery tradition in Sikkim. He has described the high and low times of the Chandra Nursery during its 100 year history (Shrestha 2010b).

It may be added here that even in the mid-20th century certain Newar traders began exporting flowers, plants and fruits from Sikkim not only to India but also further afield. For instance, Keshab C. Pradhan, a former Chief Secretary of Sikkim, is renowned in this field, winning many prestigious awards in Australia, the U.K, the U.S.A., Japan, etc. He is now retired and spends most of his time in his garden, growing varieties of oranges and hybrid flower plants. In his memoirs, Keshab C. Pradhan presents his devotion and achievements in this field and proudly states:

Every member of the Pradhan Family hailing from our ancestral village of Pacheykhani and Rhenock in Sikkim was virtually engaged in the nursery activities, even school-going kids not being spared from working in the garden during the long winter holiday. (Pradhan 2008:11)

Newars can be observed as grocery runners and hoteliers in almost all settlements of Sikkim. The Newars were the first to introduce cardamom farming to Sikkim, nowadays one of the most popular cash crops. Many are agriculturists, labourers and motor drivers. According to data from 1989, 27.27% of the total Newar households occupied an average of less than 5 acres of land, while 66.25% were landless. A 1994 survey conducted among 7,025 Newars revealed that 33.11% were illiterate and rest was literate. And, only 5% had graduated (Shrestha 1996:8). The educated are mostly concentrated in Gangtok, the State capital.

Ganesh Kumar Pradhan of Rhenock is well-known for his antique collection including old coins, banknotes, historical documents, manuscripts, books, driftwood and drift stones. He grows bonsai and hybrid plants in his family garden. His contributions have not only resulted in many prizes but also in the admiration and praise from all over Sikkim. The Newar community here feels proud of Jaslal Pradhan, who participated in the Olympics both as a boxer and as a boxing coach for India. Newars, such as R.K. Pradhan of Rhenock, are engaged in the film industry.

Many believe, and the public stereotype is, that Newars in Sikkim are affluent and often occupy high Government posts. The reality, however, is different. A survey indicates that only 10% of Newars possess assets (e.g., land, houses) in urban areas thus that 90% do not (Shrestha 1996:8). According to the former Chairman of the Sikkim Newar Guthi, Keshab Chandra Pradhan, less than 5% of the Newar population in Sikkim can be considered affluent. The very large majority lives in poor circumstances. Analysing the 1981 demographic figures for Sikkim, Bhasin & Bhasin illustrate that among the Newars, 28% of the men and 67% of the women were unemployed, 18% of the men and 37% of the women were farmers, 94% of the men and 4.5% of the women were labourers, 28% of the men and 37% of the women were employed in the service sector, 8% of the men were in teaching and 8% of the men and 5.6% of the women were entrepreneurs. It was also indicated that 40% of the Newar population survived on less than 500 Rs income *per annum* while only 4% of them had an income of 20,001 to 25,000 Rs *per annum*.²⁹ Figures show that 80% of the men and 59.2% of the women were literate but only 4% of the men had any tertiary education.

Within the Newar community, a gap is visible between wealthy and economically poor. To a certain extent, mutual trust between these two classes is lacking. One of the aims of the Sikkim Newar Guthi is to help the deprived sections of the Newar society with financial and other means. However, despite this aim, one sees little or no sign of cooperation between poor and affluent Newars. As one of my informants put it, 'Unlike other communities in Sikkim, the Newars lack a feeling of mutual cooperation, instead they envy each other's progress.' Other communities in Sikkim consider them most laborious. Certain Newars are described as oppressors, because during the time of the Chogyal they worked as contractors and landlords, applying harsh measures when collecting revenues. In addition, they were authorised to flog people who failed to report for forced labour (*jhārā*). On the other hand, elders such as Daya Prasad Pradhan dismiss



Photo 4. Ray Shaheb Ratnabhadur Pradhan, a co-founder of the Chandra Nursery.

such accusations. He claims, on the contrary, that Newar contractors and landlords undertook many development projects (e.g., the opening of schools and health centres, the building of roads and rest places). Daya Prasad Pradhan would declare that the Newars remained most friendly towards all other groups in Sikkim.

Notes

1. See O'Malley (1907:19). For a brief history of the state formation of Sikkim and the rise of a national historical narrative, see Mullard 2011. For an earlier discussion concerning a 17th-century Sikkimese chronicle that enables us to understand more of Sikkim's hidden history, see Mullard 2005.
2. See Basnet (1974:189-91) for the full text of the treaty.
3. See Pradhan (1993:4-6).
4. The late Nepalese folklorist, Kesar Lal Shrestha, presented me with an unpublished family note written by Cakraraj Timila and dated 2003 (Timila 2003).
5. See O'Malley (1907:43). For 'Formation of Darjeeling District', see Samanta (2000:37-66).
6. See Pradhan (1997:2).
7. See Jha (1985:130), Appendix IV.
8. The 1861 treaty obliged Sikkim to agree upon British commands on its internal and external affairs. For the full text of the treaty see Appendix B (Basnet 1974:192-8).
9. This letter is quoted from Appendix I (Jha 1985:56, 128). The letter was dated 20/10/1889 and refers to a lease of land he received about 22 years earlier. See also Sharma & Sharma (1997:13) Vol. 1.
10. See Appendix Ka in Pradhan (1997:37). All these sources would seem to establish the historicity of the 1867 lease to Laksmidas; however, I could not find a copy of it, nor do any sources provide its full text.
11. See Appendix II and III in Jha (1985:55-7; 128-9). See also Sharma & Sharma (1997:13-4) Vol. 1.
12. See Jha (1985:130-2) Appendix IV. See also Kotturan (1983:82).
13. See Namgyal & Domla (1908:72). See also Nakane (1966:251).
14. See Jha (1985:56).
15. See Sharma & Sharma (1997:53-5). See also Basnet (1974:46).
16. See Pradhan (2008: Plate 5).
17. See Jha (1985:130).
18. See Jha (1985:130) and Sharma & Sharma (1997:56).
19. See Sharma & Sharma (1997:45-7).
20. The text is published in Sharma & Sharma (1997:49).
21. See Jha (1985:133) Appendix B. See Bhattacharyya (1984) for more on the coinage of Sikkim.
22. See the genealogy published by one of his descendants (Pradhan 1997:1).
23. Family documents in the possession of Mrs. Kalpana and Mr. Deepak Pradhan of Tadong.

24. This list is from Jha (1985:132).
25. See Pradhan (1998:55).
26. See Sharma Kashyap (1996:161) and Basnet (1974:163). See Hiltz (2003) on the constructing of Sikkimese national identities during the 1960s and 1970s.
27. This was the first time that census was carried out in Sikkim; see Risley (1972:27).
28. See Population of India, accessed on 4 April 2014: <http://www.indiaonlinepages.com/population/sikkim-population.html>
29. See Bhasin & Bhasin (1995:117, 119), Table 6:14.