Rethinking the Nation: Authors from the Tibetan and Nepalese Diaspora

by

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Certified that the thesis entitled

Rethinking the Nation: Authors from the Tibetan and Nepalese Diaspora submitted by me for the award of the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arts at Jadavpur University is based upon my work carried out under the Supervision of **Prof.** (**Dr.) Suchorita Chattopadhyay** and that neither this thesis not any part of it has been submitted before for any degree or diploma anywhere/ elsewhere.

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Content

Figures

Introduction

Introduction

Lived experience in the diasporic space has offered the Tibetan and Nepalese diasporic writers a fertile ground for producing unique literary works. These works document the difficult journeys of the immigrants from their homelands to the host lands and their constant efforts to survive, acculturate and assimilate[1] in the countries of their adoptions. However, the ancestral memory and nostalgic elements related to their homelands are also very strong in their works. By 2023 a sizeable corpus of Tibetan and Nepalese diasporic novels written in English have emerged, and this has started arresting the attention of both the scholars and the lay readers. Yet, interestingly, critical discussion of these novels is almost absent in the academia. This, in a way, justifies my attempt to write the present thesis.

There is a long history of Tibetan and Nepalese literature in local languages. Tibetan script is mainly influenced by an Indic script, and during the period of 7th or 8th century, many Buddhist texts were translated from Sanskrit to different languages. Before the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet, the texts were mainly based on history, religion, biography and the like. Some texts concentrated on folk narratives. For example, *The Bardo Thodol* was translated into English in the year 1927 by Evans-Wentz and is known as *The Tibetan Book of the Dead*. Original authors of some works remain unknown. *Epic of King Gesar* is one such example. However, there is hardly any fictional and non-fictional work written in Tibetan. Some Tibetan/Chinese/Sinophone Tibetan writers are writing from Tibet. Alai and Tashi Dawa may be mentioned in this respect.

Nepali literature, on the other hand, in the very beginning, was primarily based on verbal or oral folklore. Some writers started writing on Nepal. Bhanubhakta, Suwananda Das, Saint Gyandil Das, Motiram Bhatta, Bishweshwar Prasad Koirala, Indra Bahadur Rai, Parijat, Suman Pokhrel, Mahananda Poudyal and the like are the names of some of the important writers. Some of the Nepali

[1] These concepts will be discussed in the 2nd chapter (Theorising Nation and Diaspora).

literary works written in Nepali language are Girish Ballabh Joshi's *Bir Charitra*, Indra Bahadur Rai's *Vipana Katipaya* (1961) and so on. However, some promising literary works are being produced in the exilic space. Some diasporic Tibetan and Nepalese writers have started writing fictional and non-fictional works in English which will be the centre of discussion in this thesis.

The first Tibetan novel in English was published in the 1960s, but there was a lull of more than three decades before other works appeared. Tsewang Yishey Pemba's *Idols on the Path* (1966) was the first Tibetan novel in English. This was followed by other novels such as Jamyang Norbu's *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes* (1999), Thubten Samphel's *Falling Through the Roof* (2008), Tsering Wangmo Dhompa's *A Home in Tibet* (2013), Tsering Namgyal Khortsa's *The Tibetan Suitcase: A Novel* (2015), Tsewang Yishey Pemba's *White Crane Lend Me Your Wings: A Tibetan Tale of Love and War* (2017), Tsering Wangyal's *Another Place* (2020) and Tsering Yangzom Lama's *We Measure the Earth with Our Bodies* (2022). Bhuchung D Sonam, Tenzin Tsundue and Tenzin Dickie also contributed to the emerging body of Tibetan Literature in English.

Nepalese diasporic writings in English were of more recent origin. Major Nepalese writers are D.B. Gurung (*Echoes of the Himalayas*, 2000), Manjushree Thapa (*Seasons of Flight*, 2010; *Tilled Earth* 2012; *All of Us in Our Own Lives*, 2016), Samrat Upadhyay (*Arresting God in Kathmandu*, 2001; *Mad Country*, 2017), and Rabi Thapa (*Nothing to Declare*, 2011; *Thamel, Dark Star of Kathmandu*, 2016).

It is rather surprising that diaspora from the Himalayan region is yet to find adequate critical attention in the interdisciplinary areas of Diaspora Studies, Postcolonial Studies, or Himalayan Studies. Even Migration Studies, in general, is largely silent on the Nepalese diaspora, Tibetan exodus, and its post-migration politico-cultural and psychological conditions. Himalayan Studies, which could have ideally discussed this area, does not accommodate it. Instead, it mainly puts emphasis on the discussion of the ecosystem of the Himalayan region, ethnicity issues related to the communities living in the region and on the socio-economic development of local communities. Almost exclusive focus on the

economy, ecology and overall sustainable development overshadows the importance of other areas such as the history of the war in the Himalayan plateau, the socio-cultural backdrop of the people residing in the region as well as outside their "homeland," and the literary works they produced. It is primarily to address this omission that this dissertation will try to explore the literary works written by people belonging to the Himalayan region.

The Himalayan region has witnessed raging Civil War, foreign aggression, political instability and several other socio-political catastrophes. Nepal suffered from a terrible Civil War during the 1996-2006, Bhutan was almost on the verge of a war with China during the Doklam face-off in 2017, and Chinese aggression in Tibet in the 1950s has its reverberations even now. Some of these events have also figured in literary representations. Yet, there is hardly any critical discussions on the creative works either in South Asian Studies, or Postcolonial Studies. Hence, there is a huge research gap that needs to be filled up. This dissertation attempts to partly cover this gap. In this thesis, I shall compare the patterns of representation as found in Nepalese and Tibetan Anglophone diasporic literatures.

In popular Western perception, Tibetan and Nepalese communities are often stereotyped and misrepresented. I shall also discuss how the writers from these communities contest the stereotypes and try to define their diasporic consciousness rooted in two or more cultures. It will concentrate on Nation-Diaspora dialectics manifested in diverse literary works in English written by authors of Tibetan and Nepalese origin. But interestingly, this conflict which is very much manifested in the lived experiences of the diasporic people sometimes also gets expressed in popular activism. This is true in the case of Tibetan diasporic writers who often use modern technology (e.g., virtual networking) to further their activist agenda, the most important of which is the liberation of Tibet from Chinese colonial clutches. Nepalese diasporic communities also resort to virtual networking, but the purpose is obviously different. Tibetans use networking to create a transnational global movement to facilitate winning independence for Tibet while the Nepalese people use this transnational space to connect with fellow members of the community spread all over the world and to access global opportunities available to them.

For some Tibetan authors in the diaspora such as Tenzin Tsundue and Bhuchung D. Sonam, literary writing and activism invariably get intertwined. This lends a political colour to their writings. In the works of others, the presence of politics may not be prominent but the material condition of their living in the exile makes their representations rather sensitive in this respect. Their works bear witness to this.

Himalayan Identity: Tibet and Nepal

To understand the lived experience of the Tibetans and the Nepalese, it is necessary to discuss how the Himalaya as a geo-cultural space, shape the quotidian life and philosophy of the people who migrate from the region. The flora and fauna (the yak, for example, is a unique species of Himalayan fauna), geography, environment and myths surrounding the Himalaya have expectedly much influenced the lives of the writers. That is why this section will deal with the concept of what may be called the 'Himalayan identity' which each of the writers to be discussed in this thesis had inherited.

The Himalaya as a mountain range in Asia passes through India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, China, Bhutan and Nepal creating a rich biodiversity. This multifaceted eco-region has touched various cultures and civilizations. The civilizations existing around or near the Himalaya are historically, culturally, and socially interconnected. This has made the Himalaya a unique socio-cultural space as well. Chandra Gurung, a Nepali poet, remarks about the commonalities and differences between the peoples of the Himalayan nation-states:

> The similar geographical location, nature of climate, traditional livelihoods, society and religious aspects provide common grounds between the peoples of the different Himalayan nation-states. Himalayas have been instrumental in preserving a number of communities, cultures and customs by virtue of its sheer isolation. Having acted as a natural and political barrier for centuries preserving the identity of Himalayan lives. Meantime, the remoteness and poor connectivity has often kept them away from external influences acting as natural barrier. (Koushik Goswami, Email Conversation with Chandra Gurung, March 1 2020)

The above remark made by Gurung provides two perspectives – one is the unique identity of the people living in the Himalayan regions and the other is the remoteness and poor connectivity of the Himalayas that protect them from the attack of the external forces. Gurung further highlights this issue in the following way,

> The people of this Himalayan and nearby regions share many things in common. They live in the same type of land topography with extreme cold type of weather. For the mountain people living in these states, the Himalaya continues to be the most predominant fact of their lives. This creates a unique geo-cultural region in the Himalaya that is different from the other South Asian nations. (Koushik Goswami, Email Conversation with Chandra Gurung, March 1 2020)

Gurung's remark thus clearly establishes the Himalaya as a distinct geographical space. As a geo-cultural space, Himalayan nations are quite different from other South Asian nations located outside it.

However, it should be emphasised that despite some common traits, the people belonging to the Himalayan regions cannot be homogenised. They hail from various communities. Although they have different cultures, religious values and languages, yet they possess an undeniable sense of inter-connectedness. Tenzin Tsundue, a Tibetan writer and an activist, in this respect poignantly speaks of the pan-Himalayan feelings and experience.

> All across the Himalayas, from Karakoram to the eastern slopes of Arunachal people live in high mountains and deep valleys, either barren like Ladakh or full of thick vegetations as in Nepal or Sikkim, there are pan-Himalayan experience and also stories that run in folklores and legends. The Himalayan regions are populated by so many people of different tribes, languages and cultures and religions too. Without jumping places if you travel by land one can feel how contiguous the languages, cultures and peoples are. I have travelled for months connecting village by village, passing into valleys.
>
> The mountain people travel up and down, not sideways, people worship mountains, rivers and animals. While Buddhism enjoys a pan-Himalayan appeal there are shamans and local deities that hold so much of life. (Goswami 2023, 166)

The above remark made by Tsundue clearly indicates the presence of a pan-Himalayan identity. Although people, living in the Himalayas, are from different tribes and have different languages to speak, they are connected to each other in various ways. Tsundue shares his own experience in the mountains where all people 'worship mountains, rivers and animals' and they have similar lived experience.

The Himalaya, as a sociocultural zone, has connected various nations such as India, Bhutan, Nepal, and Tibet, which is now part of China. This region where the people "never grew up with a strong sense of nationalism" (Shakya 2018, 1) has thus become an interactive zone where people of different nations are bound by a sense of kinship based on physical features, religion, traditions and mixed cultures. Moreover, the concept of border in the Himalayan zone is not rigid. "The memory of free movements," as Himadri Lahiri notes, "has its lingering traces in the memory of the people of the region" (2017, 71). Characters in Nepalese or Bhutanese fiction frequently visit India for educational, professional and economic reasons, and "some never go back home" (Lahiri 2017, 71). Here, diaspora does not involve journeys to "far-off Western countries" or relocation to radically alien cultural environments and landscapes (Lahiri 2017, 71). In such a context, Sujeev Shakya proposes a Pan-Himalayan identity for a "Himalayan citizen:"

> you inherit the hills as your identity. You learn bits and pieces of many languages. The Himalayas is your larger identity; you have a sub-identity of the region / country you belong to for sure, but it never really matters which nation you are domiciled in or which passport you carry. (2018, 8)

So, the people here do not have a single identity. Identity is formed not only based on one's national origin but on the unique geo-cultural space of the Himalayas. Here the passport or any other legal document does not play much role except in the legal sphere. In the porous border of the region, legal documents hardly have any role to play. Interestingly, to the inhabitants of the Himalaya, mountains are metaphors of home; the mountainous landscape inspires and motivates them. They consider the Himalaya as 'living' (Ghosh 2022), as a deity, a supervising spirit, that instils in them ecological ethics and an attitude of respect to Nature. Keeping away from the landscape and the values

it represents, often generates crisis in them. Food items such as momos, thukpa, yak meat and dhido (a Nepalese food) unite the people of the Himalayas. On the other side, music like bamboo and bansuri flute music plays an important role that bind the Himalayan people together. Shakya remarks, "Politics cannot separate Himalayan nations when people yearn for free movement" (2018, 12). They are emotionally attached with each other and morally support the communities.

