

CHAPTER THREE

Being Nepali without Nepal: Reflections on a South Asian Diaspora

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INTRODUCTION

The question of identity forms one of the key topics of South Asian history and culture. Debate often centres on issues of nationalism (“the desire of a nation to have a state of its own”) and nationism (“the desire of a state to have a nation of its own”)¹ and a variety of bases have been posited for contemporary political identity, among them religion, language, locality, caste, and ethnicity. Similar questions have also been pursued with regard to the development of the nation-state of Nepal – a phenomenon that accords more closely with Yapp’s definition of nationism. One thinks immediately of the important and much-quoted article by Richard Burghart (1984). John Whelpton also examines the issue in considerable detail in an unpublished paper (1993b), and in his contribution to this volume. This discussion will attempt no more than to begin to establish a factual basis, primarily through a review of the relevant literature, and in some areas to identify a serious lack of reliable information. This lack of data has in recent years allowed distorted versions of history, or at least divergent readings of the past, to be used as justifications for controversial measures in the region concerned. The discussion is therefore pertinent to the concerns not only of scholars and students, but also to those of governments, rulers, and refugees.

Since the latter half of the nineteenth century, Nepalis have constituted a visible and increasingly vocal element of the population in Himalayan and sub-Himalayan districts in the northeast of

the Indian subcontinent. Here I shall discuss the definition of 'Nepalis' as a quasi-ethnic group, and the historical reasons for their presence in northeast India and southern Bhutan. I shall also attempt to explain the sense of insecurity that has pervaded this community for much of the present century, and to examine some of the ways in which it has attempted to carve a more secure niche for itself outside Nepal. The discussion is topical in view of recent events in Bhutan, where the ethnic cohesiveness of the Nepalis has come to be viewed as a threat to the prevailing political order. Nevertheless, the nature and history of Nepali ethnicity in the so-called 'Nepali diaspora' was not analysed with any real vigour until the publication of studies by Kumar Pradhan (1982) and Tanka Subba (1992).

Many stories and poems portraying emigration and exile, and several novels, have been written in Nepali during the twentieth century. In fact Lilabahādur Kshetri's *Basāi* (Settlement), a novel published in 1957 that describes the exploitation, dispossession, and emigration of a peasant family in eastern Nepal, is a set text for many Nepalese school students.² Elsewhere too, the phenomenon of emigration is portrayed with a fair degree of pathos, as the final lines of a short story from the 1960s illustrate:

"You have the right to my house, but you've no right to destroy our honour. I hereby give up my house and my land. You just take it over, we're leaving." Pudke relinquished ownership of the house and land of his forefathers, picked up his son and led Ujeli away. Ujeli clung to her husband. "Where are we going?" she asked. Pudke walked on a little further, then he took his son by the hand. "To Assam", he said, "We'll keep cows" (Malla, 1968/9: 21).³

Can the term 'diaspora' be used to denote the permanent presence of a Nepali-speaking community outside the borders of present-day Nepal? 'Emigration and settlement' might describe the historical process that led to their presence more precisely, since the emigrants were not driven out of their homeland, except perhaps by economic conditions, and they do not yearn to return. On the other hand, it

can be argued that the present political boundary of Nepal – especially in the east – does not demarcate exactly the region whose population is numerically dominated by the originally disparate ethno-linguistic groups who are now categorized as 'Nepalis'. Nor is it at all clear that the whole of the Nepali 'diaspora' community is descended from emigrants from Nepal: in Sikkim, for instance, there were probably villages inhabited by Limbus and Magars (peoples now often classified as 'Nepali'), as well as the autochthonous Lepchas, during the seventeenth century.⁴ So, despite its original Jewish associations, the term 'diaspora' is used here in the sense of "a dispersion or spreading, as of people originally belonging to one nation or having a common culture" (Collins, 1979: 409), although in this diaspora, as in many others, much of the 'common culture' was constructed after the migrations, not prior to them.⁵

THE SIZE OF THE NEPALI DIASPORA COMMUNITY

The size of the Nepali community in India can only be assessed with reference to census data on "language mainly spoken in the household" and "population by place of birth". Useful data on the number of persons resident for more than six months abroad are also available from the Census of Nepal. In Bhutan, where such data are not available, the size of the Nepali-speaking population cannot be assessed with any degree of confidence. All Indian census figures probably lead to under-estimates of the 'ethnic Nepali' minority. A proportion of those who might be categorized as 'Nepali' by non-Nepalis, and who do use Nepali in their everyday discourse, still consider other 'Nepalese' languages to be the language of their household, while the majority of 'Nepalis', 'Gorkhas', and 'Lhotshampas' who are long-term residents of India and Bhutan are not Nepal-born.

The Indian Census of 1981 presents language data in two sections. The first enumerates speakers of the 15 languages of the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution, which in 1981 excluded

Nepali (Nepali became one of the languages of the Schedule in 1992: see below). The second enumerates speakers of certain other languages, including Gorkhali/Nepali, Limbu, and Sherpa, but no other language that is also spoken in Nepal. The 1971 Census of India recorded a total of 1,419,835 speakers of Gorkhali/Nepali and the 1981 Census recorded a total of 1,252,444. The fall in this figure between 1971 and 1981 is attributable, at least in part, to the absence of statistics from Assam in the 1981 census. In 1981, twelve states and union territories in India recorded more than 10,000 speakers of Gorkhali/Nepali: see Table 3.1 (the number of 'Nepal-born' persons is also noted for each state in 1971).

A comparison of the number of Gorkhali/Nepali speakers in each state with the number of Nepal-born persons is instructive. When the former far exceeds the latter (as it does in West Bengal and Assam), the situation described is evidently that of a Nepali-speaking community composed in the main of persons separated from the original emigrants from Nepal by at least one generation. When the situation is reversed (as it is in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar), it is reasonable to conclude that this is the result of more recent emigration from Nepal by people who do not claim Gorkhali/Nepali as their mother-tongue.

The second category of census data that is of relevance here enumerates long-term emigrés from Nepal (in the Nepal Census) and Nepal-born persons resident in India (in the Indian Census). It is probable that these categories overlap those enumerated under language headings; i.e. a person could be recorded twice, once as a Gorkhali/Nepali speaker, and once as a Nepal-born person, though it is impossible to estimate the degree of overlap. This data has been analysed by Harka Gurung (1989: 15–29) and Table 3.2 summarizes his findings.

It is beyond the scope of this discussion to establish a figure for the size of the Nepali community normally resident in India. However, it is perhaps of use to summarize the available data, as in Table 3.3, and suggest some maximal and minimal figures. If based solely on language statistics, even if one adds in the approximately 350,000 speakers of Gorkhali/Nepali recorded in Assam in 1971 and the 30,927 speakers of Limbu and Sherpa recorded in India in

TABLE 3.1 INDIAN STATES AND UNION TERRITORIES RECORDING MORE THAN 10,000 SPEAKERS OF GORKHALI/NEPALI IN CENSUS OF INDIA, 1981^a

	<i>G/N spkrs.</i>	<i>Total popn.</i>	<i>Nepal-born persons (1971)</i>
Assam (1971)	353,700 ^b	14,957,542	107,216 ^c
Bihar	20,197	69,638,725	122,528
Himachal Pradesh	40,526	4,257,575	79,718
Madhya Pradesh	11,904	52,000,069	
Maharashtra	23,428	62,230,282	18,422
Manipur	37,046	1,409,239	
Meghalaya	61,259	1,326,748	
Nagaland	24,918	747,071	
Sikkim	192,891	308,262	
Uttar Pradesh	29,570	110,549,826	83,459
West Bengal	711,584	54,207,652	100,365
Darjeeling distt.	540,444	1,007,848	
Jalpaiguri distt.	135,860	2,201,794	
Arunachal Pradesh	45,508	597,862	
Delhi	10,947	6,174,632	9,670
Other Nepalese languages			
	<i>Limbu</i>	<i>Sherpa^d</i>	
India	18,320	12,607	
Sikkim	17,922	10,726	

^a In only eight states and union territories do speakers of languages other than those included in the 8th Schedule constitute a majority: of these eight, six are in the northeast (including Mizoram, which recorded 5,983 speakers of Gorkhali/Nepali in 1981). The other two are the union territories of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, and Goa, Daman, and Diu.

^b No census operation was carried out in Assam in 1981, due to the "disturbed situation" there.

^c In 1971, 'Assam' denoted Assam, Meghalaya, and Arunachal Pradesh.

^d Speakers of Sherpa outside Nepal might not normally identify themselves as 'Nepalis', but may be identified as such by non-Nepalis.

TABLE 3.2 EMIGRATION FROM NEPAL AND NEPAL-BORN PERSONS IN INDIA

	1 (NC) ^a <i>Persons abroad for 6 months or more</i>	2 (NC) <i>% of (1) residing in India</i>	3 (IC) <i>Nepal-born persons in India</i>	4 (IC) <i>Nepalese nationals in India</i>
1941	81,817			
1951			278,972	82,071
1952 ^b	198,120	79.4		
1961	328,470	92.0	498,836	133,524
1971			486,000	
1981	402,977	93.1	501,292	

^a IC: Census of India; NC: Census of Nepal.

^b Data from the 1952-4 Census of Nepal.

