

## RESEARCH NOTE

### THE FLUIDITY OF ETHNICITY: THE CASE OF NEPALI AND NEWAR IDENTITY IN THE UNITED STATES

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#### Introduction

I have been searching for the true meaning of exactly what it means to be a Newar. Who is a true Newar? Just with a last name alone can we justify our claim to be a Newar? It is just me who is searching for the true meaning of Newarism? Or is it just a mid-life crisis I am going through? Well, I have to confess that I don't know too much about our Newa culture or heritage. I was born in a Maharjan family, but my parents did not speak Newari that much. ... Actually I learned more Newar words and things about Newar culture after I came to America .... I don't even know who the most famous Newar poets, artists and writers are. I know that Newars are supposed to be the most educated group in Kathmandu, but why is our culture losing value, traditions and ideals? As we look around, many nationalities and groups have their own cultural traditions. They promote their country, language, culture and tradition, but Newar people are lagging in this area. Well, our generation did not have the opportunity to learn the Newari language, because when we were in school it was not required. Many of us can hardly read and write. Many of our traditions have been through special gatherings. If we want to make it ever lasting in this culture, we need to have practical experience rather than just being a mere observer. (Maharjan, jinewa.html)

The above quote was taken from an article entitled "*Ji Newa? Am I Newar?*" written by Dr. Tulsi Maharjan. Maharjan is the president of *Nepa Pāsā Pucha*, a Newar based cultural organization founded in order to preserve and promote the Newar culture in the United States. Maharjan represents a confused Nepali-American who is struggling to maintain his identity as a Newar in the United States. The piece from the article brings to the surface some of the major issues that are relevant to the following paper. The confusion that he has encountered coming to the United States supports the notion of a shifting character of ethnicity. It shows that the boundaries of an ethnic group may vary depending on the individual, the situation, and context. Maharjan is rethinking the boundaries of his ethnic identity as a

Newar after coming to the United States. He has developed a greater awareness of his ethnicity in a place outside of Nepal. Ethnicity is an ambiguous concept that is culturally constructed. It may involve language, religion, caste, nationality and other elements of identity. Also, the relative importance of the factors constituting ethnicity may shift within different contexts. Maharjan, in his piece, has defined Newar ethnicity in terms of language, culture, tradition, literature, art. All of the above categories, he claims, are important in determining Newar identity and ethnicity. He is questioning whether his ethnic identity can be determined by his last name alone or whether there is something more to it. Certainly, coming to the United States has sharpened his perception of ethnicity and made him think of other ways of defining his ethnicity, that is different from his homeland. This change in his perception of ethnicity suggests a dynamic nature of the term.

The concept of ethnicity changed depending on the situation and context as it is the people in the society who define the boundaries of ethnicity. In a situation such as that of immigrants, they are attempting to create an ethnicity for themselves in a place away from their homeland. The people themselves create this new sense of identity by talking about these notions and setting boundaries for themselves, just as Maharjan has done for himself in the article that he has written. Maharjan's identification of the various categories, such as language, religion, nationality, tradition, in determining Newar ethnicity also shows that ethnicity is a very broad category inclusive of many different characteristics. Once again these characteristics may change depending on the context. Especially in an immigrant situation, the boundaries of ethnicity broaden. Nationality, a very large category, becomes an important aspect of identification. Nationality, which is not an appropriate definition of ethnicity in the homeland, since everybody is of the same nationality, is pronounced in a foreign country. In a place away from one's homeland, one is defined by one's nationality.

In the following paper, I will be looking at the change of ethnicity as it pertains to the Nepali immigrant population in the United States. As will be evident, since the Nepali population here find themselves in a setting wherein they are only one of the many minority groups, the definitions of caste and ethnicity are very different in the United States than in their homeland. As a result, the ethnic and caste differences that are so distinct in Nepal start to disappear in this new environment. A new ethnic group "Nepali" emerges, overwhelming previously important ethnic group or caste identities. However, the case of the Newars in the United States presents an interesting contradiction because their identity rather than merging into the larger Nepali population becomes more salient in this particular context.