Many Tibetans live in India (mainly in Dharamshala, Ladakh, Dehradun, Sikkim, and the like), Nepal and Bhutan and they support each other. Exilic Tibetans receive the support for their cause from other communities as well. They share similar kind of culture. Buddhist philosophy and ideas connect many of them. Tibetan government-in-exile that is Central Tibetan Administration[2] plays a significant role to protect and sustain Tibetan culture. Tibet Museum[3] and Tibet Policy Institute play a functional role in sustaining old memories and researches into current issues that affect lives of Tibetan immigrants. My recent trip to Dharamsala has helped me understand Tibetans' unique cultural pattern and how they protect and preserve their culture. Tibetan *thangka* paintings are made and used not only by the Tibetans but also by Indians, the Nepalese and so other communities. Norbulingka Institute is an institute that helps to sustain and preserve Tibetan art and culture. Many scholars and students from different parts of the world are involved in learning Tibetan painting, weaving, metal

[2] I visited the Central Tibetan Administration and the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives. In the library, I came across many valuable books and Tibetan manuscripts preserved in the archives. I purchased some books on Tibet's History, Tibetan Folk Culture and Tibetan traditions, Tibetan Medicine and Tibetan Language.

[3] I went to Tibetan Museum and saw the documentations of Tibet's history and culture. This museum preserves Tibet's cultural and religious traditions and history of Tibet as a lost nation through photographs, videos, maps, charts, models etc. There were several documentations of the life and culture of Tibetan people. Tibetan cultural relics and the history of Tibetans' dislocation and relocation, the story of the Tibetans' escape from Tibet, the instances of activism and movement, the formation of Tibetan government in exile and so on are displayed in digital format. Some pictures of Tibetan writers and activists have also been displayed in digital format. Tibetan folk culture, information about musicians, film makers, singers and dancers were also displayed there.

sculpting, wood paining and carving.[4] In Nepal too such practices of preserving Nepal's traditional religious paintings are visible and the *thangka* painting is known, in Nepal, as *paubha* painting. Tibetan medicine[5] plays a significant role in Tibetan culture. Many people across the Himalayas have a firm belief in the curative and rehabilitative qualities of Tibetan medicine. His Holiness the Dalai Lama is the centre of attraction and people from different nations consider him a religious guru, a teacher and a preacher of Buddhism. The Buddhist monasteries in different parts of India like Ladakh, Dharamsala, Sikkim, Siliguri and in Nepal, Bhutan and the like, have connected the people of these regions.

[4] I visited the Norbulingka Institute which tries to sustain the Tibetan culture and life by promoting Tibetan art like *thangka* painting, wood carving, silk weaving and metal sculpting. This institution has an art gallery where the Tibetan art and paintings are being exhibited. In the art workshop, I personally witnessed many Tibetans as well as non-Tibetan artists engaged in Tibetan *thangka* painting. There is a separate area in the institute where the old Tibetan manuscripts are kept. The Losel Doll Museum at the Norbulingka Institute represents the Tibetan social life, folk culture, food habit, dress code, custom, by using replicas. My visit to this institute has given me a better understanding and knowledge of Tibetan art, medicine and culture.

[5] I visited Dr Lobsang Dolma Khangkar Memorial Clinic of Traditional Tibetan Medicine and Men Tsee Kang: Tibetan Medical and Astrology Institute (TMAI) which promotes the traditional practice of Tibetan medicine and astronomy.

Interestingly, Tibetan medicine influences the lives of people of different cultures. Many people from various countries like Tibet, Nepal, India, Bhutan, Siberia, China, Mongolia and some parts of Europe and North America have faith in Tibetan medical system which is mainly based on Ayurveda and Buddhist ideology and four noble truths (dukkha, samudaya, nirodha and marga). Tibetan medical practice is mainly based on four tantras such as the Tsa Gyue (the root tantra), Shae Gyue (the exegetical tantra), Man Ngag Gyue (the instructional tantra) and Chima Gyue (the subsequent tantra). Both in Tibet Autonomous Region and in Tibetan government-in-exile, Tibetans promote Tibetan medicine and spread it among different communities. Tibetan medicine is generally known as 'Sowa Rigpa' and it "holds that the entire universe is made up of five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space. Within the body Tibetan doctors (*amchi*) recognize three *nyepas* – the 'forces' of wind, bile and phlegm – that are specific combinations of the five elements" (n.pag, International Institute for Asian Studies). Further research on Tibetan culture and Tibetan medicine may be done from the theoretical perspectives of culture studies.

Prajwal Parajuly, an Indian-Nepali writer, broadly describes this interconnection and highlights the unity in diversities among the communities of this region in the following way:

> The minute someone from the Himalaya encounters another person, there's a bond. . . .There are far too many similarities. Nepali folk songs in Sikkim bear an uncanny resemblance to those in Kumaon.
>
> We eat the same foods. We marvel at the simplicity of people from the mountains. Wherever in the Himalayas we may be from, we are wary of the plainsman. We clutch our wallets tighter the farther down into the plains we descend. (Koushik Goswami, Facebook message to Prajwal Parajuly March 14, 2020)

Parajuly further points out the similarities and differences between the communities living in the Himalayas. Food and folk songs have connected these communities. They share same food habits. He elaborates how this bond creates a Pan- Himalayan identity in the following ways,

> Our ghost stories are similar. Our tales of struggle are similar. The narrative—the innocent hill folk being taken for a ride by the wily plainsperson—is as pronounced in, say, Kalimpong as it is in Ranikhet.
> There could be a Pan-Asian Himalayan identity. (Because Pakistan and Afghanistan are difficult to get to, I'd exclude them for now). But with the rest of the region, the realisation that we are more united by our similarities than divided by our differences is hitting us more in recent years. (Koushik Goswami, Facebook message to Prajwal Parajuly March 14, 2020)

India has a strong sense of bonding with Tibet and Nepal. Parajuly's references to the common 'ghost stories,' 'hill folk' and 'tales of struggle' are very symbolic as all these connect the different communities in a single 'us.' Sujeev Shakya, a Nepali writer, has effectively addressed this connection in the following way,

> . . . our [Nepalese] sense of the country we belonged to was limited to the singing of the Indian national anthem during school functions or when a VIP visited our school. When the Nepali national anthem praising the Nepali king and country became a daily ritual on Radio Nepal, we did not mind that either. On 10

> March, when people would come out on the streets decrying the Chinese occupation of Tibet, I used to feel a sense of affinity, as many of my friends, their parents, and their communities would be part of this annual saga. (Shakya 2018, 1-2)

Shakya's above remarks indicate a sense of familiarity, affinity and bonding between individuals of Indian, Tibetan and Nepalese origin. They participate and support one another at critical situations. Jamyang Norbu, a Tibetan exilic writer, in this respect, points out to the fact that how Tibetan and Indian world have been intermingled together. Norbu points out how Tibetans are dispersed in different parts of India and how they are connected ethnically and culturally:

> When you look at the whole Himalayan region – from western Pakistan to Ladakh and then to the Himachal Pradesh, even to the Uttarakhand, then going all the way to Bengal and Arunachal Pradesh – these are all Tibetan speaking areas. . . . Ladakh is closer to the Tibetan world because the Ladakh Royal family claim that they are the descendants of the Tibetan empire; down to some parts of Nepal, namely the Sherpa areas, all of these are clearly Tibetan, not politically but ethnically and culturally. . .. (Goswami 2023, 157).

Norbu further remarks that he sees these Tibetans not from a political point of view but from a secular and cultural point of view. He says,

> If we look at the Northern region, we find that these people share a kind of heritage. That is why after the 1962 disaster [Indo-Chinese War], Indian government wanted Tibetans to be appointed into the paramilitary force. Because the only people who can operate quite safely across the borders are Tibetans. . . . The Indians respect the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. Even the Dalai Lama is the guest of India. The Muslim community in Ladakh still recites the Tibetan epic of King Gesar. This is very strange but it is still going on. The Dalai Lama had attempted to preach Buddhist scriptural teachings to the people of these areas who wanted to join Tibetan monastic universities in Varanasi or in other places in India. There are many young Indians from the border areas who are now working as teachers at the Tibetan monasteries. They are also a part of Tibetan world. So, the two different worlds have intermingled with each other, and I think it is quite positive in many ways. *I don't see it from a religious point of view*. For me it is very important because the literary tradition that Tibetans share with India is somehow flourishing it. (Goswami 2023, 157).

The remark cited above highlights how different communities in India are interconnected. Tibetan culture has a deep impact on the other communities like

Muslim community in India. In this respect, Norbu also mentions the powerful impact of Tibetan monasteries and the preaching of Dalai Lama all over the world. When we probe into the behavioral pattern of the characters in the literary works from these regions, we usually find how the Himalayan spirit and ideology shapes the character originating from countries like Tibet, Nepal, Sikkim or the like.

Misrepresentation and Stereotyping: Tibet and Nepal

The modern experience of migration from the Himalayan region is part of a far longer history of interconnection between a nation and the diaspora – between 'home' and the wider world. The history and sociology of Tibetan exilic-diaspora, Bhutanese diaspora and the Nepalese diaspora, are different from one another but they occur from the same Himalayan belt, and have some points of intersections as well. There is a substantial presence of Nepalese, Tibetan, and some Bhutanese population in India. They are particularly concentrated in some territorial zones (cities and states) in India such as Sikkim, Himachal Pradesh (Dharamshala), Siliguri, Darjeeling and so on. India may even legitimately be called a diasporic space for them. India as a diasporic space for the Tibetan and Nepalese are mostly hospitable. North and north-eastern parts of India belong to the Himalayan region. That is why India is more acceptable to them for ethnic, religious, cultural and other reasons.

Besides India, many Tibetans and Nepalese are now settled in different remote parts of the world like the U.S., the U.K., Canada, Bhutan, and the like. Being alienated from their homeland, particularly from the unique geocultural zone of the Himalayas, these Nepalese and Tibetans face different kinds of problems such as problems of adjustment, alienation, clashes in values, environmental issues and so on. They miss Himalayan culture, food and other things related to this zone. In the diasporic land, the acculturation process is an ongoing issue. However, in the West the reception of Tibet, Nepal and other neighboring nations as well as the immigrants from these countries, are mainly based on false ideologies. They are stereotyped and misrepresented. The Himalayan region, its remoteness and inaccessibility, and unfamiliar features of its inhabitants have fostered wild imagination in the West. Since the people living here have

'deviant' cultural habits, they are subjected to stereotypes, particularly when they are in the diasporic spaces. It is quite natural, therefore, that the inhabitants of Tibet and Nepal should often be misrepresented and stereotyped in some literary works, specifically those produced in the West.

Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines the term 'stereotype' as a "fixed idea or image that many people have of a particular type of person or thing, but which is often not true in reality" (2010, p.1516). Since the truth value of stereotyping is very much in doubt, and since stereotyping becomes the tool of misrepresentation in cultural fields, it should be critically examined. Stuart Hall rightly remarks, "Stereotyping reduces, essentialises, naturalises and fixes difference" (1997, 257-58). This stereotyped practices, according to Stuart Hall, are employed to construct negative images of an individual or communities. Marginalised, and often small communities become the victims to stereotyping and racist, casteist, and sexist slurs. Tibet and Nepal also encounter essentialisations in cultural representations.

Tibet was known as the 'forbidden land.' It had been isolated and unreachable to the rest of the world for a long time. As I have argued elsewhere[6], this inaccessibility of Tibet engendered inquisitiveness, and this led to the creation of false notions, imaginations, and interpretations. Dibyesh Anand rightly remarks,

> Tibet is not some prediscursive geographical entity but a place that is discursively constructed through the imaginative practices of the various [f]actors involved. Similarly, Tibetanness is not some essence of Tibetan life but is the politicized articulation of themes of identity and difference, of commonality and distinctiveness. And indeed the representational regimes, even though productive, tend to restrict and contain the options available for self-expression. This productive-cum-restrictive impact of Western representations on the identity of Tibet as well as on Tibetan identity reflects a trait of modern representational regimes in general. (2007, xviii)

[6] Some of the arguments and ideas presented in this section regarding stereotyping of the Tibetans have been elaborately discussed in my book *Reimagining Tibet: Politics of Literary Representation* (Routledge, 2023).