1981, and postulates a further absolute maximum of 50,000 speakers of other Nepalese languages (Rai, Magar, Gurung, Tamang, etc.) in India, the total figure of 'Nepalis' in India, if Nepalis are defined as 'speakers of languages spoken primarily in Nepal', cannot be stretched much beyond a total of one and three quarter millions. According to the 1981 Census of India, a total of 501,292 people enumerated in the Census were born in Nepal. Gurung attributes the fact that this exceeds the number of people recorded by the Nepal Census as being absent abroad for more than six months to "under-reporting" and "whole family emigration". One assumes that many emigrants from Nepal simply lose touch and, since their neighbours will not know whether they are living or dead, they are not recorded in the census. Whether this figure should be added to the above statistics on mother-tongue to provide an estimate of the size of the Nepali community in India is unclear: it may be that 'Nepal-born' people form some part of the "Gorkhali/Nepali" speaking community, or it may be that they are a separate and distinct category. If the latter is the case, the census data seem to suggest that the Nepali community in India consists of

TABLE 3.3 SUMMARY OF STATISTICS ON THE SIZE OF THE NEPALI-SPEAKING COMMUNITY IN INDIA

1. Gorkhali/Nepali speakers in India excluding Assam (1981 Census)	1,252,444
2. Gorkhali/Nepali speakers Assam (1971 Census)	350,000 ^a
3. Nepal-born persons resident in India (1981)	501,292
4. Speakers of Limbu and Sherpa in India (1981)	30,927
5. Speakers of other 'Nepalese' language in India	50,000 ^b
6. Persons absent abroad from Nepal for more than 6 months (1981)	402,977

^a It has been suggested that the number of Nepalis in Assam grew from 350,000 to 500,000 during the 1970s, though this has not been substantiated (see Murty, 1983: 40). Interestingly, Murty reports that the Assamese parties that were agitating for the expulsion of immigrants "viewed the presence of Nepalese settlers in Assam as not an important part of the overall issue of [the] presence of foreigners in Assam" (*ibid.*: 40). Chaudhuri (1982: 44) asserts that a total of 8,500,000 immigrants had settled permanently in Assam by 1971, constituting 57% of the total population.

^b This figure is an educated guess.

approximately 2.25 million people. If the former, the total figure is rather smaller.

The size of the Indian Nepali community is claimed to be much larger than this by various parties for a variety of reasons. Those who have demanded the inclusion of Nepali in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution have regularly quoted a figure of 5 or 6 million (see, for instance All-India Nepali Bhasha Samiti, 1979). The government of Bhutan, on the other hand, cites a figure of 10 million for the Nepali community in India, seeking to emphasize the threat of mass immigration:⁶

There are, however, many millions of people of Nepali origin living in Nepal, Sikkim, Kalimpong, Darjeeling and the surrounding areas who are not only jealous of us, the Bhutanese, enjoying so much happiness and prosperity, but would like to migrate in millions so as to steal our peace, happiness and prosperity from us and our children (RGB, 1992: 29-30).

ATIONALISM AND ETHNICITY IN A HINDU KINGDOM

Although government census figures rarely reflect demographic situations exactly, and are vulnerable to manipulation for a variety of ends, it remains unlikely that the true size of the Nepali population in India could be treble that suggested by the above maximal reading of the census figures, as claimed by language campaigners, or nearly five times greater, as claimed by the Bhutan government.

The size of the Nepali population of southern Bhutan (called *Lhotshampa*, 'people of the southern border', in official Bhutanese media) is even more difficult to assess. Officially, the total population of Bhutan is now 600,000: some refugee organizations claim that Nepalis are about 50%,⁷ but the highest estimate given by the Bhutan government, in 1979, was 33%. This was before the official figure for the total population was reduced from 1.375 million (in 1988) to 600,000 (in 1991). The truth is probably somewhere in between, although the 'demographic equation' altered between 1990 and 1993, as many Lhotshampas left Bhutan as refugees: in September 1995 the UNHCR-administered camps in southeast Nepal accommodated 88,880 (UNHCR, 1995). If they are all from Bhutan (and their origins are hotly disputed), they represent nearly 14% of the official total population, if the 1991 figure is to be taken as accurate.

NAMES AND TERMS

The language currently recognized by the Sahitya Akademi (Literature Academy) of India, the Indian Constitution, and the West Bengal Official Languages Act is "Nepali", but the 1988 Notification on Citizenship, negotiated with the Gorkhaland National Liberation Front (GNLF) in Darjeeling, refers only to "Gorkhas". The GNLF leader Subhas Ghising has argued that Nepali is a foreign language, and was deeply unhappy with its inclusion in the 8th Schedule (for which, see below). Much of the controversy surrounding the status of Indian Nepalis is concerned with nomenclature: "for the Nepalis of India the search for an appropriate term that indicates Indian nationality or which does not confuse them with the 'Nepalese' has long been a genuine concern" (Subba, 1992:

68). Until about 1980, the terms 'Gorkha', 'Gorkhali', and 'Nepali' were used more or less interchangeably in India, but there has since been a contraction of meaning and each has been invested with political connotations. The Bhutan government's application in 1958 of the Dzongkha term 'Lhotshampa' to the Nepali-speaking southern Bhutanese was clearly intended to be integrative, but outside the official media they are still more usually referred to as 'Nepalis' or 'Nepali Bhutanese'. Since its foundation, the GNLF has been violently opposed to the use of 'Nepali', whereas writers and intellectuals object strongly to the imposition of the name 'Gorkha' or 'Gorkhali' onto the literary language they share with contemporaries in Nepal. Synthetic terms such as *bhārpālī* (a contraction of *bhāratīya* (Indian) + *nepālī*) have failed to take root. In 1991, GNLF activists desecrated statues of Bhānubhaktā Āchārya (1814–68) in Darjeeling and Kalimpong. Bhānubhaktā was the author of the first major work of modern Nepali literature, but the GNLF claimed that the statues honoured a foreign poet. In Kathmandu, Nepali intellectuals view such controversies with disbelief, but in India they amount to more than mere pedantry.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Historically, migration from Nepal, as from anywhere else, can be explained in terms of both push and pull factors. During the late eighteenth, nineteenth, and early twentieth centuries, the movement was mainly eastward, and resulted in permanent settlement outside the kingdom's modern borders. The eastward drift of a culture based on the Nepali language, on the dominance of Brahmans, and of agricultural practices based on the use of the plough and, latterly, the cultivation of maize, has been a longterm process. The conquest and unification of Nepal by the Shah kings of Gorkha during the latter half of the eighteenth century represented a continuation of this process, which had begun about 800 years earlier with the establishment of a kingdom in the Karnali basin by a line of Khasa kings who probably spoke an archaic form of Nepali. The Khasa allegedly intermarried with Rajput

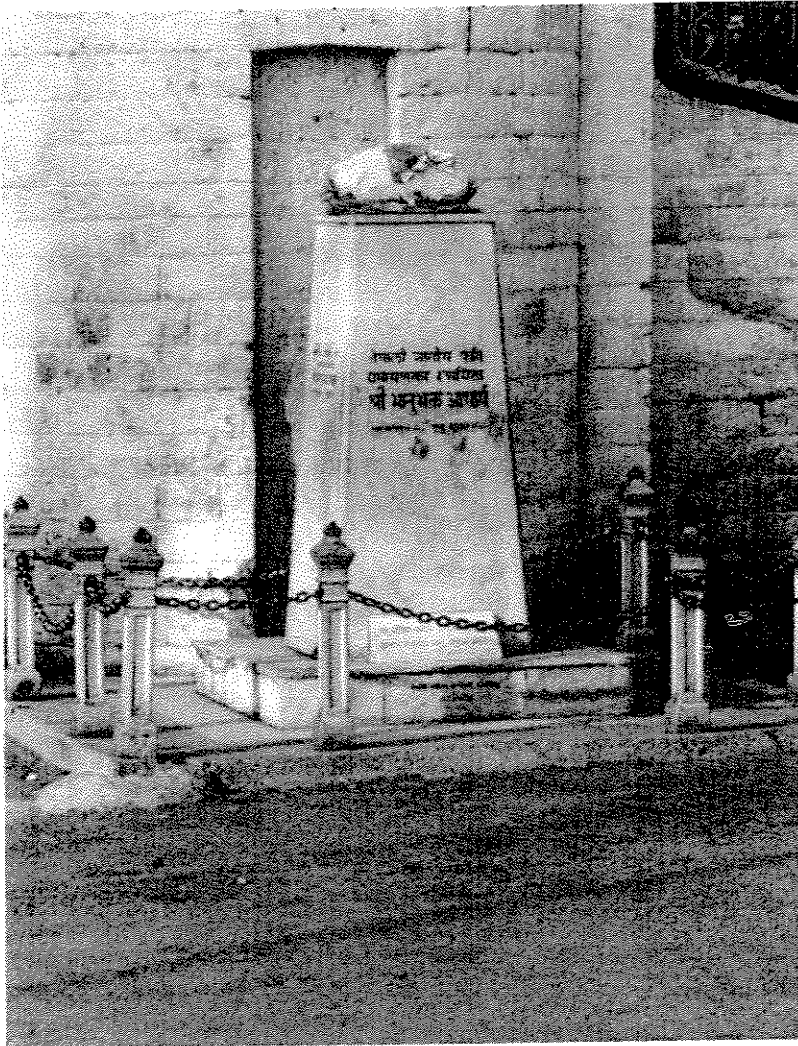


FIGURE 5 *The bust of Bhanubhakta Acharya in Darjeeling's Chowrasta, desecrated by GNLf activists in 1991 as a "foreign poet" (Michael Hutt)*

immigrants, and with local people, to form an ever-expanding Chetri caste, and their descendants spread from west to east, subjugating the local tribes and displacing their Tibeto-Burman languages, and imposing a more uniform Parbatiya culture. Eastward migration from eastern Nepal probably began on a comparatively small scale as a response to the Gorkhali conquest of districts inhabited mainly by Kiranti (Rai and Limbu) populations. The Gorkhals conquered the Darjeeling hills and a portion of western Sikkim in 1780, and held on to these territories until 1816. Parbatiya cultivators were encouraged to migrate to the less densely-populated eastern districts, and they began to encroach on the indigenous people's ancestral lands. The Rais and Limbus responded by emigrating in ever-increasing numbers: by 1834 the government of Gorkha found it necessary to declare a ten-year moratorium on the repayment of loans because of the peasants' growing penury, brought on by the conversion of taxes to a cash medium (English, 1983: 258). Pradhan has estimated that between 12 and 15% of the total Kiranti population 'emigrated' from eastern Nepal to Darjeeling between 1840 and 1860 (Pradhan, 1991: 192).⁸ Pradhan also refers to Imansingh Chemjong's history of Vijaypur, published in Nepali in 1974/75, in which Chemjong claims, citing a Limbu manuscript, that the Gorkhals' punishment of local chiefs caused 32,000 Limbus to emigrate in three groups. One group is said to have gone to Assam, one to Sikkim, and one to Bhutan (*ibid.*: 137).