### **Profile of the Nepali Immigrants**

The Nepali immigrant population of the United States is very small compared to that of other Asian and South Asian countries. The Nepalese comprise about .05 percent of the total Asian population and about 0.4 of one percent of the total South Asian immigrant population. Nepal has yet to be categorized as a separate nation in the year book of the United States Immigration and Naturalization Service. It is usually lumped together with India (Dhungel 1997: 4). When beginning this research I had a very difficult time finding information on the Nepali immigrant population. Ramesh Dhungel who is writing a thesis on Nepali immigrants states, "The Library's documentation center at the Bureau of the Census of the US Government does not have the most current statistics on Nepalese immigrants as the numbers are insignificant in comparison to the immigrants of other countries (4)."

The total number of Nepalese residing in the United States is estimated to be around 18000. However, only 3000 of them are either permanent residents or naturalized citizens. The remaining Nepalese are only temporary residents who are here either for higher education or for better job opportunities. Almost all of them originally plan on returning to Nepal after retirement. The immigrant population is comprised of various caste and ethnic groups as traditionally defined in the homeland. Numerically, the dominant caste present is of the Bahun-Chettri caste of the Parbatiya ethnic group, since the majority of the people who come to the United States are of this high caste status. They come to the United States as highly educated and technically trained people. The low caste, typically the less educated people, are not able to apply for visas nor are they able to meet the expenses for departure. Thus, the Bahun-Chettri are the largest single group, constituting about forty-five percent of the total Nepali immigrant population. Following that, the second largest group are the Newars who constitute about forty percent. There are a far greater number of Hindu Newars than Buddhist Newars although the percent breakdown is not available. However, it is known that eighty percent of the Nepalese in the United States are Hindu. The people from the Himalayan region constitute about ten percent and the terai region constitute five percent of the total population. In comparison, the Kathmandu region of Nepal consists of forty-four percent Newars, eighteen percent Chettris and fifteen percent Bahuns, and the remaining twenty-two percent include the other ethnic minorities. The numbers are different when considering the population of Nepal as a whole. In Nepal, the Newars are a minority constituting only 5 percent of the population (Dhungel 1997: 4-7).

The Nepalese interviewed for the study were mainly from the New York area and, to a lesser extent, from Boston. When the interview was first conducted the majority were of the bahun caste, followed by a few high caste Hindu Newars. I made a deliberate attempt to interview a few more Buddhist Newars. I was not able to include people of other ethnic groups as they were so few in number and could not easily be found. Among the nine people that were interviewed, four were Hindu Brahmins, four were Buddhist Newars and one was a Hindu Newar. All of the informants are married and are economically well-off. The age of the informants range from the thirties to the sixties. The majority of the informants have been in the United States for over twenty years, except in a few cases where they have only been here for six to eight years. It is often the case that these people initially come to the United States to take advantage of the better education system offered here. Their original intention was to return to their homeland after completing their education. However, in almost all of the cases, after the completion of their education a job opportunity was granted. Realizing that economic conditions are better in the United States than in Nepal, a decision was made to stay several more years. The male informants were either already married or had returned to Nepal to find a suitable marriage partner. The female informants were here because of their husbands (with one exception). Many of the informants are still unsure of what the future holds for them. They all express a desire to return to their country but considering Nepal's living conditions and that their own children have adopted the American lifestyle, they are tempted to remain in the States. Several of the informants have plans to divide their time between the two countries after their retirement.

