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Nepal Earthquake Summit, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, 18-20 February 2016

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representation of Kumaon-Garhwal in Mughal sources, interactions and connections at the borders of empires in both the Terai and the high Himalayas, and implications for the Central Himalayas of the revival of a modern silk route.

The conference provided a much needed common platform for scholars engaging with the Central Himalayas from diverse disciplinary backgrounds to broaden and enrich their understanding of the same. It was also commendable that in line with the thematic objective of the conference, besides English, some papers were also presented in Nepali. B. K. Joshi provided a final reflection on how the conference opened new doors of knowledge and cross-fertilization of ideas, especially between the liberal arts and sciences that supports a new focus on a region that naturally crosses borders. Dr. Zoller responded with appreciation on behalf of the presenters.

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Nepal Earthquake Summit

Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH

18-20 February 2016

This year, Dartmouth College's John Sloane Dickey Center devoted its annual *Leila and Melville Straus 1960 Family Symposium* to the Nepal earthquakes of 2015. A remarkably broad spectrum of panelists and participants converged in Hanover for this event to discuss what they have done individually and as organizations in response to the earthquakes; to make connections

and discover new ideas for Nepal's (re)development; and to re-engage the global community and re-focus attention on the long-term challenges the Himalayan country faces in rebuilding.

The earthquake of April 2015 killed more than 8,000 people, injured tens of thousands, and damaged or destroyed 500,000 homes. The long-term challenges of rebuilding and development in Nepal will require many talents and multiple perspectives. Thus, one objective of the Summit was to bring together multiple disciplines to tackle this complex human development problem. Representatives from the worlds of technology innovation and design, medicine, anthropology, engineering, and the visual arts, along with members of the Nepali government, grassroots practitioners, students, and community members participated in three days of engaging and dynamic events.

The Summit featured a series of panel discussions that were free and open to the public, as described below. In addition to the Straus Symposium, the Summit engaged stakeholders across Dartmouth's campus and was co-sponsored by the Hood Museum of Art, the Departments of Anthropology and Linguistics, the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies Program, and the Office of the Provost.

The opening night of the Summit featured an exhibition and public discussion on 'Representing Disaster,' with photojournalists James Nachtwey (Dartmouth '70) and Kevin Bubrisky (Green Mountain College). Award-winning Nachtwey flew to Nepal three days after the earthquake to document the event for TIME Magazine, while Bubrisky arrived there five weeks after the initial

devastation. The two photographers gave presentations of their images of the aftermath at different stages and then answered questions about the role of photojournalists as first responders, the visual medium of photography as a means of communication, and the relationship between photographers and their subjects. They discussed the ethics of representation and the power of visual media to spread awareness about human disasters. In its main gallery, the Hood Museum featured images by Nachtwey and Bubrisky as well as a revolving digital slideshow of images taken by Nepalis themselves. During and after the Summit, the Dickey Center displayed a series of Austin Lord's (Dartmouth '06 and Director of Rasuwa Relief) photos of the Langtang Valley, which was devastated by a massive landslide.

The Summit also hosted two film screenings: 'Himalayan Megaquake' (NOVA) and 'Natural Event, Manmade Disaster' (Himal South Asia). The film screenings were followed by Skype-based conversations with Director Lisel Clark and well-known Nepali journalist Kunda Dixit, respectively.

The panel 'Narrating Disaster: Calibrating Causality and Response to the 2015 Earthquakes in Nepal' featured anthropological and linguistic research, funded by the National Science Foundation, that focused on local lived experiences of the earthquakes in three differently-impacted, contiguous districts: Mustang, Manang, and Gorkha. Panelists Sienna Craig (Dartmouth College), Geoff Childs (Washington University-St. Louis), and Kristine Hildebrandt (Southern Illinois University) described the ways that Nepali society is processing loss and beginning to rebuild, physically and mentally. Nepalis have resorted

to a range of understandings of causality to explain the earthquake: moral, scientific, and religious, among others, all communicated while code-switching between local languages, Nepali, and English. Panelists discussed hopeful signs of youth re-engagement in their natal communities and explained the methodologies they are using for recording and sharing cultural knowledge.