More recently, Nepalis have travelled in large numbers to north Indian cities to seek work, but this is a different phenomenon, and has not yet produced large, culturally cohesive communities like those in the older eastern diaspora (see CNAS, 1987; Dixit, 1988). It has become something of a commonplace in media and government circles in Kathmandu to assert that "sixty lakhs" of Nepalis (i.e. six million) are working in India. As has been shown above, the census data currently available do not support this assertion, and one can only assume that it refers in part to Nepalis employed in India on a short term or temporary basis. In a seminar in London, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka gave one example of this. She described how Nepalese nationals from the far-western district of Bajhang provided

virtually all the nightwatchmen for the south Indian city of Bangalore. Most would work in Bangalore for a period of two or three years, after which their place would be taken by another Bajhangi.⁹ Dr. Pfaff estimated that approximately 16,000 Bajhangi men are employed in Bangalore at any given time.

During the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, permanent emigration from Nepal was also encouraged by two major pull factors. The first resulted from the so-called 'granting' of Darjeeling to the British by the Maharaja of Sikkim in 1835.¹⁰ Nineteen years earlier, following the Anglo-Nepalese wars, all of the territory captured by the Gorkhals east of the Mechi river (now Nepal's eastern border) had been handed over to the British. In 1817 the British then returned the tracts of Sikkimese land, plus the Darjeeling hills, to Sikkim.¹¹ In the early years of British rule, the tiny settlement of Darjeeling became a sanatorium and place of refuge for ailing British civil servants fleeing the heat of the plains. Very soon, however, the tea planters moved in. Tea was first planted commercially in 1852, and by 1891, 177 gardens had been established, covering a total of 45,000 acres. The production of tea is labour-intensive, but the Darjeeling hills contained few potential labourers. By 1876 the tea industry employed 19,000 workers, of whom over 90% came from the hills of eastern Nepal. However, the Darjeeling tea industry declined throughout the twentieth century and by the mid-1980s less than a third of the gardens were still in production. The establishment of a Nepali community based on the tea industry in Darjeeling therefore appears to have taken place between 1852 and the end of the nineteenth century (Subba, 1992: 27–50).¹² Pradhan argues that there were already large numbers of Nepalis in the district prior to this. He reproduces the texts of two letters written in Nepali in 1815 and 1826 which support the idea of much coming and going between eastern Nepal and Darjeeling (1982: 13–14), and points out that the word used by British officials to denote porters and labourers was not 'coolie' but the Nepali *bhariyā* ("bhurriah" in British records). The body of men formed to build and maintain roads in the Darjeeling district in 1839 was, according to Pradhan, "composed almost entirely of Nepalis" (1982: 20–21).

The second major pull factor was the recruitment of Gurkha soldiers into the British Indian army. This began during, or shortly after, the Anglo-Nepalese wars of 1814–16, when over 4,500 Nepalis enlisted, attracted by the fact that the British paid in cash, not in kind. The Sikhs also recruited Nepalis into their army from a very early stage: a third cousin of Jang Bahadur Rana, for instance, died fighting for the Sikhs in Afghanistan in 1824, and by 1830 the army of Ranjit Singh included a special Gurkha corps (see Whelpton, 1987; Mojumdar, 1973: 63 fn. 110; Pant, 1965/6). This fact is reflected in the Nepali word for a soldier who serves in a foreign army: the term *labure* is derived from Lahore, the Sikhs' main recruiting centre. Because the British were not allowed to recruit inside Nepal, they encouraged Nepalis to settle outside its borders. The Ranas turned a blind eye to recruiting inside Nepal by local agents and in 1887 Gorakhpur in India became the formal headquarters of Gurkha recruitment, recruiting mainly Magars and Gurungs from central Nepal. By 1902 a recruitment centre was also in operation at Ghoom near Darjeeling, attracting mainly Rais and Limbus. By 1908, approximately 55,000 men had been enlisted (Subba, 1992: 58). Admittedly, such men left Nepal to enlist, not to emigrate permanently. However, there was a marked tendency for them to settle in India after leaving military service: it has been noted that only about one third of the 11,000 Gurkhas discharged from the British Indian Army after the First World War chose to return to Nepal (Blaikie, Cameron, and Seddon, 1980: 37).

THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEPALI-GORKHALI ETHNIC IDENTITY IN INDIA

The terms 'Nepali' and 'Nepalese' were first used by the British, but during the 1920s there was a gradual move away from the use of 'Gorkha' and 'Gorkhali' towards 'Nepali' among Nepali-speaking intellectuals too. The Nepālī Sāhitya Sammelan (Nepali Literature Association), founded in Darjeeling in 1924, was the first institution to use the name. The Nepal government's publishing and censorship body was established in 1913 as the *Gorkhā Bhāshā*

Prakāshinī Samiti (Gorkha Language Publication Committee), but in 1930 the word 'Gorkhā' was replaced with 'Nepālī'. The emergence of a cohesive ethnic identity among Nepalis in India dates back no further than this time, and can again be attributed to both positive and negative factors. In isolation, the positive factors would probably account for a passive communal identification, but the negative factors have made this identification assertive.

INTERNAL FACTORS: ETHNICITY, LANGUAGE, AND CULTURE

It is significant that the majority of the Nepali emigrants who founded the diaspora communities were of Tibeto-Burman extraction. Even today, around 84% of the Nepali population of Darjeeling consists of Rais, Limbus, Tamangs, Magars, Gurungs, Sunwars, and Newars. Alongside this 'Nepali' community there live groups who have at times made common cause with them: Lepchas, Bhotiyas, and Tibetans,¹³ and plainspeople such as Bengalis, Marwaris, and Biharis who for obvious cultural and linguistic reasons do not identify with them much, if at all. Until 1951, the Darjeeling district census enumerated the members of each *jāt* (caste or ethnic group). Between 1901 and 1951, the number of persons belonging to the various Nepalese *jāts* doubled in number, but the relative proportions of each *jāt* changed very little. According to figures reproduced by Pradhan, roughly one in seven was a Rai, one in nine was a Tamang, while Brahmans numbered only 11,000 in a total Nepalese population of 445,000 in 1951. Those who might be assumed to have Nepali as their mother-tongue (Brahmans, Chetris, Kamis, Sarkis, and Damais) constituted a minority of around 20% (Pradhan, 1982: 36). A striking feature of the diaspora is the rapidity with which mother-tongues appear from the censuses to fall into disuse in favour of Nepali, often within a single generation. Although Nepali was the ancestral language of only some 20% of the Nepalese population of Darjeeling, the 1961 Census of West Bengal (1967: 238–55) recorded that 59% claimed Nepali as mother-tongue. Here it is important to see censuses not only as exercises that produce data, but also as opportunities for particular

groups and communities to assert or emphasize particular strands of their identity. The radical change in these language figures may well reflect not only a change in language use, but also a change in the respondents' *declaration* of their language use. And this change in self-representation must be, at least in part, a response to the internal and external factors outlined in this chapter.

Most Bhotiyas and Tibetans in Sikkim and the Darjeeling district have not abandoned their mother-tongue, although they have for the most part acquired Nepali as an additional language. According to Chie Nakane, "even those Nepalis who have lived in a Lepcha-Bhotia community [in Sikkim] for many years do not, as a rule, speak the Bhotia language... Lepchas and Bhotias seem much more successful in learning Nepali, and those who are accustomed to go to the Gangtok bazaar, or who have contact with government officials, are fluent in Nepali; most Bhotia peasants who have contacts with Nepalis in their own village speak at least broken Nepali" (Nakane, 1966: 261–2). She states that this is partly because "Bhotia" is a "complicated tonal language not easily learnt by the average Nepali peasant" (*ibid.*: 261) and then goes on to mention that "Nepali is a kind of lingua franca used widely throughout the Himalayan area" (*ibid.*: 262). In my view, the second factor is far more important in determining the direction of language shift than the first, which is in any case based on a subjective assessment of the inherent difficulty of the "Bhotia" language and on the supposition that "Nepali peasants" are less able to acquire a new language than Bhotiyas.

The Nepali spoken in West Bengal, Assam, and Bhutan differs from that of central and western Nepal in several important respects. In the spoken language, feminine and plural agreement of adjectives and verbs is largely ignored, and there are differences in pronunciation and intonation. In both the spoken and written versions of the so-called Darjeeling dialect, nouns commonly used in Kathmandu (*jbyāl*, 'window'; *pasal*, 'shop'; *syāu*, 'apple') are largely unknown, and different vocabulary is used, shared with Hindi or, in some cases, drawn from English (*kbirkī*, *dokān*, *āiphal*). Much the same is true of the spoken Nepali of eastern Nepal, though here the difference is less significant because eastern Nepal

does not have a Nepali literary tradition of its own, whereas Darjeeling certainly does. It is not difficult for a Kathmandu Nepali to identify an easterner or a Darjeeling Nepali from his or her accent and perceived grammatical laxity.

The Nepali language is the basis of Nepali ethnic identity outside Nepal: it is the primary basis for self-identification with the diaspora community. This is why so much of the argument about the status of Nepalis in India, and to a lesser extent in Bhutan, has focused on the status of their language. It may also represent a small part of the Bhutanese government's rationale for removing Nepali from the Bhutanese school curriculum at the beginning of the school year in 1990.¹⁴ Ethnically, culturally, and linguistically, the various emigrant groups had comparatively little in common with one another at first. Although various insignia – the *khukri* knife, the Nepalese *topi* (cap) – are adopted as other means of self-identification, and although the Bajhangis in Bangalore play up to the stereotypical image that Indians hold of Gorkhas, because it is to their advantage to do so, Nepali has no single term that adequately conveys the manifold connotations of the English word 'race'. *Jāti* is commonly used in the same contexts – *mānava jāti*, 'the human race', *nepālī jāti*, 'the Nepali race' – but its basic meaning is 'species' or 'type', as distinct from *jāt*, used to mean 'caste' which, in a Nepalese context, is frequently the same as 'ethnic group' – Gurung, Rai, Brahman, etc. However, the terms *jāt* and *jāti* are used almost interchangeably in common Nepali parlance and the standard dictionary (the *Nepālī Byhat Shabdakosh*), as Whelpton points out, employs each term in its definition of the other (above, p.76 note 25). Munshi and Chakrabarti's questions on ethnicity and race in Darjeeling in 1974, (Munshi and Chakrabarti, 1979) discussed in more detail below, drew responses in which the respondents identified themselves as members of what one might term a *jāti* (Nepali, or Indian Nepali), a *jāt* (Rai, Gurung, Brahman, etc.), or a *thar* (clan or kinship group, the name of which may also indicate which *jāt* its holder belongs to – though some *jāts* do have *thar* names in common).