### **Issues of Caste and Ethnicity**

The complexity of the caste system and ethnic divisions of Nepal was once again clearly evident during the interviews. Discourse on the issues of caste and ethnicity supports the notion that people have contradictions and confusion regarding this subject. From the interviews it becomes evident that one of the advantages of qualitative ethnographic research over quantitative methods is the use of such discourse analysis. It reveals something that surveys are never able to produce. On the surface, specific answers to questions show that caste and ethnic identities are not much of a problem among the Nepali community in the United States. When people are asked whether they feel any discrimination based on their caste and ethnicity, their responses do not include much tension or animosity. However, further discourse analysis of the interviews gives evidence that issues of caste and ethnic identity are as much an issue here as in Nepal,

whether casually or consciously. The way that people talk about this issue becomes an important way of knowing how they feel about the subject. In a situation such as this, among the Nepali immigrants, whose circumstances have changed, the meaning of these terms have become more problematic. Therefore, the way people talk about the terms becomes even more important. It becomes a way to understand how the people are struggling to express their changing new sense of identity and a way for them to construct their identity. By talking about it and expressing their views, they are also creating a world for themselves and other people.

Almost all of the interviews were conducted in English, except in a few cases. However, terms such as "ethnic group" and "caste" were always used in the English language. When the informants were asked for their ethnic group and caste, most of them seemed confused, and gave me varying answers. The way that caste and ethnicity were defined by the respondents was not clear. First of all, they used the terms caste and ethnicity interchangeably. Some respondents identified their caste when asked for ethnicity. This was a common response given by the interviewees in Nepal as well. This uncertainty further illustrates the complexity of the meaning of these terms to the people. It also could be an indication that "ethnicity" may not be the most meaningful term for Nepalese in discussing their identity. In addition, religious affiliation became an important identifying marker for one's caste or ethnicity in the States. Whereas in Nepal, informants did not make use of religion to specify caste or ethnicity. One of my informants used the Nepali categorization of Newars belonging to the Vaishya caste. Some of my informants also perceived ethnicity through American categories. For example one respondent identified himself as belonging to the ethnic group "South Asian". This can be seen as an influence of western classification. In the United States, the Nepalese are categorized from the outside as under the very broad rubric, "South Asian." South Asian immigrants define themselves as a group because they are from the nation-states of South Asia.

Partially as a result of this classification and because of certain shared, general cultural characteristics, South Asians, especially the Indian community, seem for Nepalese much more culturally similar than they would in Nepal. The differences that may have been significant in Nepal seem like similarities in a foreign land. For example, meeting someone from India in the United States makes one feel closer to home and the Indian is classified in the 'us' category whereas in Nepal, the Indian is probably categorized in the 'other' category. In the United States, India seems to be the culture most similar to the Nepali culture. One of my informants (Sita) mentions, "It definitely helps to have a big Indian community because

whenever I have to go shopping for masala (spices) I go the Indian shops. If there are any functions or rituals that need to be performed then we get the priests from the Indian temples." Another interviewee (Hari) says, "They give us a sense of not being far away from home."

Two other informants express their view on the Indian community:

The Indian community is pretty big .... Say for example the Indian market, we can buy so many things we need. If it wasn't for the Indians we will not have those places, places such as Jackson heights, Edison market or Jersey city where we buy several ethnic food or spices or costumes. When we see them because of our cultural similarities and feelings we can get a lot of feedback from them and at times I have found they are quite helpful (Name).

If I meet someone from India right away there is a bond, some kind of a bond I cannot explain it. It's almost like we are from the same country, same place but we are not. I guess it is because our thinking is alike and our culture is similar. I go to Hindu temples sometimes and I often buy spices and various foods I need in the Indian markets because that is the closest I can get to Nepal (Sabitri).

It is clear from their responses that the Nepalese rely on the large and established Indian community, which the Nepalese have not been able to form yet. Also, Savitri mentions that seeing someone from India is almost like seeing someone from Nepal. Therefore, the Indian culture is much more alike in the United States than it would be in Nepal.

Further discourse on identity also showed that "Nepal" was one of the categories used by some to identify their ethnic group. It seems as if coming to the United States has sharpened their conception or notions of ethnicity. Essentially, they have created a new sense of identity after coming to another country. They begin to use the term in a much more inclusive sense. Identity is created in terms of opposition. In Nepal the ethnic group "Newar" was created as a result of an opposition to the dominant group - the Bahun and Chettri. Here, in the case of the Nepali immigrants, there is a change of national context which changes the opposition. The Nepali immigrants are part of a larger category of South Asians. In accordance with the American discourse and category of ethnicity many identify as 'South Asian' or 'Nepali' and use religion as a critical element of identity. These

categories become relevant in the United States, whereas in Nepal there was no such need.