In 'Social Media and Social Entrepreneurship in Response to the Earthquakes,' Max von Hippel (Dartmouth '19) discussed his project Chetwani, a mobile app that allowed users to locate available resources and receive updates about damaged areas in the aftermath of the earthquake. This app also provided fact-checking about rumors to help prevent the spread of misinformation. Ravi Kumar of Code for Nepal wrote apps that helped to verify and update earthquake news and provided maps of relief resources. Bubriski described how social media had given voice to new players in civil society, while Lord reflected on his experiences on the ground after the earthquake and the importance of social media as platform for archiving communal resources and memories.

The panel "Public Health Responses" brought together clinicians, policy makers, grassroots practitioners, and students to explore the immediate and long-term public health consequences of the earthquake. Ian Speers (Dartmouth '17) presented on the state of Nepal's earthquake preparedness and identified future needs to prevent deaths and facilitate disaster recovery. S.P. Kalaunee relayed how Possible Health, a Nepali NGO, is developing new models for healthcare in Nepal that can be affordable and accountable by

focusing on practitioner training, reliable supply chains, and the provision of health posts in under-resourced areas. Bijay Acharya, of the Massachusetts General Hospital and the American Nepal Medical Foundation, discussed the on-the-ground realities he found in the immediate aftermath of the earthquake. Shreya Shrestha, a third-year student at the Geisel School of Medicine, and Dr. Daniel Albert spoke as representatives of Aasha for Nepal, which ran mobile clinics and helped communities build temporary shelters.

Swarnim Wagle, who was a Member of Nepal's National Planning Commission when the earthquake struck, gave the keynote address. Wagle helped prepare the national Post Disaster Needs Assessment and led the official Nepali delegation to the Third UN Conference on Financing for Development. Wagle gave a captivating oration highlighted by a lyrical reading of his personal observations during the first 24 hours of the earthquake, at the seat of Nepal's power, the Parliament building at Singha Durbar. This account provided a rare glimpse into the inner workings and machinations of the highest levels of government immediately after the quake struck.

The student-centered panel 'Disaster Response On and Off Campus' featured five Nepali students and Kathryn March, who heads the Nepal Studies Program at Cornell University. The panelists described their responses to the earthquake including: fundraising and outreach in the U.S. as well as on-the-ground efforts in Nepal to rebuild schools and homes; facilitating the distribution of temporary shelters; delivering supplies and assisting with logistics for medical camps; and mobilizing awareness of the heightened

incidence of human trafficking amidst the economic upheavals subsequent to the earthquake.

During the Summit, students from my course Anthropology of Tibet and the Himalaya got a taste of professional anthropological fieldwork. As part of a class assignment, the students took detailed notes and reported on panels, interviewed Nepali participants and attendees about their experiences of the earthquake, and produced a collaborative ethnography of the event <<http://sites.dartmouth.edu/nepal-earthquake-summit>>.

Additionally, moved by conversations with his parents, Aditya Mahara, a PhD candidate in Biomedical Engineering at the Thayer School of Engineering at Dartmouth, wanted to apply his engineering skills to help address the concerns of a population that is living in a heightened state of anxiety since the earthquake and its many ongoing tremors. Mahara unveiled a prototype for an affordable seismic detector device for use in Nepal. The goal of the detector is to alert households before seismic events strike. The earthquake alarm would buy locals critical seconds that could potentially save lives and limit trauma as well as provide a measure of mental relief. During this presentation, entitled 'Hacktivity,' invited participants broke out into five groups – technical, design, economic and socio-cultural, distribution, and business – to brainstorm and puzzle solutions to the varying challenges, implications, and effects of advancing this device from the prototype.