Lengthy discussions on the use of the term 'Nepali' took place during the founding of the Nepālī Sāhitya Sammelan in

Darjeeling in 1924. Hariprasad Pradhan, the chairman of the inaugural meeting, argued:

We should call this organization the Nepālī Sāhitya Sammelan because the word 'Nepali' has a broad meaning. It refers to all the races (*jāti*) of Nepal – Magar, Gurung, Kirati, Newar, Limbu, and so on – and indicates that these and all the other races here are parts of a great Nepali nation (*rāṣṭra*) ... Nepali nowadays is like a lingua franca in the Himalayan region (*pradeś*). Although the people living in this region speak different tongues (*bolī*), there is no one who does not understand Nepali ... And no one race can claim that this language (*bhāṣā*) belongs to it alone (Pradhan, 1982: 37–9; my translation).

A distinction is made here between *bolī* (spoken tongues, i.e. minor languages or dialects) and *bhāṣā* (languages), and the inference is that the various 'races' of Nepal are to be subsumed into a single greater entity, here termed a 'nation' (*rāṣṭra*). At the same meeting, Paras Mani Pradhan offered much the same justification for the use of the word 'Nepali', but used slightly different terminology. It is as if the old *jāti* categories – Rai, Limbu etc. – were in the process of being downgraded to the status of *jāts*, and subsumed within a single new construct: that of the Nepali-speakers constituting a single *jāti*:

Now, blood (*ragat*), dress, and religion (*dharmā*) are completely rejected as bases of racehood (*jātiyatā*). One finds a variety of bloods, costumes, and religions. The Darjeeling Nepalis have become a *jāti* that is bound together by the thread (*sūtra*) of common experience, shared sentiments, and a single language (Pradhan, 1982: 44; my translation).

Up until the twilight years of the Rana regime in Nepal, much of the modernization and development of Nepali and its literature took place in India, where educational facilities were more generally available and Rana censorship largely ineffective. The

earliest Nepali newspaper was the *Gorkhā Bhārat Jīvan*, published in Banaras during the late 1880s, and this was followed in India by *Gorkhē Khabar Kāgat* (Darjeeling, 1901), *Sundarī* (Banaras, 1906), *Mādhavī* (Banaras, 1908), *Gorkhālī* (Banaras, 1915), *Chandrikā* (Kurseong, 1917), and the Gorkha League journals *Gorkhā Samsār* (Dehra Dun, 1926) and *Taruṇa Gorkhā* (Dehra Dun, 1928) (Devkoṭā, 1967). In 1938 the Nepali Sahitya Sammelan published *Kathā-Kusum*, the first anthology of Nepali short stories. A Nepali intellectual and journalistic tradition therefore existed in India rather earlier than it did in Nepal itself and, while most of Kathmandu's literati were Brahmans, Chetris, or Newars, four of the five Nepali writers honoured by the Indian Sahitya Akademi prior to 1982 were Rais (Pradhan, 1982: 36).

The majority of the nineteenth-century emigrants came from hill minorities which had only a thin veneer of Hinduism. The Muluki Ain, which codified Hindu caste laws and incorporated traditionally non-Hindu minorities into the caste hierarchy in Nepal, was promulgated in 1854, just as the tea gardens were being established. The emigrants continued to attach less importance to considerations of purity and ritual status than those they left behind, and there were therefore fewer barriers between them. The Muluki Ain was derived from a variety of sources, but the most important were: the *Arthashastra* of Kautilya; the codification of caste laws supposedly promulgated by Sthiti Malla, the ruler of the Kathmandu Valley kingdom (r. 1382–95); and actual practice (Höfer, 1979: 41). However, 'actual practice' with regard to caste differentiation varied considerably from place to place, and it is entirely logical to assume that, since Sanskritization was a process that moved (broadly) from west to east through what is now Nepal, the situation among the 'tribals' of the east diverged most radically from the uniform orthodoxy that the compilers of the Legal Code sought to impose.¹⁵ In the more remote corners of the diaspora, there are still vestiges of old cultural practices. In southern Bhutan, polygyny appears to be practised to a far greater extent than it is in Nepal – whether this represents the survival of an old practice or a response to a new situation (such as, perhaps, a change in the vital ratio of land to labour) is not clear.

EXTERNAL FACTORS: HARDSHIP AND DISCRIMINATION

Negative factors explain the assertiveness of the Nepali minority more thoroughly than the positive factors outlined above, although both have been essential ingredients in the emergence of a cohesive ethnic identity. The deep-seated sense of insecurity felt by Indian and Bhutanese Nepalis is not well understood, but is an important factor in the political and ethnic turmoil of the regions they inhabit.

Economic Hardship

dāju sardār bainī kullī tuṭīsamma rin

"Elder brother's a head porter, younger sister's a coolie; debt right over our heads." (Hajirman Rai, 1900, quoted in Pradhan, 1982: 30).

As emigré workers, the Nepalis of north-east India have suffered a high degree of exploitation. In the main industries of the Darjeeling district (tea, timber, and tourism), Nepalis constitute the vast majority of the workforce, but are almost wholly absent from the ownership or management of any concern. Such positions are invariably occupied by plainspeople.¹⁶ The West Bengal state government produced a cascade of statistics during the 1980s to prove that "per capita expenditure by the State government on Darjeeling is double that of other districts and the per capita income of Darjeeling is the fourth highest" (Jyoti Basu, Chief Minister of West Bengal, quoted in Timsina, 1992: 53), but the under-representation of Nepalis in the upper echelons of the local administration seemed to go unaddressed. As Subba notes, "if [an ethnic group] feels that it is neglected, no statistical figures can erase that feeling" (Subba, 1992: 43). This sense of deprivation has been accentuated in Darjeeling in recent years by the contrast with Sikkim. Whereas the Gorkhaland movement brought all economic activity bar agriculture to a halt in the Darjeeling hills between 1986 and 1988, the economy of Sikkim has boomed.¹⁷

In Bhutan and Sikkim, many Nepali immigrants very rapidly became more prosperous than their 'hosts' by clearing forests,

establishing fields, and planting crops. In Bhutan, the Nepali immigrants turned what had until the end of the nineteenth century been an unproductive hinterland into the kingdom's main food producing area. The authors of the unpublished 'History of Sikkim', quoted by Nakane, describe the arrival of these immigrants in language which suggests that they were considered a threat:

Since the year 1871 ... there was an influx of Gorkhals from the neighbouring state of Nepal ... They settled down for good, and began digging, hoeing, smashing and overturning rocks, felling down [sic] trees, and turning the courses of streams at such a rate that all jungles were turned into fields, in a very short time (Nakane, 1966: 251).

Nakane attempts to explain the fact that "within a couple of decades after ... the first Nepali immigrant settled down in the Lepcha-Bhotia community, ... many [Nepalis] have become wealthier than the former inhabitants" (Nakane, 1966: 256). She argues that the principal factor has been "closely related to the religious differences between the Buddhists and Hindus" and examines the economic implications of these differences. The main thrust of her argument is that some Lepchas and "Bhotias" engage in "priestly activities" and are thus economically unproductive; that Nepali children and women engage in labour alongside Nepali men; and that Lepchas and "Bhotias" have a higher pattern of consumption because they expend a great deal more than the Nepalis do on religious activities. Nakane's work is of immense value, since it is one of only a few instances where such research has been permitted in Sikkim. However, when dealing with the relative economic status of the Nepalis on the one hand and the "Bhotias" and Lepchas on the other, the article lacks a broader perspective. Trevor Ling's criticism of this aspect of Nakane's analysis as a "monofactoral explanation" is therefore not without validity. Ling argues that the relations between the two communities were

not only those of Buddhist and Hindu, but also those of *settled inhabitant* and *recent immigrant* ... The *poverty* of the vast majority of Nepal's peasants is the basic datum from

which consideration of the activities of those of them who succeeded in entering and settling in Sikkim has to begin. Given this, it is not difficult to understand that such immigrants would be prepared to work intensively for even a reasonable reward and, being accustomed in Nepal to the lowest possible standards of expenditure on dress and food, they would find no great hardship in being satisfied with a somewhat more restricted consumption than their Bhotia-Lepcha neighbours during at least their early years in Sikkim. The contrast that Chie Nakane draws, therefore, is between the settled inhabitants of the Sikkimese state and impoverished refugees from Gurkhali rule (Ling, 1985: 125; emphasis in the original).

Indian Attitudes to Gurkha Soldiers

In strong contrast to the wholeheartedly positive British attitude to the Gurkha soldier, the Indian attitude has often been ambivalent – particularly during the period of British rule. At independence, the Indian government was anxious to retain its Gorkha regiments, which are now far larger than their British counterparts. This may have been prompted partly by a desire to maintain a strong Hindu element in an army with a large contingent of Muslims and Sikhs, whose loyalty at the time of partition did not go unquestioned. Anti-Gorkha sentiments in India arose from the use of Gorkha soldiers to put down the sepoy rebellion in 1857, in the Jalianwala Bagh massacre, against 'Quit India' demonstrators in 1942 and afterward, and on many other occasions to suppress the Indian Nationalist movement. By the 1920s, some Gorkhas might have been second-generation Indian Nepalis, despite the British prejudice against recruits who had not grown up in the hills.¹⁸ Nonetheless, in letters sent by the Political and Foreign Department to all district commissioners on July 21 1923 and October 1 1926, it was stipulated that the "*raiyats* [subjects] of Nepal" should not be employed except in the armed forces (Subba, 1992: 60). Subba claims that after Gorkhas were deployed to put down communal riots in Calcutta in February 1946, many Indian Nepalis suffered severe harassment, particularly

in Bengal. The government even decided to ban the wearing of the *dhukri* – still a potent symbol of ethnic identity – but found the order unenforceable (Subba, 1992: 61; Pradhan, 1982: 28).¹⁹ Indian Nepalis formed a number of organizations to protect their interests – notably the Gorkha Samiti in 1906 and the All-India Gorkha League in 1943 – and publications such as *Gorkhā Samsār*, founded in Dehra Dun in 1926, vocalized their concerns.