### **The Disappearance of Caste and Ethnic Divisions**

Most of the interviewees agreed that the caste divisions that exist in Nepal do not exist in the United States. In the United States, they are an ethnic community in and of themselves. They are already a small minority, therefore it would be impossible to separate them into further divisions. There seems to be more of an inter-ethnic integration among the Nepalese in the United States than in Nepal. The different sociocultural associations of the Nepali immigrants have enabled this integration. Organizations such as Association of Nepalese in America, America-Nepal Friendship society, Greater Boston Nepali Community, Nepal Forum at Columbia University, Alliance for Democracy and Human Right in Nepal, Nepalese Women's Association have coordinated various activities throughout the years bringing together the Nepalese community ([organiz.html](#)). In addition to these, there are various other organizations. I have listed only the ones of the New York area. All of these organizations are equally inclusive. The only two ethnically based organizations are the United Sherpa society and the *Nepa Pasa Pucha Amerikaye* (Newar based). Through these organizations the Nepalese in America celebrate their social, cultural, and religious festivals. These organizations also publish various newsletters and other publications throughout the year. The differences among caste and ethnic groups that were so prominent in Nepal become similarities in a foreign country. Members of various ethnic groups in Nepal have very little in common with one another, culturally and linguistically. The following quote from an informant mentions this new sense of ethnic identity:

The way that we live here is mostly we belong to our ethnic community and all my friends who are here. With them what happens is the actual daily living we live in our family and we share with the people here and at work, so in respect it does not really matter to me but I still see a very big difference about how we live back in Nepal and how we live out here and it's a different world (Rama).

There is some kind of tension and animosity between different groups in Nepal. I think it is less here than what you see in Nepal. The reason may be in Nepal there area sizable number of people so they can do well on their own but here the Nepalese are a very small minority and again if you start

having these ethnic divisions....you are so small in number and you feel very vulnerable. There is more of a sense of community here, even though once in a while you hear people of certain ethnic groups saying things and there is a segregation in their social life. I don't think it is a major problem here (Krishna).

That (caste) applies much less than it does in Nepal. Here, we as Nepalese come together whereas in Nepal we kind of separate within our own groups. Here, we are much more together. A lot of Nepalese marry one another here. The sense of nearness is here because we live in a foreign land I guess (Hari).

Both Rama and Krishna have used the term "ethnic community" to refer to the Nepali population. They have categorized all Nepalese as a single ethnic group, despite their geographical, linguistic, and ethnic diversity. Language seems to be the unifying force for the group. All of the Nepalese who come to the United States are able to speak Nepali. Their common language unites the people together, as well as sharing a similar background such as their Nepali nationality and culture. Michael Hutt (1997) writes, "The Nepali language is the basis of Nepali ethnic identity outside Nepal; it is the primary basis for self-identification with the Diaspora community (116)." The Newars who have their own language, often speak in their own language whenever they are in the presence of other Newars. They use their unique language as an important marker of solidarity. Other ethnic languages such as Sherpa, Gurung, Tamang are also used by members of those groups. However, many of the ethnic languages, such as Newari, seem to be slowly disappearing in the United States. It is possible that even Nepali fluency will disappear by the next generation due to the smallness of the Nepali community. Most of the second generation Nepalese Americans do not know how to speak Nepali. The possibility of losing Nepali language also depends on the arrival of new immigrants. Rama, Krishna and Hari's responses also suggest that it is not simply being able to speak Nepali that unites them, but also being citizens of Nepal. Nationality becomes an important aspect of ethnicity in an immigrant situation because that is how they are defined in this context.