The final event of the Summit was a Town Hall meeting, which gave conference attendees and participants an opportunity to ask questions directly to Nepali

government officials responsible for relief efforts. Swarnim Wagle and Mahendra Shrestha (Chief of Policy, Planning and International Cooperation Division in the Health Ministry) took questions regarding the government's preparations prior to the earthquake and efforts to improve planning and response in future disasters. Shrestha discussed the Government's efforts in preventing disease outbreak and the struggle to improve mental health services. Wagle addressed questions about the National Planning Commission's continued role in improving governance, emphasizing in particular the need for transparency and open data.

The Summit was filmed and is available through a dedicated YouTube channel, which provides free access to the proceedings for use by Nepali activists, scholars, and interested parties around the globe at <<https://www.youtube.com/user/dickeycenterevents>>.

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With contributions to this report by the students in his course, Anthropology of Tibet and the Himalaya

Himalayan Studies Conference IV

University of Texas-Austin

26-28 February 2016

The Association for Nepal and Himalayan Studies (ANHS) held the Fourth Himalayan Studies Conference at the University of Texas at Austin, February 26-28, 2016. Esteemed and emerging scholars attended twenty-five panels and four roundtables that broadly addressed questions related to social change, cultural processes, historicity, and boundaries in the

Himalayas. In addition to panels, attendees were invited to attend cultural performances and view films that addressed these key questions. Of critical focus throughout the conference was the role of social scientists in effecting positive social change.

Chaitanya Mishra (Tribhuvan University) opened the conference with a keynote talk on what it means to study social change in Nepal. In his talk, Mishra emphasized the need to historicize and situate development, identity politics, and federalism in conversations on time and space. He raised the critically important question about what role the social sciences can play in mediating local knowledge and experiences vis-à-vis the global.

Several panels addressed identitarian political mobilizations and social change in Nepal. The double panel 'The Tarai in Nepal's National Imaginary I and II,' organized by Amanda Snellinger (University of Washington), focused on social change and spatiality in the Tarai. Amy Johnson (Yale University) spoke on the creation of a Pahari public in the United Far-West movement, and the territorialization of space through affective relations in Dhangadi, Nepal. Jacob Rinck (Yale University) spoke about the mobilization of non-party Madhesi political actors in Janakpur, Nepal, and advocated for the need to consider how caste and socio-economics become bound up with regionalization and spaces. Frazer Sugden (International Water Management Institute) argued that properly historicized analyses of modes of production make ethnic and political mobilizations in the Tarai intelligible. Snellinger examined how in the 2013 elections, socio-political conditions influenced voters' decisions to vote in first past the post (FPTP) based on local issues, but in

proportion representation (PR) based on aspirational politics of identity and ideologies.

Arjun Gunaratne (Macalaster College) shifted the focus of the second Tarai panel to changes in religious practices within Chitwan's Tharu communities. Gunaratne argued that 1950s development practices, including the migration of communities from the hills to the Tarai, resulted in an expanded role of the Brahmin priest in Tharu's life-cycle rituals. Andrea Grimaldi (Macalaster College) spoke about how outward migration of men and remittances shape women's social experiences in Chitwan. Each paper presented addressed the constitutive parts of change in the Tarai. These talks highlighted how the Tarai became demarcated through movement and affective action.

Caste and ethnicity are integral to social change and the reconfiguration of the Nepali state. Mahendra Lawoti (Western Michigan University) organized 'Marginalized Groups and the New Constitution in Nepal,' in which panelists examined how constitutional processes abetted domination and marginalization. Lawoti argued that marginalization might become institutionalized in the new constitution if protest movements are not successful, while Pramod K. Kantha (Wright State University) examined the conditions that led to Madhesi protests against the promulgation of the 2015 constitution. In the panel 'Exclusion: Caste Class, and Ethnicity,' organized by Kathleen M. Gallagher (St. Mary's University), papers focused primarily on the ways in which Dalits are engaged and marginalized through constitutional processes. These conversations are critical to understanding the current state of Nepali politics.