CITIZENSHIP AND NATIONALITY

Whether they are of Nepalese birth, or Gorkhas born in India, all ethnic Nepalis in India are liable to be assumed to be foreign nationals or immigrants. This attitude persists today, and sinister political motives are often imputed to leaders of the Indian and Bhutanese Nepali communities. Subba quotes from a Bengali writer's analysis of an increase from 19% to 59% in the Nepali population of Darjeeling, as recorded in the censuses of 1951 and 1961. This statistical blip can actually be explained by a change in the census questionnaire (the 1941 figure had been 67%), but Snehamoy Chaklader put it down to "[the Nepalis'] urge for the formation of a bigger group with a view to preserving their separate identity and gaining some benefits in a foreign country" (Subba, 1992: 5). Similar rhetoric appeared regularly during the early 1990s in Bhutanese denunciations of *ngolops* (anti-nationals; literally, 'rebels') in the southern districts of Bhutan, where a predominantly Nepali-speaking population was encouraged to settle by a government-authorized commissioner at the beginning of the present century (Sinha, 1991: 36–40). It is impossible to venture anything more than a subjective opinion on the proportion of the southern Bhutanese population that consists of illegal post-1958 immigrants (the government of Bhutan claimed in 1988 to have detected 100,000), but the bulk of the southern Bhutanese Nepali community appears to be the product of primary migration from Nepal.²⁰ British reports are the only sources of information on early Nepali migration to Bhutan: there are references to a "considerable community" along the length of southern Bhutan in the 1890s,²¹

to "about 15,000, of whom 14,000 were Nepalese" in Sipchoo and Tsangbe in 1904;²² to "60,000" in south-west Bhutan in 1932,²³ and in 1938 to a "very practical problem" of whether "the local races are destined to be overwhelmed by the Nepalese".²⁴ With such a large Nepali population in the south at such an early stage, an annual population growth rate of 3% could conceivably have produced a Nepali community in Bhutan of around 200,000 without any need for immigration, legal or otherwise. The date when the migration commenced may also be somewhat earlier than is usually supposed: Christopher Strawn has reproduced the text of a handwritten deed of settlement with which the pönlop (referred to as "Bhar Raja Rinphu Raja") of Paro granted land in southern Bhutan (Chamarchi) to Sardar Dalchan Gurung and his son Gajarman Gurung in Bhadra V. S. 1944 (August/September 1887) (Strawn, 1993: 292–3).

The likelihood is that the Nepali diaspora in northeast India and Bhutan is the product of primary migration from eastern Nepal that reached its peak at the turn of the century and then subsided, rather than of the emigration from Nepal that has undoubtedly continued, but in a different manner and to different destinations, since 1950. This view is supported by a small piece of relevant research conducted in three tea estates near Darjeeling in 1974, during which 411 randomly-selected hillpeople were interviewed. To the question "what is your *jāti*?", 276 answered "Nepali", 64 answered "Bhāratīya Nepali", and 55 gave Nepalese caste or tribal names. Most were aware that their families had migrated to the district from eastern Nepal, but 67% dated this migration (*basāi sārne*) back two generations, and 32% dated it back three generations. 85% of those interviewed had been born in the Darjeeling district, 48% had never travelled outside the district, and only 13% had ever visited Nepal (Munshi and Chakrabarti, 1979: 701–9). Furthermore, whereas one sixth of the Nepalese population of Darjeeling in 1931 was born in Nepal, by 1951 the number had dropped to only 749 in a total of 445,260 (Pradhan, 1982: 33).

The status of Nepalis in India, and of Indians in Nepal, is governed by article 7 of the Indo-Nepal Treaty of Peace and Friendship, concluded on July 31 1950. The Article states, "the

Governments of India and Nepal agree to grant, on a reciprocal basis, to the nationals of one country in the territories of the other, the same privileges in the matter of residence, ownership of property, participation in trade and commerce, movement and other privileges of a similar nature" (Timsina, 1992: 79). This article is resented by many Indian Nepalis, and its abrogation was one of the central demands of the Gorkhaland movement. Texts of the article were burned in mass demonstrations throughout the Darjeeling district on 27 July 1986. Indeed, the Indo-Nepal Treaty is one of the principal causes of the Indian Nepalis' sense of insecurity. Ethnic Nepalis all enjoy the same status in India, whether they are Indian nationals or citizens of Nepal. Those who are Indian nationals cannot easily prove their citizenship when the Treaty makes no distinction between them and Nepalese nationals. The reciprocal nature of the Treaty is also problematic: if the government of Nepal takes steps to limit the rights of Indians in Nepal, as it tried to do in 1989, Indian Nepalis feel vulnerable. Although they may have been Indian citizens for generations, their status in India is still dependent upon Nepalese government policies, in which they have no say whatsoever.

In northeastern states such as Meghalaya and Mizoram, the need for a Restricted Area Permit caused Indian Nepalis great problems, perhaps because most were assumed to be Nepalese unless they could prove otherwise. In the course of *bhūmiputra* ('sons of the soil') movements, between 13,000 and 17,000 were expelled from Meghalaya in 1980–86,²⁵ 8,000 from Mizoram in 1967, 2,000 from Manipur in 1980, and thousands fled from Assam after 1979. Nepalis were also expelled in sizable numbers from Burma during the 1960s.²⁶ Legal arguments are advanced to justify the various expulsions of Nepalis from north-east India and Bhutan, but in practice they have often occurred on a purely ethnic basis. The Bhutanese government claims that those being expelled from the south of the kingdom are illegal residents according to citizenship laws promulgated in 1958, 1977, and 1985, and that they have been identified as such by a census operation which began in 1988. The exiled Lhotshampas complain that this last act has been implemented retroactively, expelling many who had been granted

full citizenship between 1958 and 1985.²⁷ Refugee statements suggest that in practice many were driven from their homes without any reference to their status or non-status as citizens, because they were suspected of having supported or participated in anti-government demonstrations in September and October 1990.²⁸

The simple fact of the matter is that a Newar or a Limbu born in Darjeeling, Bhutan, or Assam will always be considered 'Nepali', even if he or she adopts the label 'Gorkha' or 'Lhotshampa', just as a Bihari or a Marwari who has no home other than Kathmandu will always be considered 'Indian'. Throughout this century, Indian Nepalis have struggled to forge an identity for themselves that distinguishes them from the Nepalese of Nepal, so that they might emerge as a distinct ethnic group within India for, as Ronen has remarked in a more general Third World context, "ethnic identity [during the 1960s] had become an organizational form, a weapon, a tool, and/or a means for the attainment of goals" (Thompson and Ronen, 1986: 6).

THE STATUS OF THE NEPALI LANGUAGE

The long-standing campaign for the inclusion of Nepali in the 8th Schedule of the Indian Constitution came to fruition on 20 August 1992. It had many antecedents: first there came a modest demand for the approval of Nepali as the medium of instruction in Darjeeling schools, achieved at primary level in 1927. Next, the demand was for the adoption of Nepali as an official language in Darjeeling. In 1958, the West Bengal Official Languages Bill opted for Bengali as sole language: this led to widespread protests in the hills and, after an inquiry, Nepali was included as an additional language for the three hill subdivisions, though implementation was delayed until 1971.

The first explicit demand for the inclusion of Nepali in the 8th Schedule was made in 1956. The precise status of the languages included in the Schedule, and the criteria for their selection, are still somewhat unclear. The Schedule originally listed 14 languages,²⁹ to which Sindhi was added in 1967, and is appended to articles 344(1)

and 351 of Part XVII of the Indian Constitution, headed "Official Language". The languages of the 8th Schedule have been described in various ways at different times. According to Article 351, they are "languages of India" and "sources of enrichment" for the national language, Hindi. According to Article 344 (1), they can be used, on the president's recommendation, in High Courts and the Supreme Court. They have been described as "national languages", "regional languages", and "languages that need to be developed". Most significantly, perhaps, a resolution was adopted in 1967 which called for the coordinated development of all 8th Schedule languages, and prescribed that they be allowed as alternative media for All-India and higher central service examinations (Munshi and Chakrabarti, 1979: 704). The criteria governing the inclusion of a language in the 8th Schedule do not appear to include the number of its speakers: according to the 1971 Census of India, there were 1,372,000 speakers of Sindhi (which received constitutional recognition in 1967), but 1,419,000 speakers of Nepali.

A delegation of the Akhil Bharatiya Nepali Bhasha Samiti (All-India Nepali Language Committee) met the Indian Prime Minister, Moraji Desai, in September 1977, asking for the inclusion of Nepali on the grounds that it represented "the long-cherished aspiration of over five million Indians with Nepali as their mother-tongue" who suffered from a "sense of insecurity" because of its exclusion from the Schedule. The delegation's communication argued that the inclusion of Nepali would bring about "the development of a linguistic minority" and "emotional integration", and pointed out that the same demand had been supported by 74 MPs in 1971, and now had the backing of the state governments of West Bengal and Sikkim. However, Desai was opposed to any move to extend the 8th Schedule: referring to Nepali as a "foreign language", he argued that its inclusion would set a precedent for scores of tribal languages (Munshi and Chakrabarti, 1979: 705). The campaign for Nepali subsequently became more strident, but its success in 1992 was probably attributable to the election of a more pro-Indian government in Kathmandu, and to Indian hopes that the inclusion of Nepali would prompt a reciprocal move with respect to Hindi on the part of the Nepalese government, as was

being demanded by the Tarai-based Nepal Sadbhavana Party. According recognition to 'Nepali' rather than to 'Gorkhali' also deepened the rift that already existed between the troublesome GNLFF leader, Subhas Ghising, who had been pushing for the recognition of 'Gorkhali', and the chief minister of Sikkim, Nar Bahadur Bhandari, who had argued the case of 'Nepali'. Such a rift is in the interests of the central government (Datta-Ray, 1992).³⁰

THE SEARCH FOR A HOME WITHIN INDIA

We came here looking for a place where we could see the Himalaya clearly. Now we don't want to go anywhere else. All of us should have a house where we can open the window each morning and look at the Himalaya ... Wherever we go we will take this land with us, wrapped up in little bundles (Indra Bahadur Rai in Hutt, 1991a: 263).