Although most of the informants that were interviewed responded that there were no caste or ethnic divisions, there seems to be a heightened sense of ethnic awareness among the Newars and other minority ethnic groups of Nepal. Evidence of this can be seen in the few ethnically based



organizations that exist. All of them are formed by people who are of a minority within the Nepali American population. Their minority status in Nepal seems to have brought about this feeling since their identity was already suppressed in Nepal. Thus, coming to the United States gives them the need to assert their identity.

One Buddhist Newar who was interviewed also pointed out that there were indeed caste differences, although subtle, in which the Newars have been subjugated by the Bahun-Chettri group.

Although they try to calm down about their ethnic background. But I am definitely sure that the Bahun and Chettri group are feeling that they are superior to other people. They do have that type of a feeling although they don't open their mouth. But we can feel it. Just by the way they talk, the way they behave, the way they act. It is very imperative because most of the people who come here although they call it Nepali people but whoever comes here, the majority of them are Bahun and Chettri. They have a connection with the high ranking people and that's why they come. While as you can take the Chame, pore, gaine, damai, kasai, those people have never been able to come here and I don't see any single person who are a low caste people. If there were an equal opportunity given by the Bahun-Chettri, then why don't they come here. They are really subduing the other caste. They do not want everybody to become one (Gopal).

It is always the case that the people on the bottom are the ones that feel any type of discrimination since they are the ones who experience the difference. The caste and ethnic distinctions that are present in the United States are taken to be not outward discrimination but rather hidden feelings. The strong traditions of class hierarchy that are common in their homeland has become a very sensitive issue in the Nepali community of the United States. As mentioned previously, the majority of the people who come to the United States are of a high caste status, therefore, interaction among the people are only going to be on the same caste level and social status. One of my informants revealed a case in which she had brought a housekeeper (low caste) from Nepal and would take her along to most Nepali social gatherings. People began to criticize her for such behavior as inappropriate mixing of castes. She began to realize that although people try to show that there is any discrimination, it is inherent in most people.

Also, one can see the prevalence of caste ideas in choosing marriage partners. Caste still seems to be an important criterion in finding suitable spouses even in the United States. Most people when interviewed said that it was suitable as long as the other person was a Nepali but they would most certainly prefer someone from their own caste and ethnic background.

Here is one of my informants talking about her possible marriage partner,

I took an interest in him and I told my mom that I had been talking to a guy, he's from New York and he is a Nepali, he's a brahmin, same caste and she was very happy to know that .... It was important that I marry someone from my own caste in a sense that I wanted my mom to be happy and I knew even though she was telling me that she doesn't really care I knew that she would be happy if I got married to somebody from Nepal (Sita).

Although the second generation Nepalese don't really have a preference on this matter, it is usually the parents' preference that they find someone suitable. It is difficult to deduce whether Nepalese are more likely to accept international relationships or inter-caste marriage. It seems to be the trend that there are more international marriages than inter-caste. But most of my informants said that they would prefer that their children marry someone from Nepal regardless of ethnic background. Once again, nationality becomes an important aspect of identifying ethnicity. Many immigrants prefer that their children marry other "citizens of Nepal."

### **The Newars of the United States**

Among the Newars, there seems to be a heightened sense of ethnic awareness. Previously I had argued that caste and ethnic differences among the Nepalese in the United States had disappeared. However, the case of the Newars is paradoxical because their ethnicity, rather than disappearing, has become more pronounced in this particular context. The unusual circumstances of the Newars in their homeland, may be the cause of such a phenomenon. The Newars who were once the ruling class of Nepal have now become a minority group. It is unfortunate that many of the Newars in Nepal itself do not know much about their own tradition. They have begun to realize that they need to learn about their own culture first.

The Newars, already a subordinate minority in their country, upon coming to the United States may have been influenced by the ethnic assertions of other minority groups in the United States. Since a Newar in

the United States will always be considered a "Nepali", it seems that they are attempting to create an identity for themselves that distinguishes themselves from the dominant group.