The phrase ‘representational regimes’ here refers to the corpus of the Western cultural products which are powerful enough to create an impact on the readers spread across the world. The messages embedded there are disseminated widely through a carefully built-up channels of distribution and sales. These cultural products are packed with ideological power and hegemonic politics. Representation is indeed a powerful tool capable of creating a hierarchy between the Occident and the Orient. The word ‘regimes’ refers to the prevailing dispensation that exercises its power primarily through different modes of cultural representations.

Dibyesh Anand also talks about various strategies employed in the representation of Tibet particularly. These include eroticisation, infantilisation, gerontification, idealisation and debasement. Eroticisation is a particular mode of gazing at an object (such as an individual or a community). The target of the gaze is reduced to an object that offers erotic pleasure or is a vicarious means of sexual gratification. Objects such as dress, looks, ways of delivering speech, behaviour pattern are employed in representations to eroticise an individual and community. Geronification is another way of looking at a person – the object of gaze is invested with the negative qualities of aging. He or she is treated as one incapable of activities that young people can easily perform. The person is imagined as infirm, non-performative, lazy, catabiotic, forgetful, neurotic and senility. Infantilisation, yet another tool of stereotyping, is a process of looking at an adult as a child. S/he is supposed to be one with no adult intelligence, wisdom, experience and mental development, one who is ignorant of the ways of the world. Idealisation and debasement are two opposite ways of stereotyping, the first positive and the second negative, in which one is placed on the opposite ends of a binary. The idealisation of a community is often employed as part of politics to debase and vilify another. Asian American community in the United States is idealised as a ‘model minority’ to foreground the backwardness and ‘debasement’ of the African American community there. Feminisation is another widely applied mode of stereotyping. It reduces a person to a domesticated, powerless feminine subject who is supposedly lacking in male intelligence and worldly skills.

In both literary works and visual technologies Tibet is stereotyped through the above mentioned 'ideological typecasts' such as infantilisation, gerontification, eroticisation, and the like. In Western popular imagination, Tibet is stereotyped as a place of mystery which has an exotic culture. It is also essentialised as 'Shangri La', 'a mythical Himalayan Utopia', or the like. In some of the works like James Hilton's novel *The Lost Horizon* and Herge's comics *Tintin in Tibet*, Tibet is stereotyped in various ways. Shangrilisation of Tibet gave rise to slanted views of Tibet. Regarding these stereotypes, Guido Vogliotti rightly remarks:

> If the man in the street were asked today to name the main characteristics of Tibet that spring to mind, he would probably come up with some clichés like: the Dalai Lama, monks in dark mysterious monasteries, snow-capped mountains in a remote and inaccessible country, levitation, reincarnation, ritual implements, secret initation [sic; correct word 'initiation'] ceremonies and so on. The prevalent idea of Tibet is that it is remote, mysterious, impenetrable, forbidden, esoteric, pure. (2014, 1)

Due to lack of direct knowledge and the prejudiced and biased notion about Tibet, one may find a gap between Tibet as a myth and as a reality. Rinchen Lhamo in her book *We Tibetans* (1926) expresses her resentment against the 'falsehood' and misconceptions prevalent about Tibet. She observes:

> Some of the statements made about us display *total ignorance*, and others *malice*. Some are *wrong* but harmless; others made me laugh at the *absurdity* of them; still others made me *angry*. Why should people write *falsehood* about us, why should they write at all of things they do not know? (v; emphases added)

Her observation criticizes the politics of misrepresenting the other culture. She also questions the powerful hegemonic gaze that distorts the reality of the community. Tibet generates curiosity among the European travellers who consider the country 'almost voyeuristic' (Bishop 1988, 177). It takes a large place in touristic vocabulary. Many western travellers, missionaries (Jesuit missionaries from the West, the Jesuit father Antonio de Andrade from Portugal and the like), imperialists, religious seeker, geographer, mountaineers, and the like visited Tibet. However, as Ian Burma rightly points out,

> it was never the actual place [of Tibet] that fired the imagination of romantic seekers: it was the idea of Tibet, far away,

> impenetrable, isolated in the higher spheres of the earth. (qtd.in Anand 2007, 37)

The visitors thus romanticise and exoticise the place – Tibet becomes a highly fictionalised, fabricated representation – a figment of their imagination. It is a kind of mythicization that displaces the 'real' Tibet, one that is familiar to those who live there. Tibet is thus rendered into 'a land of a utopian Shangri-La, the Eternal Sanctuary, the Forbidden Shrine, and so on and so forth' (Mi and Toncic 2011, 44). Mi and Toncic rightly remark,

> Under the construction of the imperialist imaginary, Tibet finally emerged as a heterotopia, a no-man's-land— a site of peace, simplicity, naturalness and the "Noble Savage"—standing between a pre-industrial but culturally sophisticated China and an already industrialized and urbanized West. (44)

Guido Vogliotti in the article "Western Visions of Tibet" (2014) describes how Tibet is imagined by the Western world. Vogliotti further refers to Western mythologies of Tibet and the Theosophical ideas related to the process of myth making. It was believed that Tibetan lamas had the telepathic power. Cyril Henry Hoskin, a British author, whose pen name was Lobsang Rampa, wrote a book entitled *The Third Eye* that intensifies these myths. Vogliotti rightly remarks about this in the following way,

> *The Third Eye* is the perfect example of how the West can be easily deceived into believing what it wants to believe; it has all the ingredients that will attract a credulous class of readers—body possession, magic and mystery, ancient Egypt, caverns under the Potala, man-lifting kites, the yeti, a Shangri-la valley, astral travel, Theosophical spiritualism, giant extraterrestrial gods from Tibet's prehistory, telepathy, telekinesis and such balderdash' (2014, 4).

In this regard, Anand remarks,

> Yeti, time travel, hypnotism, telepathy, levitation, astral travel, clairvoyance, invisibility — Tibet is a land of possibilities! It combines mysticism and fantasy, being both a lost horizon and a future utopia. (2007, 62).

Vogliotti classifies the essentialised beliefs of the West about Tibet into following seven categories:

1. Tibet is an inaccessible, mysterious country (a lost realm).
2. Tibet is a repository of secret doctrines and a power place.

3. Tibet is a peaceful, pure land where Buddhism reigns.
4. The Tibetan lamas have supernatural powers: levitation, inner warmth (*gtum-mo*), fast running (*rlang-sgom*).
5. Tibet has secret places (*sbas-yul*, hidden valleys), sacred spaces that can only be accessed by the initiated. Utopian societies thrive in these secret places where famine, violence and poverty are unknown and where eternal youth can be enjoyed.
6. Tibet is a safe haven . . . against the evils of the Western world, it has a continuous, unchanging tradition. It preserves the values the West has lost, it is outside the turmoil of history, sheltered from modernity.
7. Tibetan religion and spirituality are of a superior nature. (5-6)

In a similar fashion, Nepal and the Nepalese have also been consistently misrepresented. Most people in the West are ignorant about Nepal. Thus, they stereotype the Nepalese in various ways. In the diasporic space the Nepalese have been racially discriminated all over the world. Racialisation in fact is a form of stereotyping because it essentialises a community. In this context, Samrat Upadhyay, a Nepali diasporic author, provides his own experience in the United States:

> I have felt racially discriminated, but more in my younger years as a student. I must say that given my position as a writer and a professor, I personally haven't felt as discriminated against recently, but there is a great deal of systemic racism in the US, as recent events have demonstrated, especially under the Trump administration. As with any other groups, especially South Asians, Nepalis are stereotyped in the US. But they are also stereotyped in South Asian countries, where they are mostly seen as "bahadurs" who make excellent guards. It's the writer's job to break open these essentializations and provide new perspectives. (Goswami 2022, n.pag)

Upadhyay, in the above quote, shares his own experience. He mentions how he himself has gone through different phases of racial discrimination. He critiques the 'systemic racism in the US.' Nepal is often imagined in the context of India. It is sometimes wrongly considered as a part of India. Some stereotypical images such as those of loyal guards, violent individuals, and subservient servants are used to define and describe Nepalese.

The tourists flock to Thamel and other touristic sites which are carefully maintained to cater to the needs of the tourists. When they go back, they

metonymically take these places as representative of the entire country. This too contributes to the misconception about the country. The locals too cater to the expectations of the tourists and sell stereotyped images of the country. Nepal is "viewed in terms of other countries and through touristic vocabulary" (Goswami 2016, 266). Goswami rightly points out:

> Tourists flock to the country to experience the spectacular and to satisfy their desires. But selling Nepal as an exotic place also becomes the core business for the Nepalese as well. Nepal's unique territorial position and natural beauty is pressed into service for selling Nepal. Thamel, the epicentre of touristic activities, is not the real Nepal. One needs to scratch beneath the surface to find what really constitutes Nepal. Problems like poverty, casteism and unemployment surface occasionally beneath the glittering façade. (Goswami 2016, 267)

This production of Nepal is recycled, feeding the course of wrong images. "Nepal has been overwhelmingly feeding the desires of the tourists and the profit drive of the Nepalese businessman" (Goswami 2016, 268).

In the context of such widespread misrepresentation, it is necessary to examine the writings of Nepalese and Tibetan writers. They mostly contest the biased and stereotyped images of Nepal and Tibet and try to reconstruct the actual socio-cultural and political conditions of the two countries and reproduce the rhythms of lived experiences of the common people in their literary works.

Historicising Tibet and Nepal

The literary works produced by Nepalese and Tibetan diasporic authors are informed of the historical developments both in their homeland and the hostland. Many of the characters in the novels speak of history and even participate in history. This history is related to the accounts of foreign aggression, civil war, bloody uprising, killings of innocent people, and the overall living conditions of the common men and women. Their history is also one of migration from the home country to the diaspora. The bodies of the migrants bear witness to the history, their minds recapitulate the history and they see new chapters of history unfolding before their eyes. Hence it is important to have a look at the political history of Tibet and Nepal and the history of migration from these two nations.

The Chinese annexation and occupation of Tibet in 1950s have been followed by violence and trauma and resulted in the displacement of the Tibetans from their native land to different parts of the world. Chinese perception of the Tibetans has all along been that of a coloniser – they consider Tibet as an "old feudalistic society without any scope for modernisation" (Rathee 2010, 13). Chinese imagination of Tibet is influenced by power politics. A biased notion about the Tibetan ethnicity and civilisation has been created by the military might of the People's Republic of China. It considers Tibetans as uncivilised, superstitious and backward people and they try to control the bodies as well as the minds of the Tibetans. They imprison, torture, and humiliate the Tibetans who go against the rule imposed on them. China's relationship with Tibet is one between the coloniser and the colonised. Gyaneshwar Chaturvedi rightly remarks,

> The Chinese discourse about Tibet first *constructs* the 'Tibetan Other' and then *demonises* it, thus creating a comprehensive ideological rationale for the subsequent multi-pronged assault on the very identity of Tibet" (qtd. in Bernstorff and Welck 2002, 73; emphasis added,).

Such objectification of Tibet is an ongoing process. Chinese attitude and ways of looking at Tibet and treating Tibetans is thus overtly imperialist in nature.

The major conflict between Tibet and China is based on the matter of accepting or denying Tibet as an independent nation. Tibetans consider Tibet as an independent nation with three provinces – U-Tsang, Kham and Amdo. However, China considers Tibet as their own property and a part of their country. Dibyesh Anand in *Geopolitical Exotica*: *Tibet in Western Imagination* rightly says,

> The contemporary Chinese claim over Tibet is based on a version of Chinese history that sees the present-day nation-state as a successor to a longer history of Chinese civilization marked by a number of imperial phases. Tibet was historically linked with various Chinese empires and therefore the Chinese deem it part of modern China. What the exact nature of Tibet was within different empires in China is not considered a crucial factor, for what is important is that Tibet was subordinate to the Sino-centric empires. It is this historical subservience that underpins the argument asserting Chinese sovereignty over Tibet *forever.*' (2007, 65-66; emphasis added)

Tibet has now been under the supervision and surveillance of the Chinese army. The ground reality there has caused a large-scale exodus of Tibetan communities and they are now scattered all over the world.