The ethno-political movement of the Indian Nepalis dates back more than 80 years, but it remained largely non-violent until 1986. At first it involved a loose alliance of ethnic groups – 'hillpeople' (Nepalis, Bhotiyas, and Lepchas) united by a common lingua franca and a shared sense of economic and political disadvantage. However, as the movement progressed, it came to be dominated by Nepalis who called themselves 'Gorkhas', and the other factions were marginalized.

The first demand for a "separate administrative set-up" for Darjeeling was put before the government in 1907, and similar demands were made again in 1919 and 1929, inspired by the Home Rule movement. Economic considerations precluded any concessions on the part of the government. In ca. 1917 the Gorkha-dominated Hillmen's Association was formed and the common cause of the various hill communities came under increasing strain. The association's sole Bhotiya member, Laden La, opposed the introduction of Nepali as the medium of primary school instruction in 1927, and in 1934 the Association's demand for an "independent



FIGURE 6 *Indra Bahadur Rai, a leading Nepali writer in Darjeeling (Michael Hutt)*

administrative unit” made reference only to the “problems of the Gurkha population”. In an attempt to bring the hill communities together again, Laden La called a mass meeting in Darjeeling in 1934, which created the Hill People’s Union. The Union began the publication of a celebrated Nepali monthly entitled *Nebulā* (i.e.

Ne-B[b]u-Lā: Nepali, Bhutia, Lāpche) in February 1935 (Adhikari, 1975: 145).³¹ In the early 1980s, the Gorkhaland National Liberation Front (GNLF) attempted to revive the spirit of *Nebulā* with slogans such as *lāpche, bhutiyā nepālī, hāmī sabai gorkhālī* (“Lepcha, Bhutia, Nepali – we are all Gorkhali”), but by then the Gorkhas’ dominance was too well-established, and the Lepchas and Bhotiyas too disenchanted (Subba, 1992: 66).

The All-India Gorkha League (AIGL) was founded in Dehra Dun in 1923, and replaced the Hillmen’s Association in Darjeeling in 1943. Its mouthpiece was the monthly *Gorkhā*, and in 1949 it launched the most concerted campaign so far for a separate province, tabling several options all called *Uttarakhand*. These options ranged from separate status for Darjeeling alone to separate status for a region that included Darjeeling, Sikkim, and a portion of the Dooars and Siliguri lowlands. The Uttarakhand movement struck a chord in the public imagination, and was widely discussed and supported throughout the hills. But the anti-Rana uprising in Nepal distracted the attention of its proponents and by 1955, when the West Bengal Congress Committee addressed the issue, the regional scene had changed irrevocably and the movement’s leaders had faded away.

Communism was established as a political force in Darjeeling during the 1940s: at first the Communist Party of India (CPI) collaborated with the AIGL, but later delinked from it and began to campaign among the exploited workers on the tea estates. The utopian and impracticable demand for a ‘greater Nepal’ or ‘Gorkhasthan’ comprising Nepal, southern Sikkim, and Darjeeling was first raised by the CPI in 1947. The spectre of ‘greater Nepal’ still inspires fear in Bhutan, and has also been raised by the GNLF leader Subhas Ghising, a staunch anti-communist, who claimed in 1993 that a campaign for a ‘greater Nepal’ was being coordinated by the Communist opposition in Kathmandu and the CPI(M) in West Bengal. The claim was flatly denied by the Nepalese Communist leader Man Mohan Adhikari (Chaudhuri, 1991; Dixit, 1993).³²

The demand for separate statehood for Darjeeling and the Dooars area of Jalpaiguri was pressed more systematically after the establishment of the Pranta Parishad and the GNLF in 1980 and

the Swatantra Manch in 1985. Between May 1986 and December 1988, the Gorkhaland movement involved extreme violence and the total disruption of everyday life in the hill districts of West Bengal. Violence took place between the nationalists ('Gorkhas') of the GNLF and the communists ('Nepalis') of the CPI(M); between the GNLF and the security forces (especially the Central Reserve Police Force); and between rival factions within the GNLF itself. Total casualty figures are difficult to establish, but it is generally believed that about 200 people died during the two and half years of violence, of whom 50–60 were police personnel.

The GNLF's central demands were made in a meeting between Subhas Ghising and Rajiv Gandhi on July 22 1987. They were: the abrogation of article 7 of the Indo-Nepal Treaty; the creation of a separate state of Gorkhaland within the framework of the Indian Constitution; the establishment of an "Indian Gorkha" regiment and the cessation of recruitment of Indian Nepalis into the 'agreement regiments';³³ and the inclusion of the 'Gorkhali' language in the 8th Schedule (Timsina, 1992: 97–98). Settlement of these demands was delayed and complicated by the strained relations which existed between the Left Front government of West Bengal and the central Congress (I) government in Delhi. Both used the Gorkhaland agitation as a stick with which to beat the other on numerous occasions. Tripartite talks were held in Delhi in January 1987, but final agreement was not reached until July 1988. On August 22 1988 an accord on the creation of a Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council was signed in Calcutta, and a "notification on citizenship issues" was signed in Delhi the following day. The GNLF had agreed to drop its demand for a separate state "in the overall national interest", and had settled for a 42-member Council, consisting of 28 elected members and 14 state government nominees, to administer the hill subdivisions of Darjeeling, Kalimpong, and Kurseong, and a section of Siliguri subdivision. In polling on December 13 1988, the GNLF won 26 of the electable seats, and on January 7 1989 the State announced its nominees, 13 of whom were CPI(M) members.

The "notification on citizenship" was not an abrogation of the 1950 Treaty, but underlined the rights of "certain classes of persons commonly known as Gorkhas" to citizenship by virtue of

(a) domicile in India as of 26 January 1950 (the date of the commencement of the Constitution), (b) ordinary residence for a minimum of five years before that date, (c) birth in India, and (d) birth of either parent in India (Subba, 1992: 269–270). The Hill Council and the citizenship notification were the Gorkhaland movement's two principal achievements, and both represented compromises. Their attainment demolished much of Darjeeling's economy, and disillusioned many of the movement's supporters. The violence of the movement itself may also have played a major part in convincing the Bhutanese government that its Nepali population was a political liability.

THE NEPALIZATION OF SIKKIM

It has today become a commonplace to assert that Sikkim's loss of sovereignty and merger with India were direct consequences of the emergence of a Nepali-speaking majority in the former kingdom. It therefore becomes axiomatic that Bhutan has lessons to learn from the experience of Sikkim. But although many parallels undoubtedly exist between the two demographic and political situations, there are also important differences. First, it is abundantly clear that Sikkim's Nepali majority is not of recent origin. Sinha (1975: 10) presents census data showing that Nepalis formed just over 50% of the total population of 30,458 in 1891, and 75–80% of the total population of 109,808 in 1931. Of the three main ethnic groups (Nepali, Bhutia, Lepcha), the Bhutias formed the smallest element. After an Indian intervention in 1949, the interests of the two minority groups were safeguarded by labyrinthine electoral conventions designed to maintain "parity" between the Nepalis on the one hand and the Bhutias and Lepchas on the other. In elections to the Sikkim Assembly in 1953, the candidate securing the highest number of votes from the ethnic group he represented had also to secure at least 15% of the votes of one other community. If he failed in this, a runner-up from his own community who *had* secured 15% of the votes of another ethnic group could be elected. The Assembly comprised six Nepali seats

and six Bhutia-Lepcha seats, and the electoral process for each half of the House was different (Rao, 1978: 17). That these arrangements were unpopular among the Nepali leaders is unsurprising. But other factors that have little to do with ethnicity also help to explain the apparent paradox of 14 April 1975, when the people of Sikkim voted by a huge majority to merge their state with India.

Here, the personalities of the principal players in the drama seem to have been crucial. Rustomji's account focuses upon the author's long friendship with the last Chogyal, Palden Thondup Namgyal: the two men had known one another since their schooldays, and Rustomji acted for the Government of India as the Dewan in Gangtok from 1954–9. Nonetheless, Rustomji levels the occasional criticism. He observes that "[the then Crown Prince's] nostalgia for the traditional values of the Sikkim of his fathers gave rise to an apprehension amongst the Nepalese that they were not only not wanted in Sikkim but that they would be denied full citizen rights" (Rustomji, 1987: 42). Later, he argues, "even amongst the Nepalese [in 1973] the desideratum was not, perhaps, merger so much as the clipping of the ruler's wings, and their vote was, in effect, a vote for a more democratic form of government as against an absolute monarchy" (*ibid.*: 150). B. S. Das, the Indian government's Chief Executive in Sikkim from April 1973 to September 1974, mentions the Chogyal more caustically, but his account is more important for the light it sheds on the Indian government's view of the situation. In Delhi, he was advised, "[d]o not allow the Chogyal to get on top again. We will never get a second chance like this" (Das, 1983: 2–3). In general, Das treats the Bhutia elite's nationalist aspirations with almost open contempt, and one assumes that this reflects the attitude of the Government of India at the time.