In Washington D.C. there is in fact a Newar based organization called the *Nepa Pasa Pucha* which is an ethnically based organization that is directed towards the Newar community. It was established as an increasing population of the Newars in the United States felt the need to preserve their cultural heritage outside of Nepal. The fact that the Newars are struggling to maintain their identity in Nepal gives rise to the need for this particular group to assert their individuality.

The same organization publishes a monthly Newar magazine called the *DABUU*. The goals of the association as stated in the publication are:

1. Conserve the cultural heritage, the traditions and the customs of Nepal.
2. Participate and develop the Newar culture in arts, literature, music, dances, custom and rituals of the people in the modern world.
3. Enhance mutual understanding between the people of Newar culture and other cultures.
4. Appreciate and respect the uniqueness of each culture. (Shakya, bhintuna.html)

Also in this magazine and on various Internet sites many Newars, have written concerning their ethnic identity. Articles such as "What does being a Newar mean to me?", "Am I a Newar", "Nostalgia", an editorial on "cultural pride" questioning their Newar identity have appeared in the magazine. Beena Maharjan in her article writes, "June 23, 1994 - the date I entered the United States. Ever since then I have been thrilled by the idea of meeting people from Nepal. I cross examine myself - 'ANYBODY from Nepal?' My desperate answer would be 'yes'. Nevertheless, deep in my heart, I am aware of my preference for Newars (beena.html)." Tulsi Maharjan has written many articles over his concern of losing his Newar cultural identity. Referring back to my introductory quote it is obvious that his sense of ethnic awareness developed after living in the United States. He mentions that his desire to learn about the Newar culture actually started once he came to the United States. He writes, "Actually, I learned more Newari words and things about Newar culture after I came to America. Although, I did manage to take one course in Newari while I was in high school in Patan but that was not an easy task because all my friends were non Newars." Coming to the United States where there is much talk about race and ethnicity has made

him aware of his own ethnic roots and given him the inspiration to teach the culture to other people.

In most of the articles that Tulsi Maharjan has written, he criticizes the situation of the Newars in Nepal and the lack of cultural interest of the Newars there for the disappearance of Newar culture. He writes that many of the Newars of Kathmandu are probably more westernized than the Newars, in the States.

On that matter, he writes,

We are rapidly diluting our history. First of all we did not have that strong of a tradition to start with. Our culture has been watered-down for many years by outside influences..... As we yearn for good old *Wola Baji* (ethnic Newar food) our friends in Nepal are eating *chow chow* (instant noodles). As we become more easterner, our friends in Nepal have become more westerner (Maharjan 1997: 1).

Two things seem to be going on here. First, coming to the United States and being away from one's culture has induced feelings of nostalgia in Maharjan. This seems to be a common outcome among people living away from their homeland. The mere feeling of being away from one's own culture creates a greater appreciation of that particular culture in the individual. In the case of Maharjan, it may have been the influence of other minority groups' attempt of asserting their identity in the United States, that has made him feel the need to promote 'his' culture. In another article entitled, "Let's Empower one another", Maharjan writes, "'One's cultural heritage, language, and tradition. They are very important especially when one is far away from their homeland (3). Thus, is the case in which the Newar ethnicity has become more pronounced in the United States.

### **Conclusion**

The shifting importance of ethnicity seen in the case of the Newars supports the notion that ethnicity, rather than being something static, is a process that is in continual flux. The boundaries and definition of ethnicity are never clear-cut. Ethnicity, however it may be understood as "primordial," is in fact a concept constructed by the people of a given society. This paper has argued that ethnicity can be defined from various perspectives: in terms of language, religion, nationality. In a context, such as that of an immigrant community, their ethnicity is defined through their nationality as "Nepalese," whereas in Nepal, they would be defined through their own caste and ethnic distinctions. "Nepali" becomes an umbrella term to identify

the various caste and ethnic groups that are present in the United States. However, the Newars in the United States are attempting to create an identity for themselves apart from the larger Nepalese immigrant community. This shows that the concept of ethnicity is relative depending on the situation. Ethnicity may be heightened in one context whereas it may not be as important in another situation. In addition, the question of who belongs to one's ethnic group may expand or contract depending on the context.

