

Yūba:
Making Modern Youth, Making New
Nepal

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A youth participating in a Tamang New Year (*Lhosar*) celebratory march.

Thesis Declaration

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Natalie Greenland

Dedication

Dedicated to the memory of my grandmother Helen M. Eglinton who blazed the trail.

Acknowledgements

Being able to undertake doctoral studies is a privilege. The privilege I feel in no way denies the hard work that it takes to be accepted as a doctoral candidate and the challenges of doing fieldwork and writing a thesis. My sense of privilege instead comes from the knowledge that not everybody, no matter how intelligent and driven, has access to the same opportunities that I have had. Thus first and foremost I have to thank those people whose perseverance for a better life has changed mine. I would like to thank the many people who participated in this research. I would especially like to thank the staff of Equal Access Nepal, Hetauda FM and Radio Makwanpur and the members of the *Janahit Yūba Samuha*. I am incredibly grateful for the time you gave me, the insights you provided and for your friendship. I would especially like to acknowledge Dudumaya Singtan, Saru Adhikari, Nisha Lama, Ananta Baniya, Saraswati Bhandari and Jiwan Timalsina for their dedication to this research and for their friendship that made living in Hetauda bearable. I would also like to acknowledge my translators: Saru Adhikari, Shirisha Amatya, Smriti Thapa, Tulsi Thapa, Upendra Ghimire, Bhumika Vaidya and Bikram Bajcharya.

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Transliteration

Nepali is written in Devanagari script and the transliteration of Nepali words and phrases in this thesis is done in romanised form and is derived from Turner's *A Comparative and Etymological Dictionary of the Nepali Language*, 1931. This dictionary was accessed via an online database (last updated in 2006) that is supported by the U.S. Department of Education at: <http://dsal.uchicago.edu/dictionaries/turner/>.

Audio

Throughout this thesis there are links to audio tracks that can be found on the accompanying CD.¹ Throughout the text there are prompts to listen to particular tracks on the CD. The inclusion of this audio is intended as an opportunity to experience the places and media productions to which I refer throughout the thesis. The audio included in this thesis is predominantly the work of radio producers in Nepal, with the exception of a piece of audio produced by me and a video recording of a street drama production captured by Sam Handley. Some of the productions are included in their entirety, while some have been edited to shorter lengths. Below is a track listing:

Track 1		
Introduction to Banaspati (recorded and produced by the author)		p.66
Track 2		
SSMK episode no.355 (produced by the SSMK team, appears in its entirety)		p.94
Track 3		
NN episode no. 149 (produced by the NN team, appears in its entirety)		p.97
Track 4		
Chhar Nepal episode (produced by Hetauda FM, appears in its entirety)		p.115
Track 5		
Introduction to Young Generation episode (produced by Hetauda FM, edited)		p.122
Track 6		
Young Generation episode (produced by Hetauda FM, edited)		p.123
Track 7		
Street Drama Movie (performed by Janahit, recorded by Sam Handley, edited)		p.149

¹ Audio files are in .mp3 format, video file is provided in both .wmv and m4v formats.

Abstract

In this thesis I ask what constitutes a Nepali youth, and question what role they play in contemporary Nepal. Based on fieldwork conducted in Nepal from March 2008 to March 2009 and July to September 2010, my research contributes to an emerging body of work that problematises the youth construct in Nepal. Bucholtz (2002) has highlighted the increasingly salient roles that young people are playing in their societies and has called for an anthropology of youth as a pressing task. Faced with social, cultural, political and economic change, young Nepalis are playing more important social roles than ever before. I argue that one of these fundamental roles is nation building, the ideal product of which is popularly termed 'new Nepal'.

I look at youth and their role as nation builders through a communication for development initiative that centres on two radio programs produced in Kathmandu. The content of these radio programs is re-packaged into local radio programs that are produced in regional radio stations, and community-level activities that are conducted by radio listeners clubs. I use Bolter and Grusin's (1999) concept of remediation to conceptualise this process and the changes to the youth archetype represented in the original radio programs. Following Novak's (2010) application of this concept, I argue that the process of remediation is a means for those involved to construct and practice a youth subjectivity. The youth I describe in this thesis are defined by an awareness of development that is displayed in activities that are oriented toward building a new Nepal.

I conclude that the young people who play a role in making a new Nepal actively situate themselves within landscapes of power created by development through their engagement in the process of remediation. Development is a powerful element in the Nepali imagination that has tangible benefits for those who can demonstrate command over its rhetoric and align themselves with its visions and young people demonstrate this in their nation building activities. I argue that young people creatively engage in the process of remediation described in this thesis to position themselves within terrains of power created by development to ultimately define their own destinies and articulate their visions for a locally modern Nepal.

List of Acronyms

AC4SC	Assessing Communication for Social Change
BCC	Behaviour Change Communication
C4D	Communication for Development
CA	Constituent Assembly
CFSC	Communication for Social Change
DDC	District Development Committee
DTR	Development Through Radio
EA	Equal Access
EAN	Equal Access Nepal
EE	Entertainment-Education
GWP	General Welfare Prathistan
INGO	International Non-Government Organisation
NGO	Non-Government Organisation
NN	<i>Naya Nepal</i> (New Nepal)
SSMK	<i>Sāthi Saṅga man kā Kura</i> (Chatting with my Best Friend)
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
VDC	Village Development Committee
WHO	World Health Organisation

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