Discontent with the political situation in Sikkim does not appear to have been confined to the Nepali community. Das records that he was approached by a group of Lepcha leaders in May 1973; the Lepchas informed him that they supported the idea of a merger with India because "having suffered under Bhutia rule for centuries" they would become "second class citizens" in a Nepali-dominated Sikkim (Das, 1983: 28–9). It is also significant that the Sikkim

Congress, which won all but one of the 32 seats in the Sikkim Assembly in April 1974, was dominated by Kazi Lhendup Dorji, a Bhutia Lepcha with a Belgian wife, not by a Nepali.

Sikkim today is a Nepali-dominated state of India. Several historical questions remain unanswered. For instance, would Sikkim now be the world's smallest independent, sovereign state if there had been no Nepali immigration? The most one can say is that this is doubtful; none the less, the notion has gained general acceptance, and, along with the legacy of the Gorkhaland movement, exercises a powerful influence on government policies in Bhutan.

BHUTAN AND THE NEPALI DIASPORA

Bhutan's Nepali-speaking population remained politically quiescent until Indian independence sent shock-waves through the neighbouring states. It is significant that the late 1940s and early 1950s saw the creation of Nepali-led reformist or revolutionary groups in Nepal, Sikkim, and Bhutan. In 1952, the Bhutan State Congress was formed across the Indian border in Assam. The Congress membership was entirely Nepali: its programme was aimed initially at improving the lot of peasant farmers in the south, but later it called for a broader democratization of the Bhutanese government. On March 22 1954 Bhutan witnessed what was probably its first ever public political demonstration, but the 100 or so marchers were promptly expelled from the country by the militia. The Bhutan State Congress had no support whatsoever in the north, where modern political concepts remained unknown, and probably very little support in the south either, where a largely uneducated peasantry had no wish to endanger its right to continue to till highly productive lands.³⁴ Moreover, the Congress adopted the flag of the Indian National Congress, with a *vajra* replacing the Indian spinning-wheel (Sinha, 1991: 180). Within Bhutan, it can hardly have been forgotten that the Shabdrung, the reincarnate monk-ruler whose position in the affairs of state was eclipsed when the first Druk Gyalpo was crowned in 1907, had sent his brother to meet Mahatma Gandhi in India in 1931 to seek support for the

restoration of his temporal powers (Sinha, 1991: 150–2). As a result, the Shabdrung was confined to his monastery and died there in suspicious circumstances six months later. The Nepali activists' alliance with the Indian National Congress, a party that was perceived to have marked anti-monarchical tendencies, at a time when Bhutan's first concern was to remain distinct from India, made their demands anathema. The party submitted a petition to Jawarharlal Nehru when he visited Bhutan in 1958, and continued to issue statements from Siliguri in West Bengal, but became inactive in 1969 when its leaders were granted an amnesty and permitted to return to Bhutan.

The abortive State Congress campaign may have been taken as a warning, nevertheless, for the Bhutanese government's attitude to southern Bhutan changed noticeably thereafter. During the reign of King Jigme Dorji Wangchuk (1952–72), the administrative system was reformed substantially. A partially-elected Tshogdu (National Assembly) was established in 1953, Bhutan's first Five-Year Plan was inaugurated in 1961, and great efforts were made to encourage the Nepali-speaking southerners to identify with the nation. The most important event in this process was the passing of legislation in 1958 which granted citizenship and land tenure to the entire southern population, and decreed that the Bhutanese Nepalis should thereafter be referred to as 'Lhotshampas'. A significant feature of the 1958 Citizenship Act was the extent to which local officials were empowered to grant citizenship certificates: Bhutanese nationality could be granted by "an official appointed by His Majesty" to people over the age of majority who owned agricultural land and had lived in Bhutan for over ten years, and to the wives of Bhutanese nationals. Some clarificatory amendments were made to the Act in 1977, but its basic principles remained in force until 1985.

Lhotshampas were also guaranteed some measure of political representation: in 1990 the 158-seat National Assembly had 16 Lhotshampa members, the ten-member Royal Advisory Council as constituted in 1977 must have one Lhotshampa representative, and the six judges of the High Court, established in 1975, must include a Lhotshampa (Sinha, 1991: 190, 191, 197, 202). The Lhotshampa population could study Nepali and Sanskrit in southern schools,

despite the official policy of promoting Dzongkha as the national language, and intermarriage between northerners and southerners was for several years encouraged by financial inducements.³⁵ The government's policy of educating its southern population and absorbing Lhotshampas into the administration met with considerable success: by 1992, 1188 Bhutanese held qualifications ranging from Bachelor's degrees to doctorates; 450 of these were southern Bhutanese (RGB, 1992: 59). By 1990, 39% of all Bhutanese civil servants were Lhotshampas (*Kuensel* 2/11/91).

It is probably too early to state with any finality why it was that relations between the Nepali-speaking southern population and the Bhutanese government soured during the late 1980s, though it is clearly apparent that the trend towards integrative policies outlined above was suddenly reversed. The government's oft-repeated explanation is that this was due to the detection, during a census operation that began in 1988, of massive numbers of illegal immigrants. It should be borne in mind that the census did not appear to have as its objective an enumeration of the inhabitants of Bhutan in the way that censuses of India and Nepal do, but aimed simply to "identify Bhutanese nationals", and therefore also non-nationals, and apparently only in southern Bhutan. The new criteria for citizenship enshrined in the 1985 Citizenship Act of Bhutan represented a major revision of the 1958 legislation – but according to many refugees this would not have presented a problem for the vast majority of southern Bhutanese, who could prove their residence in Bhutan during or before the alleged 'cut-off' year of 1958. The source of the political problem in southern Bhutan, and the resulting refugee crisis, seems to have been the manner in which the code of dress and etiquette known as Driglam Namzhag was introduced in the South, and the Lhotshampas' reaction to it. This led to a hardening of government attitudes as dissident organizations began to grow in centres such as Sherubtse College (the Students' Union of Bhutan) and the National Institute of Education in Samchi (People's Forum for Human Rights), and with the formation in June 1990 of the Bhutan People's Party across the border in India. After these organizations launched very large public demonstrations all across southern Bhutan in September and

October 1990, submitting 13 wide-ranging demands for civil rights, cultural safeguards, and political reforms, the Bhutanese government reacted strongly against all dissidents, whom it could now characterize as 'anti-nationals' or *ngolops* in terms of its own laws on treason. The flow of refugees began in late 1990 and reached a peak in May 1991 with 11,000 new arrivals in camps in southeast Nepal (Hutt, 1993).

Clearly, the existence of the refugee camps, and also of influential and articulate critics in Kathmandu, threatens the system of government that has developed in Bhutan since its political unification in 1616. Whether or not the presence of a large, culturally unintegrated population of Nepali-speakers in southern Bhutan represented an equal threat is perhaps a moot point. It is unlikely that the government of Bhutan foresaw what would result from its attempt to effect the "internal cohesion and external distinction" (Haugen, 1966) of its culture, but it is clear from the record of the 68th session of the National Assembly debate in 1989 that its "one nation, one people" policies were directed principally at the Nepali population:

[The Deputy Home Minister] explained that this subject assumed particular significance since some of our ways and practices were identical to the customs and traditions prevailing in other countries and *some of our people tend to identify more closely with the people of other countries*. In a large country, such diversity would have added colour and character to its national heritage without affecting national security. However, in a small country like ours it would adversely affect the growth of social harmony and unity among the people. The Government has, for these reasons, promulgated a policy to promote Driglam Namzha, National Dress and Language among our people. He emphasized that the successful implementation of this policy is vital for the promotion of our national identity. The Deputy Minister said that His Majesty's KASHO clearly states that the dress or the customs of the people living in the north need not necessarily comprise the basis for promoting our national identity. What is imperative he



FIGURE 7 *Woman and child, Khudanabari Bhutanese refugee camp, Jhapa, southeast Nepal, February 1995 (Michael Hutt)*

said, was that a small country such as Bhutan should have a distinct national identity that would always stand as a proud and common symbol of strength to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of the people and sovereignty of the nation (RGB, 1989: res. no. 3; emphasis added).



FIGURE 8 *A 59-year-old former member of Bhutan's National Assembly who now lives in Sanishchare Bhutanese refugee camp in the Morang district of southeast Nepal. He wears the Bhutanese national dress that became compulsory throughout Bhutan in 1989 (Michael Hutt)*

Herein lies the notion that a country as small as Bhutan cannot afford cultural diversity within its borders. But radical integrative measures such as those adopted in Bhutan are rarely

based on purely cultural considerations: the political and economic implications of the southerners' cross-border identification must also be significant here. The people who "tend to identify more closely with the people of other countries" can be no other than the Nepali Bhutanese. Many of the "people of other countries" are of course Nepalis in the diaspora communities, whose political activities in India and Sikkim are matters of concern to the Bhutanese. The fact that the Bhutanese bureaucracy contained a growing number of Lhotshampa officials and that the South produced most of Bhutan's cashcrops and hydro-electric power must also have increased the government's sense of vulnerability.

CONCLUSION

It is significant that rifts in the diaspora community have until very recently tended to occur along political lines, and between the various segments of the diaspora, although the growth of ethnic movements and political parties in Nepal since 1990 has been mirrored to some extent in the diaspora, and particularly in Sikkim. With the establishment of the Gorkha Hill Council and the Nepali domination, both numerical and political, of Sikkim, the Nepali diaspora communities have become more secure inside India. The future status of Nepali-speakers in Bhutan will depend in large part upon the outcome of negotiations over the return of refugees between the governments of Bhutan and Nepal. The unity of the Nepali/Gorkha diaspora community remains compromised although its members are often objects of suspicion throughout the northeastern reaches of the subcontinent. Dixit points out that "[U]ntil the Lhotshampas emerged as refugees, there seem to have been very few political links between them and the Nepalis of Nepal. If there is any place where there is a feeling for being 'Nepali' today, however, it is in the refugee camps of Jhapa" (Dixit, 1993: 17). He also suggests that "a serious move towards Greater Nepal would have to have its origins in the targeting and humiliation of Nepali-speakers from all over, on an extreme scale, *for being Nepali-speakers*" (*ibid.*: 19), but notes that the

expulsions and evictions of Nepalis from various Indian states in the past did not provoke any kind of pan-Nepali response. Indeed, the strongest protests against India's absorption of Sikkim emanated from public demonstrations on the streets of Kathmandu (Das, 1983: 59; Rustomji, 1987: 110–11). The final question raised by 'being Nepali without Nepal' is the responsibility that should be assumed by Nepal itself. Curiously, although they may never have resided in Nepal themselves, it is usually to that country that Nepali-speaking refugees come to seek sanctuary, whether they have come from Meghalaya, Manipur, or Bhutan, and Nepal has usually accepted them. Ultimately, being Nepali without Nepal has often proved impossible, and the diaspora's bond with the motherland, however tenuous it may be, is often renewed in times of crisis.