Tenzin Tsundue, a Tibetan activist and writer based in India, in this context rightly points out:

> In 70 years of Chinese occupation China has changed into the world's industry [sic] and the only religion left in China is money. We fight with nonviolence and His Holiness the Dalai Lama is leading the movement. Our country may not be free today, but we are. And one who has freedom in the heart will remain free. Of course, Tibet will be free. Insallah. Prayers for China. Prayers for freedom and democracy in China (Goswami 2023, 23).

The above remark reveals the covetous and insensitive nature of the contemporary Chinese regime. China has now lost all moral values and been reduced to the status of a pillager in search of material gains. He declares China as a 'thief' who had looted the land of Tibet.

Chinese occupation naturally led to the displacement of the Tibetans who took shelter in Nepal, Bhutan, and different parts of India. Since 1959, following the trails of the Dalai Lama, many Tibetans entered India and took refuge in Dharamshala. However, the condition of Tibetans settled in Tibet is more critical as they face the Chinese oppression and victimisation directly. They are the worst sufferers of Chinese colonialism. The performance of their social, cultural and religious practices is made subservient to the whims of the Chinese regime. Thousands of temples and monasteries have been destroyed. It has been widely known that China has been committing 'physical and cultural genocide' for a long time.

These Chinese atrocities compelled Tibetans leave their homeland and migrate in different parts of the world. There are three stages of Tibetan emigration. The first stage (1959) took place after the Chinese occupation of Tibet. Alongwith Dalai Lama, approximately 80,000 Tibetans entered India and settled in Dharamshala in Himachal Pradesh and some other places. These refugees included monks, lamas, nuns and soldiers. The second stage started in the 1980s

> and increased steadily up to the mid-1990s. Between 1986 and 1996, the Indian government admitted 25,000 Tibetans. . . . About 44 percent of the people in the second wave of refugees were monks and nuns. (MacPherson et.al 2008)

In the year 1990, more than 100000 Tibetans from Tibet came in Sarnath to join Kalachakra ceremony. The third stage started in 1996 and it continues today. "In 1998 … 2,200 Tibetans arrived in India, most of whom were monks or nuns seeking religious sanctuary and education" (MacPherson et.al 2008). Many Tibetans left their homeland to avoid the regime of strict surveillance and constant torture. Besides India, many Tibetans are now settled in Nepal, the United States, Switzerland, Canada, the United Kingdom and so many other countries. In the 1970s, Tibetans started migrating to the United States and Canada. In Canada they are settled in places like Ontario, Alberta, British Columbia and the like.

On the other hand, Nepal is a small country in the lap of the Himalaya. It is a country that has eight of the highest mountains in the world. Full of snow-covered plateaus, Nepal

> is the country of Lord Buddha, the world-famous brave Gurkha soldiers and a peace-loving people. The bio-culturally diverse society and the natural environment make Nepal a beautiful country. (Goswami 2022, 203)

It is officially known as the Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal. In critical discussions the presence of Nepal and other small neighbouring nations in South Asian is overshadowed by the presence of India.

> The geographical immensity of India's landscape and its overwhelming cultural presence has impacted upon the perceptions of the people of India's neighbouring countries like Nepal. (Goswami 2016, 263)

The history of Nepal is very complex. First it experienced the autocratic rule of the Rana regime. Nepalese people launched an agitation against the undemocratic rule of the Shah dynasty and established a People's Republic in 2006. The Maoist insurgency in Nepal from 1996 to 2006 took many lives. Nepal became a war-torn country.

This political uprising and civil war forced many Nepalese to flee from their homes. Gurung rightly remarks,

> The young preferred to go to the Gulf countries and Malaysia to seek job opportunities and a brighter future. Thus the agricultural country changed to a remittance-oriented country, remittances earned by its people living abroad. (Goswami 2022, 203)

In this case of displacement / migration, Nepalese people are no longer rooted in one place. They form a diasporic space where they create two kinds of Nepali diasporic communities: (1) Non-Resident Nepalese, and (2) People of Nepalese origin with citizenship of foreign countries. In the book *Nepalese Diaspora and its Literature: Emotion and Expression* (2020), Dr Ramji Timalsina follows Amar Nembang Limbu's classification of the history of Nepalese migration into 'three waves.' The first phase "contains the period when Nepalese people migrated to India, Sikkim, Bhutan, Tibet and China from many centuries ago to AD 1815" (Timalsina, 2020, 38). The nature of the migration during this period was based on both pull and push factors. Michael Hutt points out that "many emigrants of this period 'were not driven out of their homeland except by economic conditions, they do not yearn to return'" (qtd. in Timalsina 38). Hutt further states that a "group of 32,000 Limbus from eastern Nepal was forced to migrate because of 'Gorkhali's punishment to local chiefs;' they soon settled in Assam, Bhutan and Sikkim" (qtd. in Timalsina 38).

The second wave of Nepalese migration, according to Timalsina, 'extends from AD 1815 to 1970s.' During this period,

> large scale Nepalese migration was confined to India; and it was, in a small amount, also to Burma, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Fiji, Britain and other parts of the world where the Gurkhas reached for warfare. (Timalsina 38)

"[C]ontemporary migration out of Nepal to new destinations like the Europe, the Americas, the Oceania and the Gulf" (Timalsina 39) which began in the 1980s constitute the third wave.

The Nepalese communities are now scattered in different parts of the world. "[T]hey are preferred as soldiers by the British; they were also encouraged to migrate to India for road construction, clearing of forests, agriculture, work on tea plantations and so on" (Subba and Sinha 2016, 4). After 1950s or more particularly after Maoist insurgency, they began to disperse to different Western

countries including Britain, Hong Kong, Switzerland, Malaysia, Singapore and the like. Unlike Tibetan diasporic communities, Nepalese communities are very much eager to acculturate with foreign cultures. The North-East of India is a zone where they have gathered in large numbers and created their own socio-cultural zone. The core motto of some of the Nepalese migrants is to practise and preserve their traditional, religious and cultural identity even in the diasporic space.

> They have migrated from Nepal with their Nepali 'socio cultural baggage' and have planted it in a new land. They try to preserve their distinct Nepalese cultural identity despite their economic assimilation in the hostland workforce. (Timalsina 38)

In both the cases of Tibetan and Nepalese diaspora, India plays an important role. The major epicentre of Tibetan diaspora is in Dharamsala. On the other hand, migrated Nepalese have created 'little Nepals' in the North-East region of India. This diasporic experience, as mentioned earlier, gave rise to many literary works. Chandra Gurung rightly remarks,

> Literary works produced during this period depict the transitional phase of Nepalese society and politics. These changes and the dilemmas that the country has faced in recent years have found expression in succeeding literary genres. (Goswami 2022, 203)

Gurung's remark is also applicable to the case of emerging Tibetan literary works.

This Ph.D. dissertation will focus primarily on the select novels and stories of two Tibetan authors (Thubten Samphel, and Tsering Namgyal Khortsa) and three Nepalese diasporic authors (Manjushree Thapa, Samrat Upadhyay and Rabi Thapa). It will critically explore Thubten Samphel's *Falling through the Roof* (2008), and Tsering Namgyal Khortsa (*The Tibetan Suitcase: A Novel*, 2015). Among the Nepalese literary works, it will discuss Manjushree Thapa's novel *Seasons of Flight* (2010), select stories from her *Tilled Earth* (2012) as well as Rabi Thapa's *Nothing to Declare* (2011), and Samrat Upadhyay's *Arresting God in Kathmandu* (2001) as well as *Mad Country* (2017). The thesis will analyse the nation-diaspora interface as it appears in the works mentioned above in this paragraph.

The authors this thesis will deal with are scattered in different diasporic spaces. Manjushree Thapa is based in Canada while Samrat Upadhyay is settled in the U.S. Rabi Thapa is now settled in London. Among the Tibetan authors I will deal with, Thubten Samphel and Tsering Namgyal Khortsa live in India. The geo-cultural locations of the authors are important as they determine the nature of their response to both the diasporic space and their original homeland. Material condition of the countries, their cultural and civilisational features, and the policies of the Governments, the attitude of the citizens towards the refugees and immigrants, all these factors combine to shape up the quality of life lived by the immigrants. These also ignite their desire either to return 'home' or to settle down in the diaspora. Debates regarding the interface between nation and diaspora are generated particularly in this context. These also lead to the birth of various discourses regarding homeland, hostland, nostalgia, hybridity and the like.

There are seven chapters in this thesis including Introduction and Conclusion. Introduction, as discussed so far, mainly concentrates on the basic thrust of my research, stereotyping of Tibetan and Nepalese communities, history and politics of the Himalayan region.

Chapter 1 will mainly concentrate on literature review. Books written on this area would be discussed and critically reviewed. It will subsequently address the research gap and introduce the thrust are of my research.

Chapter 2 is entitled "Theorising Nation and Diaspora." This will build up a methodological framework informed by discourses of nation and diaspora. One of the objectives of this chapter is to understand the diasporic consciousness of the writers from Tibet and Nepal. Concepts such as home, homeland, 'borrowed homeland,' hostland, exile, refugees and immigrant will be explored in this chapter. The main focus will be the theorisation of the interface between the Nation and the diaspora. The theoretical implications of the term interface will be explained here. The theoretical framework built up in this chapter will be helpful in interpreting the select literary texts with which this thesis will deal with.

Chapter 3 entitled "Representing the Nation: Tibetan Diasporic Writers" will primarily analyse select Tibetan diasporic novels written in English: Thubten Samphel's *Falling through the Roof* (2008) and Tsering Namgyal Khortsa's *The Tibetan Suitcase: A Novel* (2015). These works deal with the exilic experience of the Tibetans. One of the objectives of this chapter will be to explore the nature of nation-diaspora dialectics. Through the critical discussion and investigation of the literary texts, this chapter will bring out Tibetans' effort to liberate the homeland, their sense of nostalgia, and the interface between "homeland" and the "hostland."

Chapter 4 is entitled "Representing the Nation: Nepalese Diasporic Writers." It will primarily explore Nepalese fictional works. People from Nepal have been migrating around the globe and their diasporic experiences have given rise to new literary works. This chapter would concentrate on some of the notable writers of Nepali diaspora. The focus will be primarily on the fictional works of Manjushree Thapa (*Seasons of Flight*, 2010; *Tilled Earth* 2012) and select stories of Samrat Upadhyay (from the book *Mad Country*, 2017), and Rabi Thapa (from the book *Nothing to Declare* 2011). Among them, Manjushree Thapa has published her account of "what has gone wrong" in Nepal. Thapa's fictional works are the results of her lived experience in the diaspora. Her stories in *Tilled Earth* (2007) deal sensitively with dilemmas faced by "immigrants who find themselves at home neither in their land of origin nor in their adopted country" (Gadgil n.pag). With deft touches, she evokes disparate lives of the Nepalese both in Nepal and abroad. This chapter will also deal with the works of Samrat Upadhyay and Rabi Thapa. Upadhyay and Thapa through their fictional and non-fictional works have highlighted the political turmoil, Maoist insurgency in Nepal and the Nepalese migration and their diasporic world. Their writings on home and diaspora also indicate how involved they were in interacting with their nation from the diasporic space.

Chapter 5 is entitled "Nepalese and Tibetan Diasporic Writers: A Comparative Analysis." This will primarily study the texts written by Nepalese and Tibetan diasporic writers through a comparative/contrastive lens. The analysis of the texts would bring out the vital differences between the Tibetan diaspora and the Nepalese diaspora. It appears that the consciousness of being subjected to a

colonial situation that caused the victim diaspora to take place makes the Tibetan writings nostalgic and oriented towards activism. The Nepalese diasporic writings, on the contrary, seems to be less nostalgic and look forward to the 'promises' offered by the diasporic existence.