In conclusion, I would like to point out some of the limitations that were present in the study and look at ways in which it could have been improved. I would also like to suggest possibilities of further research on this subject. There were many limitations under which this study was conducted. First of all, the sample size for the fieldwork studies in the New York area, was rather small due to time constraints and difficulty of finding relevant informants. In order to make accurate judgments and conclusions a larger sample would have been helpful. I was only able to interview high caste Newars and Parbatiyas predominantly of the Bahun caste. I was not able to locate people of other ethnic groups. It would have been interesting to examine how their views differed from the Newars and the Parbatiyas.

As a result of this thesis, I have learned a whole lot about my own cultural heritage. It is my hope that the Nepali culture, especially the Newar culture will continue the preservation of its heritage. It is reassuring to know that there are people like Tulsi Mahajan who are adamant about preserving the Newari culture in the United States. However, it is difficult to determine how much of this will be continued by the next generation. Considering that most of the second generation do not even know how to speak Nepali, much less Newari, the hopes for the future do not look very optimistic. Maybe a new influx of Nepali immigrants will change the situation. With the introduction of the lottery system in obtaining visas, a wider variety of Nepalese will be able to come to the United States. Although, most of them will have to be economically well off to afford to come all the way here, it still might bring in several other ethnic and caste groupings. With the wider variety of Nepalese from other ethnic and caste groups it would be interesting to see if there still remains an integration of all the 'Nepalese', even with some members of a lower caste. Presently, almost all of the Nepalese are of the high caste and majority of them are Newars and Bahuns. It is yet to be determined what type of shift of ethnicity the future holds for the Newars in Nepal and the Nepalese immigrants of the United States.

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## List of Interviews (All the names have been changed for confidentiality)

### *Informants from the United States* (Interviews conducted in January 1997):

#### 1. Rama

Thirty-six year old Hindu Brahmin, he is an attorney-at-law and has lived in the United States for 8 $\frac{1}{2}$  years. Originally, he came to the United States to pursue his masters at Columbia University. After he got his license, he decided to work here for a couple of years but ended up staying here much longer. Married a Nepali (same ethnic and caste group) studying in Canada, now he has one daughter, plans on returning to Nepal in about seven more years.

#### 2. Krishna

Forty-four year old Hindu Brahmin, he is a physician and has lived in the United States for 20 years. He came to the United States with a permanent visa in order to get his post-graduate degree in medicine. He returned to Nepal to get married and brought his wife over. Now he has two children (8-year old son and 13-year old daughter). He has not made

a decision as to where he is going to spend his retired life. He is thinking of dividing his time between Nepal and the United States.

**3. Hari**

Thirty-year old Hindu Brahmin, a Computer Network engineer at the United Nations. He has lived in United States for 16 years. He came here with his parents when he was fourteen. His parents went back to Nepal when he was in college. He decided to stay here and finish his education. Eventually he found a job here and decided that he would spend a few more years and he is uncertain about how much longer he will continue to remain here. He also returned to Nepal to get married. He has a eighteen-month old daughter in Nepal with his parents. His wife is currently finishing her studies in the United States.

**4. Sita**

Thirty-four years old Hindu Brahmin, and the wife of Ram, she has lived in the United States for six years, and previously she had been in Canada for seven years. She moved to the United States after marrying Ram. Now she is a food scientist at Concord Marketing. She plans on returning to Nepal for good after her daughter goes to college.

**5. Gopal**

Forty-one year old middle-class Buddhist Newar, he has lived in the United States for sixteen years. Originally he came to pursue his education and then remained here after he found a job. He also went back to Nepal about four years ago to get married.

**6. Savitri**

Fifty-three years old middle-class Buddhist Newar. She has lived in the United States for twenty-seven years. She came with her husband who came here to do his post graduate studies. She, herself, completed her post graduate studies here and is currently working as a physician. She has a twenty-five years old son. Her future plans are to remain in the United States, occasionally spending three to four months in Nepal.