NOTES

This Chapter has grown from a paper on the Nepali diaspora that was first presented to a workshop on the 'Concept of Race in South Asia' at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, in 1992, and shortly afterwards at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology in Oxford. The paper in its present form was also presented to a seminar at the CNRS, Aix-en-Provence, in July 1994. My thanks to Lionel Caplan, David Gellner, Pratyoush Onta, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, Françoise Pommaret, Keith Sprigg, Tanka Subba, and John Whelpton for advice, suggestions, and comments on earlier drafts.

- ¹ Both definitions are suggested by Malcolm Yapp in his introductory essay to Taylor and Yapp (1979: 5).
- ² Other novels that deal with similar themes are Lainsingh Baāngdel's *Muluk Bāhira* ('Outside the Country', 1948), Rudrarāj Pānde's *Prāyashcīt* ('The Penance', 1938) and Kshetrī's later *Brahmaputrakā Cheuchāu* ('On the Banks of the Brahmaputra') for which Kshetrī received an award from the Sahitya Akademi in 1987. Kshetrī reviews and discusses these novels in an article in *Samkālīn Sābhitya* 9 (Māgh-Chait 2049), pp. 34–45, Kathmandu 1993.
- ³ My translation of this story is published in *Himal*, May–June 1993, pp. 14–15.

- ⁴ Pradhan (1982: 6 and 1991: 69) mentions the unpublished "History of Sikkim", compiled "by the lamas of Pemiongchi" and salvaged and translated by members of the royal family of Sikkim in 1908. In this, Pradhan claims, it is stated that the Tibetans had to subdue Lepcha and Magar villages in order to establish control over Sikkim in the seventeenth century. He also repeats Joseph Hooker's claim (*Himalayan Journals*, 1848) that the Magars were indigenous to Sikkim, but had been displaced by the Lepchas (1982: 5). The 'History' is also referred to by Chie Nakane (1966), whose article is discussed below.
- ⁵ My thanks to Keith Sprigg for his help in thinking through the connotations of this term, and my apologies for differing with him in my conclusion.
- ⁶ The figure of 10 million was mentioned to me in interviews with His Majesty King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, the Home Minister Lyonpo Dago Tshering, and the Foreign Minister Lyonpo Dawa Tsering during a visit to Thimphu in September 1992. It is also cited in Shaw (1994) and Rose (1993).
- ⁷ A figure of 52% is given in Pradhan (1992: 1) while a figure of 64% is cited by Chaudhuri (1991). The likelihood of Chaudhuri's figure being accurate is put in serious doubt by the fact that he believes the total population of Bhutan to be "2.46 million"!
- ⁸ I use the word 'emigrated' cautiously here. It should be borne in mind that for many such people the distance involved would have been only a few score miles, at a time when nations were less clearly conceptualized and national boundaries less clearly demarcated than they are today.
- ⁹ Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, 'Lotteries as social order: Nepalese peasants as night watchmen in Bangalore, South India', Himalayan Forum seminar, SOAS, London, November 9, 1992. See also Pfaff-Czarnecka (1993b).
- ¹⁰ The first Bhutia ruler of Sikkim was called the *Chös-rgyal* (lit., 'king of religion') but this title appears to have fallen into disuse during the British colonial period. The ruler of Sikkim was more commonly known as the 'Maharaja' until March 1965, when Palden Thondup Namgyal (who had succeeded his father two years earlier) was crowned *Chös-rgyal* and the queen became the *Gyalmo* (Rao, 1978: 22–3).
- ¹¹ Sikkim's gift of Darjeeling to the British was probably extracted rather than bestowed (see Pinn, 1986: 119–129).
- ¹² However, Pradhan (1982: 20) states that the first commercial tea estate, the Alubari Kaman, opened in 1856.

- ¹³ The Bhotiyas (also called Bhutia or, in Sikkim, Lhori) of Darjeeling and Sikkim are people of Tibetan stock who have inhabited the district for generations, and are distinct from the 'Tibetans' (*bod-pa*, *khams-pa*), most of whom settled there after the Chinese invasion of Tibet in the 1950s. Nakane (1966: 215 fn. 5) suggests that the Bhutia immigration into Sikkim began during the sixteenth century.
- ¹⁴ The Bhutan government's case rests on three arguments: (1) because English has been the medium of education in Bhutan since 1961, the need for schoolchildren to study a third language in the south put them at a disadvantage; (2) Nepali is only one of many languages spoken in Bhutan and is, moreover, the national language of a foreign country; (3) new curricular materials could not be produced in Nepali in line with the New Approach to Primary Education programme, for reasons of cost (Thinley, 1994).
- ¹⁵ In this regard, see Macdonald (1975). Lionel Caplan has examined relations between the Limbus of Ilam district and the Brahmans who have settled there since its incorporation into the Nepalese state (Caplan, 1970).
- ¹⁶ A table reproduced by Timsina (1992: 55) demonstrates that hillpeople comprise 25% of the clerical staff and lower cadre officers in the Darjeeling forest department administration, but 85% of the menials, e.g. orderlies, drivers, watchmen, etc.
- ¹⁷ The number of tourists visiting Darjeeling per annum declined from 115,000 in 1985 to 5,000 in 1988 and the number of unemployed youths was estimated in 1986 to be 65,000 (Subba, 1992: 65). See also Shakya (1991).
- ¹⁸ Des Chene (1991: 174–5) is probably right to assume that the vast majority of British Gurkha soldiers had their homes in Nepal, not in India, during the 1930s, and that this explained their reluctance to join with "ex-Gurkhas who urged them to join the Indian nationalist cause [who] came from families settled for several generations in India". This situation changed when the demand for soldiers expanded after 1939; and in any case 'martial Gurkhas' were probably as available in the Darjeeling hills by 1930 as they were in Nepal proper.
- ¹⁹ The Arms Act of 1878 permitted the use of the *khukri* for ritual, domestic, and military purposes.
- ²⁰ In interviews with eight Nepali-speaking farmers in Damphu, in the southern Bhutanese district of Chirang, on 16/9/92, I established that all were second or third-generation Bhutanese residents; only one had visited Nepal, on a pilgrimage to the temple of Pashupati. Of the fifteen elderly Bhutanese refugees I interviewed in Beldangi and Sanishchare refugee camps in Jhapa, Nepal, in February 1995, eleven knew that their grandfathers had emigrated from Nepal.
- ²¹ John Claude White in ca. 1893; quoted in Sinha (1991: 29).
- ²² Charles Bell, in 1904; quoted in Sinha (1991: 38).
- ²³ Capt. C. J. Morris, in 1932; quoted in Sinha (1991: 39).
- ²⁴ Basil Gould, Political Officer in Sikkim, in 1938; quoted in Sinha (1991: 171–2).
- ²⁵ Newspaper reports in Nepal in 1990 claimed that about 60,000 Nepalis had been forced out of Meghalaya since 1987 (*Gorkhapatra* 16–17 July 1990, quoted in *Nepal Press Digest* 34.30, 23/7/90).
- ²⁶ Pratyoush Onta maintains that a number of Nepalis were recruited by the British for the Burma Police, and that others arrived there as a part of the general north-easterly drift of population through Assam (personal communication, April 1994).
- ²⁷ A strange feature of the continuing war of words between exiled southern Bhutanese dissidents and the Bhutan government is the way in which both sides regularly reproduce the texts of the Bhutanese citizenship acts of 1958, 1977, and 1985 to buttress their own arguments. The Harvard lawyer David Thronson (1993: 8) has remarked, "The laws of Bhutan and its neighbors do not form a seamless web and the combination creates vast potential for statelessness. For one simple example, Nepali citizenship by descent comes through the father, as was the case in Bhutan's laws until 1985. Now that Bhutan requires both parents to be Bhutanese, the children of Bhutanese fathers and Nepali mothers are apparently citizens of neither state."
- ²⁸ Testimonies by refugees have been published in S. K. Pradhan (1992); SAARC Jurists (1992); AHURA BHUTAN (1993); Amnesty International (1992, 1994), and elsewhere.
- ²⁹ These were: Assamese, Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Kashmiri, Malayalam, Marathi, Oriya, Punjabi, Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, and Urdu.
- ³⁰ The bill on the recognition of Nepali apparently includes a rider clause which allows the use of the name 'Gorkha bhasa' in the Darjeeling Gorkha Hill Council area. See Josse (1992: 11).
- ³¹ 'Lepcha' is a English corruption of the Nepali term *lāpche*. *Nebulā* became *Parivartan* ('Change') after its first twelve issues. Both *Nebulā* and *Parivartan* published essays arguing for social unity and communal uplift.
- ³² Dixit examines the 'likely conspirators' for Greater Nepal – the Nepali state, the Sikkimese state, and the Lhotshampas of Bhutan—and

concludes that “[W]hile a large portion of the population is able to appreciate the cultural attributes of Nepaliness, the feeling does not go deep enough to emerge as a movement for Greater Nepal anytime soon.”

³³ The ‘agreement regiments’ are those covered by the 1947 tripartite agreement on British and Indian recruitment from Nepal.

³⁴ There are brief accounts of the Bhutan State Congress agitation in Sinha (1991: 179–81) and Rose (1977: 109–15). See also D. B. Gurung (1960).

³⁵ The incentive, termed *soelray*, amounted to Nu. 5,000 when introduced, and was increased to Nu. 10,000 by the 68th session of the National Assembly (Tshogdu) in 1989. However, it was abolished by the 69th session in the following year (*Kuensel* 29/3/90, 2/11/91).

PART TWO