The Conclusion will discuss how Tibetan and Nepalese networking and cyberspace activities have connected both the nation and the diaspora. It will be examined whether this is in sync with the findings of the earlier chapters. Subsequently, it will discuss how the findings of the present thesis would offer new insights and perspectives to the future researcher in this field.

Chapter 1

Literature Review

Chapter 1

Literature Review

Over the centuries quite a good number of books have been published on Tibet and Nepal. These two countries, as stated earlier, attracted adventurers, imperialists, scholars, tourists and others. We have already discussed that their interest mainly lay in the fact that Tibet and Nepal had immense natural beauty and romantic charm. However, out of their explorations emerged several categories of books and articles. Publications by Tibetan writers can be categorised under some specific sections.

Some publications on travelogue and adventure include Edward John Dingle's *My Life in Tibet* (1939) and Marco Pallis's *Peaks and Lamas* (1939). These two books provide details of the accounts of their journeys, mountaineering and Tibetan socio-cultural life.

Dingle's book is an autobiography in which the author dwells on his journey from Shanghai to China. As the title suggests, it talks about his life in Tibet. After thirty years, the author recalls the occult happenings that he experienced in Tibet – how the Tibetan spiritual masters used to walk on hot rods while meditating, and sit in frozen caverns, as well as how they leave the human world and return from a state of death. Similarly, Pallis's book, *Peaks and Lamas* is a travelogue that provides a detailed description of Buddhist Tibet and its socio-cultural life. The book is divided into four parts and each part contains several chapters. The first part of the book is based on the author's journey to the sources of the rivers, Ganges and Sutlej in the year 1933. In the first chapter of the book, "The Birth of an Expedition," Pallis discusses how he took up a journey to the Himalayas. The second chapter of the book entitled "The Pilgrim Way to Gangotri," gives a vivid picture of nature in the valley of the Bhagirathi and Ganges. The second part of the book provides details on Pallis's journey to Sikkim in 1936. In this part, he talks about the missionaries and moths in Sikkim, and considered Sikkim as the antechamber of Tibet. The third part of the book contains Pallis's documentation of his journey to the different parts of Ladakh in the

year 1936. The last part is the author's "afterthoughts" on the present status of Tibetan art, the education system in the border areas and so on.

Sven Hedin's *Trans-Himalaya: Discoveries and Adventures in Tibet* (1913) captures the pictures that the writer saw and encountered throughout his journey to Tibet. This book is a three-volume travelogue in which he shared his experience of meeting the 9th Panchen lama, his visit to the lake of Manasarowar and the sacred Mount Kailash and also recounts how he explored the sources of the Indus and Brahmaputra Rivers. William Montgomery McGovern's book *To Lhasa in Disguise* (1924) is yet another example of a work that describes a Western traveller's secret journey to Tibet. Through his journey, he narrates historical, political, economical and military situation of the country.

Lowell Thomas Jr.'s book *Out of this World: Across the Himalayas to the Forbidden Tibet* (1950) is an autobiography of an American traveller who along with his father took up a journey to Lhasa before the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet. This father-son duo were the last Westerners to reach Tibet before Chinese occupation. They were invited by the Tibetan authorities to make a film there as it would help to convince the US government to defend Tibet against possible Chinese atrocities. This book is a record of the trip that lasted for four hundred days. According to the author, the journey is "a climax to his father's lifetime of adventure" and "probably the greatest travel adventure I will ever have" (7). This book has nineteen chapters. In the first two chapters of this book Thomas discusses that they got an invitation to visit Lhasa and their preparations for the journey. Here Thomas records how he along with his father arrived in Sikkim where an Indian officer and his wife hosted them and they started their journey to Tibet in their caravans. They crossed the Himalayan barrier and reached Tibet. In this book, Thomas provides a vivid description of the Tibet's land and its people. In one of chapters entitled, "In Tibetan Homes" he captures the inside picture of Tibetan people's lives in their own houses, their ways of living, food habit, cultural and religious beliefs and so on. In the other chapters of this book, he shares his experience of visiting different monasteries and his meeting with the 14th Dalai Lama. In the chapter "The Dalai Lama's Family – and Others" Thomas talks about the life of the Dalai Lama and introduced his family members. Giuseppe Tucci's *To Lhasa and Beyond: Diary*

of the Expedition to Tibet (1956) and *Land of the Lamas: Adventures in the Secret Tibet* (1959) record the journey of Western travellers, missionaries and imperialists to Tibet. *To Lhasa and Beyond* was set before the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet in 1950s. The author describes various aspects of cultural life including religion, art, rituals of Tibet.

There are some publications on historical and political narratives. L.A. Waddell's book *Lhasa and Its Mysteries: With a Record of the Expedition of 1903–1904* (1905) describes how Lhasa lost its virginity. In this book, Waddell shared the experience of his first visit to the mystic forbidden land, Tibet. After returning from the war in Burmah (1885-86), he got an opportunity to visit Tibet's capital Lhasa and to explore different aspects of Buddhism. In the Preface to the book, Waddell claimed that for several years he lived near the Tibetan border at Darjeeling where there was a colony of Tibetan lamas with whom he got the chance to communicate. It generated curiosity in him to get to know those strange people better. So, he explored the Himalayan land and gathered information about the place's history and topography.

In his book *India and Tibet* (1910), Francis Younghusband describes Tibet from the imperialistic approach. This book highlights the relationship between British India and Tibet. It is Younghusband's own account of political expedition that he took up in the year 1904. It is a record of the political incidents that took place before the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet in 1910. One of those important political incidents is the treaty signed between Great Britain and Tibet. In the twenty-five chapters of this book, Younghusband deals with several issues such as Warren Hastings' policy, Manning's visit to Lhasa, the policies of China, negotiations with Russia and so on.

> In contrast to the image of Tibet as a utopian archive, Younghusband's account is mainly about self-affirmation, a defence of the British imperial project as ennobling for the British and as civilizing for others. (Anand 2007, 46)

Sir Charles Alfred Bell is one of the best- known writers on Tibet and his acquaintance with Dalai Lama helped him to gather information about Tibet. He is best known for *Tibet: Past and Present* (1992), *The People of Tibet* (1928) and *The Religion of Tibet* (1931).

In his book *Tibet: Past and Present*, Charles Bell deals with the history of Tibet from ancient times. The author gives an insight of the movements of the period witnessed by him. As he served for 18 years on the Indo-Tibetan frontier, he had a vast knowledge of Tibetan language and culture. This book also gives a close view of the political developments in Tibet that attracted world-wide attention. It is a classic study of Tibet's geographical status, early history and the forbidden place's relationship with the neighbouring countries. In the 'Appendixes' of this book, Bell listed 14 treaties signed between Tibet and other countries.

Another book, *The People of Tibet* written by Charles Bell speaks of the lives of the Tibetan people in their own homeland. This work is based on Bell's first-hand experience of the Tibetan life during his residence of nearly twenty years. It provides an in-depth view of the lives, culture and food habits of Tibetan people hailing from different classes. Bell points out that there had been little changes in the lives of the Tibetan people for the last thousand years as it is a less-explored region and completely shut-off from the outer world. As Tibet is a geographically inaccessible region and the intercourse of one part with the another is restricted, the life style, manners and customs vary in different provinces.

The Religion of Tibet by Charles Bell is a sequel to the author's *Tibet: Past and Present*. It provides an overview of the history of Buddhism in Tibet and its development through ages. In this book, Bell partially deals with the role of religious organisations, the lives of the Tibetan lamas in the great monasteries, religious customs and beliefs of the people and so on. in the first part of the book, Bell traces the history of Tibetan people, the life of Gotama Buddha and his enlightenment. It further discusses how Buddhism came to Tibet and became the national religion. Subsequently, in the second part of the book, the writer points out how the Tibetan monasteries rule over the population and His Holiness the Dalai Lama's role in this respect. One of his articles, entitled "Tibet and its Neighbors" discusses the place and history of Tibet and its relationship with neighbouring countries.

Laurie Hovell Mcmilin's book *English in Tibet, Tibet in English: Self-presentation in Tibet and the Diaspora* (2001) analyses the relationship between

Tibet and the West and narrates the history of Tibetan communities in India, Nepal, Tibet, Switzerland and the US. In this book Mcmilin deals with two types of self-presentation in Tibet and Tibetan diaspora. The book is divided into two parts. The first part entitled "English in Tibet" explores how the myth of epiphany dominates English texts of travel and the second part entitled "Tibet in English" gives details on how some writers have responded to the Western images. This part also deals with the Tibetan autobiographies in English, the life of His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his family, the reincarnate lamas like Chogyam Trungpa and Chagdud Tulku, lives of some prisoners like Palden Gyatso and Ama Adhe. One of the chapters deals with the information about the lives of the Dalai Lama's siblings, Jestun Pema and Thubten Jigme Norbu. Mcmilin also discusses Francis Younghusband's expedition to Tibet in one of the chapters of this book. *Return to Tibet: Tibet after the Chinese Occupation* (1983) by Heinrich Harrer, which was translated from the German by Ewald Osers, offers an overview of the situation of Tibet as a colonised nation. This book is a personal account of Harrer's experience in Tibet before and after the Chinese occupation and invasion of Tibet in the year 1951. After several years of effort to get permission for entry into Tibet from the Chinese government, Harrer joined a tourist party and took up the most awaited journey to Tibet. He gives a vivid description of the journey through Tibet. He draws a picture of Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, before and after the Chinese occupation. He also discusses Tibetan culture and the mysteries and miracles which the Tibetans believe in. This book contains information about His Holiness the Dalai Lama's flight to India. Milerepa, the first poet of the Himalayas also gives an overview on the future of Tibet as a colonised nation. Harrer includes an interview of the Dalai Lama's doctor, Dr. Tenzin Chodak who was arrested and imprisoned by the Chinese government. Harrer took Dr. Chodak's interview in which the doctor shared his miserable experience in Chinese jail.

Similarly, Harrer's another book, *Seven Years in Tibet* (1933) is an autobiographical work that is based on his real-life experiences in Tibet before the Chinese occupation. This book provides details of Harrer's flight from British Internment Camp in India to Tibet and his journey to Lhasa where he spent seven years. Harrer became a tutor to the 14th Dalai Lama. The book is set

against the backdrop of Second World War. It is divided into several chapters and the chapters contain detailed description of his life in Lhasa, Chinese invasion of Tibet and his departure from the "forbidden country."

Bryan J. Cuevas and Kurtis R. Schaeffer's book *Power, Politics and the Reinvention of Tradition: Tibet in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (2006) describes the history of Tibetan's culture and religion.

Exile as Challenge: The Tibetan Diaspora (2003), an edited book by Dragmar Bernstorff and Hubertus von Welck, offers an overview of the historical and political framework of Tibetan society in exile. The book is divided into three parts. Each part consists of several critical essays focusing on Tibetan culture, medicine, arts, education, Tibetan Youth Congress and so on. The first essay of this book, "Tibet, the 'Hidden Country,'" written by Michael von Brück, consists of the history of the forbidden/ 'hidden country,' Tibet and its status as a nation. Gyaneshwar Chaturvedi's essay "Indian Visions" reveals the Indian gaze towards Tibet. On the contrary, Joachim Glaubitz's essay "Chinese Views" highlights the Chinese gaze towards Tibet. This book also contains an interview with the 14th Dalai Lama, Tenzin Gyatso. The second part of this book, entitled "Tibetan Society in Exile," deals with the overview of exilic Tibetan society scattered in different parts of the world. It is a documentation of the lives of the people of the exiled Tibetan community in India and other parts of the world. The writers address Indian and Chinese views on Tibet. The essay "Government in Exile" discusses the role of Tibetan government in exile and the lives of the exiled Tibetans in Europe and different parts of the world. Interestingly, Thubten Samphel's essay "Virtual Tibet" highlights the role of media in the Tibetan cause.

There are also some Tibetan religious and spiritual books. L. A. Waddell's *The Buddhism of Tibet or Lamaism* (1895) portrays Tibet as a land of spirituality. This book traces the history of Buddhism in Tibet and describes how the people of this region practice Buddhism. It provides a fascinating inside view into the core of the religion. Waddell deals with different strata of Buddhism through factual documentation. According to Waddell, Tibetan Buddhism is unlike other schools of Buddhism. He defines Tibetan

Buddhism as Lamaism. This book also discusses the gradual development of primitive Buddhism to Lamaism, the religious rituals and festivals, the mystic cults and so on.

The cultural and religious issues of Tibetans in Britain are portrayed by David N. Kay's book entitled *Tibetan and Zen Buddhism in Britain: Transplantation, Development and Adaptations* (2003). It analyses the role of Buddhism and Zen Buddhist organisations in Britain. The Tibetan and Zen organisations in Britain follow New Kadampa Tradition (NKT) and the Order of Buddhist Contemplatives (OBC). The book is divided into four parts. Kay, in the first part of the book entitled, "Review and Contextualisation," discusses the process of transplantation, policies of adaptation and the impact of Buddhism on British culture and vice versa. The first part subsequently deals with the evolving literature on British Buddhism. The second part of the book, "The New Kadampa Tradition" puts emphasis on the Tibetan context of the NKT before its emergence in Britain, its background and cross-cultural context, the general history of NKT and its identity construction. The third part explores the history and gradual development of OBC, the development and innovation of Zen Buddhism and so on. The last section of the book contains an "Epilogue" that traces the recent developments within NKT.

Some books are based on mystery, myth and fantasy of Tibet. W. Evans-Wentz's *Tibetan Book of the Dead* (1927) and Alexandra David-Neel's *Magic and Mystery in Tibet* (1929) and *My Journey to Lhasa* (1991) exoticises Tibetan landscape as 'The Land of Snows' and explores the 'mystery' of Tibet.

The book *Magic and Mystery of Tibet* is based on the strange and mysterious land of Tibet and the lives of the people who live in this forbidden 'land of snows.' It is a record of Neel's fascinating journey to Tibet. She travelled for nearly fourteen years through the mysterious land of Tibet. The author is the only European woman who had been honoured with the rank of lama. Her knowledge on Tibet's cultural and religious beliefs and the lives of the Tibetan lama. The book is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter entitled Tibet and the Lamas deals with the author's encounter with the Dalai Lama who gave her advice to learn the Tibetan language. The chapter entitled, 'A Famous

Tibetan Monastery' contains information about the famous Kum-Bum monastery, Neel's visit to famous Buddhist monasteries in Japan, Korea, Peking, and Burma. This book also talks about the Westerners' misconception about Buddha and his reincarnation. In one of the chapters of this book, Neel explores the magical and occult practices conducted by the Tibetan occultists – how they survive without food and water, how they float in air, how they deal with the 'ghosts and demons' with their magical powers and bring the dead bodies back to life. In the last chapter of this book, Neel points out to the psychic phenomena of the Tibetans.

My Journey to Lhasa is an account of Neel's expedition to Tibet in 1923. In this travelogue, Neel recounts her journey to Lhasa, Tibet's forbidden capital city. This book gives vivid description of the author's perilous journey to Lhasa with her adopted son Yongden. She used her skill on Tibetan language and disguised herself as a beggar to enter into the 'forbidden city.' This book contains eight chapters and each chapter brings out the author's first-hand experiences in different parts of Tibet. The first chapter of the book deals with her attempt to enter into Lhasa by deceiving the Chinese security officers. In the next chapters she moves on describing her journey to Shigatse, Jakyendo, Po Country and so on. During the journey, she gathered various information about the lives of the people of those regions, their culture, food habit, beliefs and customs. In the last chapter of this book, Neel talks about her silent departure from Lhasa after living there in disguise for two months.

Lobsang Rampa, a British author, whose original name was Cyril Henry Hoskin, narrates Tibet as a land of mysticism and fantasy in his trilogy entitled *The Third Eye: The Autobiography of a Tibetan Lama* (1956), *Doctor from Lhasa* (1959), and *The Rampa Story* (1960). He believed that his body was possessed by the spirit of a Tibetan monk named Lobsang Rampa. Rampa describes Tibet as 'a theocratic country' without any 'desire for the progress of the outside world' (Rampa 1956:14). *The Third Eye* is set during the reign of the 13th Dalai Lama. Lobsang Rampa was a medical lama. The book contains eighteen chapters. In the first chapter Rampa describes his early life with his parents at his hometown in Tibet and also talks about the lives and culture of the Tibetans. In the next chapter he talked about his journey to become a lama and his life in the lamasery

as a disciple. The chapter entitled, 'The Opening of the Third Eye' is a record of a strange procedure of opening 'third eye' which Rampa had to go through. Rampa narrates the whole incident of how his guide operated his forehead with the help of an instrument and inserted a silver wood that would act as a third eye. It was believed that Rampa could sense the true aura of people with the help of his third eye. In one of the subsequent chapters entitled, 'Using the Third Eye' he talks about the supernatural power of his third eye. The last chapter captures Rampa's departure from Tibet to China. *Doctor from Lhasa* continues the story with Rampa's departure from Lhasa and living in China. There he continued his medical studies but he was captured by the Japanese. He was tortured in the jail until he escaped. This book has eleven chapters. The first chapter records his journey from Lhasa to Chungking in China. The chapter entitled "Medical Days" record his experience as a medical lama in Chungking. There he furthered his medical studies and became a surgeon. He also learnt to fly aeroplane. In one of the chapters entitled 'The Other Side of Death' Rampa shared his supernatural experience when he encountered a spirit. The last chapter of the book, 'The Bomb' records the bombing incident in Hiroshima. Lobsang was one of the very few survivors of the atom bomb.

The last book of this trilogy, *The Rampa Story* continues Rampa's journey as he travels from Korea to Russia that ends up in England. This book consists of ten chapters and each chapter contains Rampa's experience on his adventurous journey to different parts of the world. He provides ample description of the land and nature of those places. The first chapter records his arrival in China. In the second chapter of the book Rampa ruminates his childhood days and introduces his parents. According to his narration, his father was an important government official in Tibet. In this chapter he also talks about the role of an astrologer in Tibetan society. He shares an incident when an astrologer foretold Rampa's fortune when he was a new born baby. In the next chapter of the book, he gives information about his journey to Vladivostok in Russia where he confronted Russian soldiers and were arrested by them. The book ends when Lobsang headed for Atlantis.

Besides describing Tibet as a mystic and fantastic land, Rampa narrates how in Western imagination Tibet was the 'greatest storehouses' and a land of 'material wealth' where 'hundreds of tons of gold' can be found (206).

The book, *The Tibetans* written by Matthew T. Kapstein, provides an introduction to the less-explored Tibet and its inhabitants. This book provides a clear overview of the geography of Tibet, its history and culture. It also talks about the Tibetan myths, beliefs, social institutions, custom, food habit, religious tradition, art, literature and so on. The book divided into nine sections which contain several subsections. In the first section of the book, entitled 'The Vessel and Its Contents,' Kapstein discussed Tibetan's geographical location, the lives of the nomads and peasants who live in Tibet. The nomads were regarded as the archetypal Tibetans. This section also gives information on the economy of Tibet which is largely based on agriculture and trade. This book traces the history of Tibetan language and invention of the first Tibetan script. The section entitled, 'The Rule of the Dalai Lama' discusses the role of the religious institutions and the power of Dalai Lama. One of the sections of this book deals with the history of Tibetan empire, the monarchs and the introduction of Buddhism in Tibet. The last section of the book discusses Tibet's position in the modern world and the 'end of traditional Tibet.'

Peter Bishop in his book *The Myth of Shangri-La: Travel Writing and the Western Creation of Sacred Landscape* (1989) examines Tibet as a mystic place or Shangri-La. This book comments on the Western gaze on Tibet. The westerners often exoticise Tibet as a sacred of religious place. In the 'Introduction' of this book, Bishop gives general introduction of Tibet's geographical location and analyses how the Western imagination sees the country as a utopian place. This book has seven chapters. The first chapter identifies Tibet as an imaginary geographical land. It also catalogues the travel writings on Tibet, the texts written on Tibetan culture and the people of the land. One of the chapters deals with the discovery of Tibet by the Westerners.

West's distorted image of Tibet and Tibetans has been portrayed by Donald S. Lopez in his book *Prisoners of Shangri-La*: *Tibetan Buddhism and the West* (1998). However, he also addresses the issue of how Tibetans are trying to retain

Western people's idealised vision of Tibet in order to get sympathy from them and to fight against Chinese aggression in the 1950s. The book entitled *Imagining Tibet: Perceptions, Projections, and Fantasies* (2001) by Thierry Dodin and Heinz Rather provides a detailed description of the images of Tibet from various angles.

Dibyesh Anand's book *Geopolitical Exotica: Tibet in Western Imagination* (2007) is an important book that discusses "Tibet" as "Other" and the politics of representation of Tibetan transnational identity. This book deals with the Western gaze at Tibet. It examines the Western representation of Tibet and how the West exoticized Tibet. Anand here points out to the fact that because of Tibet's geographical location, it is a less-explored area and is isolated from the rest of the world. So, Tibet is often regarded by the Westerners as an 'exotic' and 'mystic' place. This book discusses Tibet's status as a colonised nation, its history, political representation and its lost identity. Anand divides the book into six chapters along with an 'Introduction' and a 'Conclusion.' The first chapter of the book deals with the world politics and the representation of Tibet as a colonised country. In one of the chapters entitled, 'Imagining the Other' Anand points out to the Western representation of Tibet that consider the Tibetans as 'others.' The chapter, 'The West and the Identity of Tibet' questions the 'identity of Tibet' and the 'Tibetan identity.' In the 'Conclusion,' Anand sums up the arguments established in different chapters of the book.

The book *We Tibetans*, written by Rinchen Lhamo, the first woman writer of Tibet, is a personal account of a Tibetan woman's life and experiences. In the 'Preface' of this book, the author, introduces herself as a woman of a Tibetan region named Kham. Her husband was an Englishman. He was a former British Consul on the Chinese frontier of Tibet. According to Lhamo, she came to know from her husband about the western perception of Tibet and its people. This book has twenty-two chapters which give an inside picture of the lives of the Tibetan people, their customs, beliefs, food habit, religious rituals, culture and so on. The book contains a lengthy 'Introduction' that covers a historical background of Tibet as a nation. It gives ample information about the ancient monarchs of Tibet from 5^{th} century BC and their ruling periods, the history and role of the Dalai Lama, Tibet's connection with China, role of Tibet in the world

politics, Tibet's struggle for autonomy and so on. The first chapter of this book provides a geographical picture of Tibet: its mountains and rivers, the second chapter deals with the economic structure of Tibet which is based on agriculture. In the next chapter, Lhamo discusses the Tibetan culture, Tibetan dress code and diet which is largely dependent upon 'tsampa.' The author also talks about her personal life: her life as a Tibetan woman married to an Englishman. In one of the chapters entitled 'Womanhood,' Lhamo points out to the position of a woman in Tibet. She claims that Tibetan men consider women as equals. They take full part in social affairs. Interestingly, in one of the chapters, Lhamo talks about different kind of games such as 'Woolf and Sheep' and 'Gun-dru' in which the Tibetan children usually take part. The book ends with a love story of a Tibetan couple who committed suicide due to their family problem.

The Struggle for Tibet written by Wang Lixiong and Tsering Shakya is a book that discusses how power structures operate in Tibet and traces the role of Chinese Communist Party in Tibet. This book contains an 'introduction' written by Robert Barnett, director of the Modern Tibetan Studies Programme at Columbia University. In the 'introduction,' of this book Barnett incorporates general introductory notes on the writers, Lixiong and Shakya and briefly discusses the history of Tibet. This book is divided into three parts and each part contains several sections. The very first section of the book delas with Tibet's ethnography and cultural history, the ruling system in Tibet and the flight of the Dalai Lama to India. The second section highlights the Chinese colonial attitudes towards Tibet, the emergence of Mao Zedong and his totalitarianism and so on. in one of the sections of this book, Lixiong deals with the history and function of religion in Tibetan society and the end of Buddhism in Tibet. The last part of the book contains an interview of Tsering Shakya. The conversation between Lixiong and Shakya provides a political overview on the reality in Tibet and the political and cultural atmosphere in Tibet Autonomous Region, Tibet-China relationship and the role of media in Tibetan cause.

None of the of the categories of works mentioned above deal with literary works. There is only one book in English that discussed Tibetan literary works partially. This book entitled *Resistant Hybridities* (2020) edited by

Shelley Bhoil contains twelve chapters, three of which are on Tibetan fictional works in English (and therefore relevant to this dissertation), three on Tibetan poetry in English and the rest are on Tibetan films, pop songs, music, protest pamphlets, performing arts, human rights and so on. The three articles which are on the fictional works deal with Jamyang Norbu's *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes*, Tsewang Yishey Pemba's *Idols on the Path* and Tsering Wangmo Dhompa's *A Home in Tibet*. *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes* is approached from the perspective of hybrid cartographies. *Idols on the Path* is discussed in the context of early nationalistic phase and *A Home in Tibet* is considered as a 'Tibetan Odyssey' dealing with the nostalgic elements.

Koushik Goswami's book *Reimagining Tibet: Politics of Literary Representation* (2022) is an important contribution to this field. It is written from the theoretical perspectives of gaze and representation. It talks about three kinds of literary representations: Western representation of Tibet, Indian representation of Tibet and Tibetan representation of themselves. It mainly concentrates on three novels: James Hilton's *Lost Horizon* (1933), Kaushik Barua's *Windhorse* (2013) and Jamyang Norbu's *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes* (1999). It subsequently explores Tibetan exilic writings and their activist movements in the diasporic space. How Tibetans are utilising the networking sites to gather and interact with dislocated Tibetan and to counter Chinese atrocities and occupation of Tibet, has been discussed in one of the chapters of the book. Interestingly, this book includes interviews of eight notable writers: Kaushik Barua, Jamyang Norbu, Tenzin Tsundue, Bhuchung D. Sonam, Thubten Samphel, Tsering Namgyal Khortsa, Tsering Wangmo Dhompa and Tenzin Dickie. All these interviews are very much useful for the researchers who are pursuing research in this area.

Besides these, there are some articles that deal with the myths and the history of Tibet.

Dibyesh Anand's article "Beyond Tibet" represents the history of Tibetans and diasporic consciousness of Tibetans living 'beyond Tibet.' This article provides an insight into the lives of the diasporic Tibetans' living in India, Nepal and the

Western countries. According to Anand, Tibet "is a product of post-exilic imagination" (211). So, Tibet is usually represented by the Tibetans living outside Tibet. Anand points out to the fact that the Tibetan identity is synonymous with Tibetan language and Buddhism but there are few Tibetans who do not follow Buddhism. This article also deals with the history of Tibetan diaspora which is a result of Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet. Tibetans try to preserve their culture and heritage even in the diasporic space. This article talks about the formation of pan-Tibetan culture and examines the role of Tibetan government-in-exile.

As to the studies on Nepal, Ali Riaz and Subho Basu's book *Paradise Lost? State Failure in Nepal* (2007) gives us a picture of political turmoil in contemporary Nepal, the history of state formation, Maoist insurgency, ethnicity and politics in Nepal. It talks about the political history of Nepal from the first monarchy in 1769 to the Rana regime in 1951. This book also covers some important state affairs in Nepal such as the decay of Royal autocracy, the revival of democracy movement and the establishment of parliamentary democracy in the year 1990, Maoist insurgence in 1996 and the royal massacre which took place in 2001. It analyses the ideological hegemony of the ruling class in Nepal and the clash between Nepali Congress and Communist party of Nepal (CPN). The second chapter of this book concentrates on the process of centralization and the categorization of people on the basis of their caste or ethnicity, the Dalit resistance movement in Nepal and the problematic concept of citizenship in the country. In one of the chapters of this book, the authors, Riaz and Basu point out to the economic crisis and 'lack of performance legitimacy' that caused the state failure in Nepal. In the chapter four of this book, the authors highlight the immense impact of Maoist insurgency in Nepal. The next chapter brings out the impact of the uprising in the year 2006 and the last chapter of this book comments on the current socio-political scenario in Nepal and the role of India in shaping the political outcomes.

Bradely Mayhew's book *Nepal* (2018) describes the history of Nepal and its neighbouring countries. Keshav Bhattarai's book *Historical Dictionary of Nepal* (2003) offers an overview of the chronological history of Nepal. A detailed

description of politics, economy, culture and history of Nepal is found in the book *Nepal* (2008) by Krishna P. Bhattarai.

Retheorizing Religion in Nepal (2006), a book by Gregory Price Gieve, offers us a picture of the traditional way of religious life and modernity in Nepal. "Category and Practice as Two Aspects of Religion: The Case of Nepalis in Britain" by Sondra L. Hausner and David N. Gellner is an article based on religious issues of Nepal.

The book *Global Nepalis* (2018) edited by David N. Gellner and Sondra L. Hausner is a compilation of twenty critical essays written by several writers. This book is divided into four parts and deals with the history of Nepali diaspora, the issue of belonging, the concept of 'homeland' and the lives of the Nepalis living in UK, USA, India and different parts of the world. The book talks about two types of diasporas: the 'old' and the 'new'. The first part of the book covers the old diaspora in Southeast Asia and beyond. This part mainly focuses on the lived experience of the Nepali marginal migrant workers in India, the lives of the Nepalis in Myanmar and their religious beliefs, the lives of the Nepalis of Fiji. The second part of this book focuses on the status of the urban migrants in Singapore, USA and the Gulf. This part also discusses the role of media and popular culture in Nepal. Subsequently, the third part of this book discusses the concept of new diaspora and also covers several issues like adaptations of religion in the diasporic land and the caste discrimination the Nepali Dalits face in England. The last part examines the impact of diaspora on the homeland.

Ramji Timalsina's book *Nepalese Diaspora and its Literature* (2020) is the only book that provides a theoretical discussion of the role of diaspora in Nepali literary creation. It also examines the development of Nepalese transnational migration and its role in Nepali diaspora. This book is divided into nine chapters which have several sections. The very first chapter gives a theoretical overview on migration and diaspora, transnationalism and different stages of diasporic formation. The third chapter deals with the definition and features of diasporic literature. In one of the chapters of this book, Timalsina examines the formation and history of Nepali diaspora and the development of Nepalese diasporic literature. This book also deals with fifteen Nepali poems which explores the

emotions and imagination of the Nepalese. The poems are written by several Nepali diasporic poets settled in the UK, the USA and Canada. Timalsina provides a diasporic reading of the poems and analyses the theme and stylistic feature of the poems. However, it does not deal with any fictional and non-fictional works written by Nepali diasporic writers in English.

Unleashing Nepal (2009) by Sujeev Shakya addresses the political instability and poor economic condition in Nepal. In this book, Shakya critically explains why Nepal remains one of the poorest countries in the world. As Shakya explains, a corrupt segment of the private sector prevents the development of legitimate economy in Nepal. This book is divided into three parts and each part contains several chapters. In the first part of this book, Shakya analyses the political history of Nepal which has impacted Nepal's economy. The first chapter entitled, 'Isolation, Isolation, And Isolation,' brings out the major reasons behind Nepal's isolation from the global economy. This chapter briefly discusses the history of Nepal during the reign of king Prithvi Narayan Shah (1743-1775). The second part of the book examines the political events which occurred between 1990 and 2012. The year 2012 is an important year for Nepal as it became a republic in this year. Part Three of this book highlights Nepal's potential to become an economically stable country. In this respect he indicates the economic opportunities in Nepal such as tourism, branding Nepali tea, coffee, handicrafts, hydroelectricity and so on.

Nepali Diaspora in a Globalised Era (2016) edited by Tanka B. Subba and A. C. Sinha contains critical essays on Nepalese diaspora and the migration of Indian Nepalis and Gurkhas. This book is divided into nineteen chapters with an 'Introduction' and a 'Conclusion.' The 'Introduction' discusses the Nepali diaspora and human migration since ages. The very first chapter of this book is an essay written by P.K. Misra. In this chapter, the author talks about the migration of the indenture labourers from eastern India to Trinidad and Tobago. The next chapter written by Bhim Subedi, deals with human migration from and to Nepal. Subedi also introduces the concept of 'ghumphir' which means wandering and 'basai-sarai,' which means permanent migration. This book also

covers the issue of belongingness among the Nepalese. A chapter written by Jens Seeberg focuses on the concept of 'perspectival anthropology' developed by de Castro. In this chapter, the author compares the view on the 'Gurkhas' found in the colonial discourses and Nepali literature and discusses the problematic concept of homeland. Some of the chapters bring out the state of the second-generation Nepalese immigrants in Assam. In the last chapter, Mitra Pariyar deals with the lives of the Gurkhas in UK.

An article "Hami Nepali?" written by Ulrike Muller-Boker deals with Nepali diaspora and the diasporic Nepalese subjects' sense of belonging. According to Boker, "the human sense of belonging not only has a social dimension, but also a territorial one:" (40). He points out to the displacement and migration of the Nepalese that cause change in their sense of belonging. In this respect Boker incorporates the concept of 'Othering' used by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Boker worked in Gorkha where the song 'Hami Nepali, hami Nepali' is chanted. This article briefly discusses Nepal's political history and the reign of Prithvi Narayan Shah, a Gorkha ruler. It also discusses the lives of Nepali people belonging to different ethnic groups or caste. Finally, Boker addresses two specific Nepalese diaspora: the 'Nepali diaspora in Delhi' and 'Nepali diaspora in Switzerland.'

The article of Ramji Timalsina, "Nepalese Diasporic Literature: Voicing the Silence from the Margin" develops the concept of Diaspora and the role of Nepalese Diaspora Studies in diasporic literature. It brings out the view of some diasporic critics on the characteristics of Nepalese diaspora. In this respect Timalsina gives reference to Abhi Subedi who has differentiated Nepalese diaspora community from Nepalese transnational and cosmopolitan communities. This article points out to the minor and marginal position that the old and new Nepalese Diasporas suffer in their hostland. The minority status put them in a position of marginality and discrimination.

"A little of Nepal: Nepali diaspora in the US in an age of globalization," an article by Lopita Nath, reflects on the issues of Nepali diaspora in the context of globalization. **I**t represents the Nepali immigration to the countries like USA, India and the countries of the Asiatic region. It also talks about DV Lottery

system that allows the Nepali people to immigrate to the USA. This article also highlights some of the important diasporic factors such as acculturation, assimilation, adjustment, issues of home, hostland and identity. It narrates how the Nepali diaspora has been affected by globalization and transnational migration.

Most of these books and articles mentioned above are written from political and historical perspectives. Some books are from the perspectives of religion, travel and adventure. There is practically no book exclusively on Nepalese and Tibetan diasporic writers. Some Tibetan and Nepalese Anglophone writers have started writing fictional and non-fictional works which are yet to be discussed and explored from different angles. Hence there is a huge research gap that needs to be filled up. This thesis is an attempt towards that direction. As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis will mainly deal with Tibetan and Nepalese diasporic literature. Among the Tibetan literary works, it will focus on two novels Tsering Namgyal Khortsa's *The Tibetan Suitcase* (2015) and Thubten Samphel's *Falling Through the Roof* (2008). On the other hand, among the Nepalese literary works, it will concentrate on Manjushree Thapa's novel *Seasons of Flight* (2010), select stories from her *Tilled Earth* (2012) as well as Rabi Thapa's *Nothing to Declare* (2011), and Samrat Upadhyay's *Mad Country* (2017). The common theme that is prominent in most of these works is nation-diaspora tension/binary. This thesis will address this aspect from the literary perspectives. With the help of select texts mentioned above and by analysing the theoretical perspective of diaspora studies, this thesis will critically analyse the nation-diaspora conflict.

Chapter 2

Theorising Nation and Diaspora

Chapter 2

Theorising Nation and Diaspora

The focus of this thesis is the intersection between nation and diaspora, and hence the literary works included in this thesis will be interpreted from that theoretical perspective. In the era of globalisation and cosmopolitanism, the idea of nation and its relationship with the diasporic world is constantly changing. In the world of transnationalism, the border between nation and diaspora is getting increasingly blurred. The idea of singularity of nation is gradually collapsing and the transnational subjects are getting increasingly used to the notion of plurality of nations. In such a context, transnational migrants and particularly the children of immigrants, are beginning to think of the diasporic space as the new nation. Initially they try to respond to the new nation space with their old mindset but the exposure to the new cultural space subsequently forces them to reformulate the idea of the nation. The image of the old nation, however, persists in the imaginary of the immigrants. In short, the idea of the nation remains problematic for the immigrant population. This seems to be true in the case of the Tibetan and Nepalese diasporic subjects as well as my subsequent analysis will attempt to establish.

Nation: An Overview

The people of a nation-state usually derive their identity from their lived experience in the territory. Originating from the Latin word 'natio,' literally meaning 'birth,' the word 'nation' refers to a large body of people having some common characteristics. They inhabit a particular bounded territory and share a common history, cultural and socio-political background, and often a common language. Benedict Anderson in his book *Imagined Communities* (1983) describes 'nation' as an 'imagined community.' He elaborates,

> It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. (6)

Interestingly, the role of imagination is foregrounded by Anderson – it is a faculty that constructs an ideological structure called 'nation.' Configuring an

idea like nation and nationhood thus involves an act of bodying forth an abstract concept that is Nation-state.

Regarding Anderson's concept of nations as 'imagined communities,' Paul James remarks,

> *Imagined Communities* is developed with exciting perspicacity. However, by so prominently centring the concept of imagination as the organizing principle, Anderson limits the reach of his argument. *This is not just a quibble over word choice. The concept is both too central and not sufficiently developed*. . . . Anderson acknowledges that 'all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these) are imagined.' In the same way, I have already noted that both tribal and national communities are, at different dominant levels, constituted abstractly (1996, 6; emphasis added).

In his definition of nation, James thus approaches the concept from a similar perspective. For him, it is an 'abstract' community. He observes,

> A nation is at once an objectively abstract society of *strangers*, usually connected by a state, and a subjectively embodied community whose members experience themselves as *an integrated group of compatriots*. (1966, 34; emphases added).

Like Anderson, he too underscores the element of the mutual unfamiliarity of the members of the constructed body. These strangers, though unknown to one another, share some common cultural features and interests and 'interact' on a particular issue through behaviour patterns and some channels of communication (such as the mass media like newspaper, radio, television, WhatsApp, and other electronic media). James rightly observes that 'strangers' in the nation are connected

> much more through the abstracting meditations of mass communications and the commodity market than we do at the level of the face to face, but we continue to use the metaphors of the face to face to explain its cultural power. (James 1966, xii).

Mass communications and the commodity market which operate smoothly and very fast are prioritised over 'face to face' meeting. Though the latter is more concrete in manner and more comprehensible, it is limited in scope. The formation of an 'imagined community' is possible only through a medium that disseminates messages speedily, widely and effectively. Mass communication, therefore, is the most suitable form of contacting large segments of people.

Newspaper, radio, television, email, and other forms of electronic media serve to bring together people of disparate backgrounds on the basis of their interests in the cultural, social, and political aspects related to their 'nation' and create a sense of togetherness. During a cricket match, for example, members of a nation feel at one with one another. This sense of unity may even be achieved in the diaspora, specifically if there are important issues at hand. One can think of the example of Tibetan nationalist activities in the diaspora. Virtual Tibetan activism has been carried out through 'mass communication' that creates a sense of community even outside the geographically identifiable nation space. This indeed amounts to an extension of the nation which overflows into the diasporic space. Circulation of books, speeches, organisation of protest movements against the Chinese who forcibly occupied Tibet serve the purpose of motivating the people of Tibetan origin who are now scattered in different corners of the world. This, in a way, generates a nationalist feeling that results in the gathering of the scattered people.

As a historical and cultural phenomenon, a nation thus brings together people of a community under the same umbrella. These people living in the same territory (and even beyond) are usually homogenised. Every nation has supposedly cultural and 'ethnic homogeneity' that helps a community to imagine their nation and create an identity based on shared everyday culture, cultural myths and history. This 'ethnic homogeneity' subsequently gives birth to a sense of nationalism.

In this context, two concepts, nation-state and state-nation, may be discussed. When the people of any nation have an independent state which enjoys sovereignty, it is called a nation-state. In a nation-state, the idea of a nation is built up based on ideas related to cultures, ethnicity, religion, language, geographical locations and so on. The term 'nation-state' indicates a system that is governed by people with a common cultural or national identity. In a state-nation, the term state is used interchangeably with nation. Unlike in a nation-state, the state "is a self governing political entity" (Rosenberg 2004, 1).

Ernest Renan introduces two important ideas – the spiritual nature of a nation and the issue of 'remembering' and 'forgetting.' In his essay entitled "What is a

Nation?" he interprets the term 'nation' in two contexts. One is concerned with remembering the history of the nation and relating it to the present situation. The other is related to the idea of amnesia. Ali Behdad in his book *A Forgetful Nation* (2005) describes America as a 'forgetful nation' and in this respect he also mentions the idea of 'amnesia.' Although his discussion is primarily based on America, in the case of Tibet, and China's relation / attitude towards them, both these terms could be discussed. Even in the postcolonial world, according to Behdad, the power politics of the superpower countries are seen towards the 'immigrant others' and subsequently the colonial policies are imposed upon them. "Behdad thus argues that in the very foundation of the American nation there is 'historical amnesia' which confirms the exclusionary nature of its social, political and legal practices" (Lahiri 2019, 66). How the powerful nations try to erase the history of the past of subordinate and marginalised people has been discussed here. Behdad describes the term 'amnesia' in two-fold ways:

a. "to signify a form of disavowal that entails a negative acknowledgement of what is historically and collectively repressed" (2005, xii).

b. "to mean a form of cultural disavowal that simultaneously denies certain historical facts and produces a pseudo-historical consciousness of the present" (2005, 4).

Repression of the true history and creation of the 'pseudo-historical consciousness' of the marginalised communities or nations are significant here. The history of violence, atrocities, insurgency, brutal killing against the weaker nations or people (in this case Tibet or Nepal) has been erased. Promises of unconditional hospitality takes the shape of hostility here.

Renan further opines that, "the nation, like the individual, is the culmination of a long past of endeavours, sacrifices and devotions" (2007, 20). According to him, a nation is a 'large scale solidarity' and the roots of the solidarity is ingrained in the emotions, devotions and sacrifices of the people. Ernest Gellner connects this solidarity to two important factors: will and culture. 'Will' is a kind of consent that is needed to form any small or large groups. 'Will', according to Gellner, is "the basis of a nation" (29). Gellner's theory of nationality is primarily based on "'One Culture' or ethnicity under one roof or

state." He further defines nationalism as a system where the ideology of the hegemonic groups is imposed upon the people belonging to the non-hegemonic groups. Andrezej Walicki who talks about constructivist perspective while discussing Ernest Gellner's ideology of nation states that constructive perspective "claims that nations are not anything real, objective or indispensable; they are only "constructs", contingent and artificial, deliberately created by various elites" (1998, 611).

The nature of the nation, however, does not remain static. Slavoj Žižek underlines the evolution in the following way:

> On the one hand, 'nation' of course designates modern community delivered of the traditional 'organic' ties, a community in which the pre-modern links tying down the individual to a particular estate. Family, religious group, and so on, are broken - the traditional corporate community is replaced by the modern nation-state *whose constituents are 'citizens'*: *people as abstract individuals, not as members of particular estates,* and so forth. On the other hand, 'nation' can never be reduced to a network of purely symbolic ties: there is always a kind of 'surplus of the Real' that sticks to it - to define itself, 'national identity' must appeal to the contingent materiality of the 'common roots', of 'blood and soil,' and so on. (Žižek, 1991, 20, emphasis added)

In the course of evolution, the nation moved away from the pre-modern 'organic ties' that the feudal society sustained and embraced the concept of the 'citizen' which does not evoke the old organic links but a new kind of abstract, imagined relationship that has been discussed earlier in this chapter. Going beyond the material reality of the small estates where mutual familiarity and lived relationship were conditions of reality, the citizens are tied together through political concepts such as the state and membership of the state (i.e., citizenship). Žižek, however, feels that the organic ties do not vanish altogether; some of these persist obstinately and coexist with the modern features of the nation. He views this coexistence of the old and new features in terms of a 'suture' – they are stitched together in the body of the nation:

> The crucial point is again to conceive both aspects in their interconnection: it is precisely the new 'suture' effected by the Nation which renders possible the 'de-suturing', the disengagement from traditional organic ties. 'Nation' is a pre-modern leftover which functions as an inner condition of modernity itself, as an inherent impetus of its progress. (Žižek 1991, 20)

The organicity does not persist uniformly in all nations, the quality and quantity may differ considerably. In some nations, for example in the Himalayan region, the organic ties may be stronger than those in the European nations because the power of symbols of religious and cultural bonds may run deeper in their history and sustain the organic link even in their modern nationhood.

This brings us to the concept of primordialism which, according to some theorists, play an important role in the formation of a nation. It works at different layers and helps one to imagine the nation through some primordial connection, tribal affiliation and family bonding. Such connections are ancient and supposedly fixed. The attachments towards traditional beliefs and primordial objects help one generate nationalistic feeling. This ethnic attachment, sentiment and a commitment towards ancestral nation then lead to a 'nationalist primordialism.' This also puts stress on cultural roots of any nation. The concept of primordialism, it may be mentioned here, was developed by Clifford Geertz. To him, this connection between individual and social group or community is natural and found at the very birth of an individual. Many critics like Rogers Brubaker reject the ideas and views of primordialism as they do not believe in a single ethnic identity and consider identity as an idea that is constructed by society and is changeable. In the Tibetan case, such primordial connection is found as they are deeply rooted to their cultural heritage and always looking forward to their cultural roots even in their diasporic space. A commitment towards their national ethnic identity is found in this respect. However, in Nepalese case, this ethnic identity is not fixed. They always look forward to the better opportunities of the diasporic world and leave behind the primordial connection.

Perennialists, another school of critics, rely on tracing the history of the origins of the nations and the common cultural characteristics of a nation. According to them, nations existed for many decades and have impacts on ethnic groups. Anthony Smith divides the Perennialists approach into two categories: "recurrent perennialism" and "continuous perennialism." While discussing Smith's two approaches of perennialism, Steven Grosby opines:

> The first, "recurrent perennialism," recognizes nations existing in every period of history; thus, for the "perennialist," nations are not

> exclusively modern, finding examples in antiquity and the Middle Ages. In other words, examples of the nation, as a category of human association, can be found to "reappear in every period of history and is found [throughout] the globe" (Smith 2001: 51). Somewhat distinct from this recurrent perennialism is "continuous perennialism" that recognizes that a "particular nation has a long continuous history [that] can trace [its] origins back to the Middle Ages or, more rarely, antiquity." (qtd.in Grosby 2015, 1)

Grosby further makes a comparison between these two approaches in the following ways,

> Both variants, especially the former, represent challenges to "modernism" that insists that nations emerged or were created only recently, being dependent upon either political strategy, for example to legitimize the state, or technological development, for example modern means of communication, or a cultural consequence of economic development such as a mobile workforce. (Grosby 2015, 1).

Both these variants are necessary to understand the present, past and 'pastness of the past' of any nation. "Continuous perennialism" will help to understand the origin and the source of any nation. The roots of the nation can be traced back. On the other hand, "recurrent perennialism" will concentrate on nation's relationship with current trends. Globalization, technological advancement, economical development and the mass communication have changed the static definition of nation.

Blagoj Conev also makes a difference between primordialist theory and perennialist theory in the following way,

> In contrast to primordial theory, the supporters of perennialism claim that nations, although they exist for an infinite long time, ie [sic] since there is both written and unwritten history of mankind, cannot be classified as natural or biological creatures. Thus, the Perennialists claim that all nations that existed or still exist, starting with Sumerians, Babylonians, Jews, or modern Germans, Russians, or Macedonians, are historical creations that have existed, evolved or assimilated throughout history, but cannot be defined as natural, biological and primordial groups. (Conev 2019, 3)

This suggests that the 'historical creations' and connection of the nations does not necessarily have 'natural,' 'biological,' or 'primordial' connection. It changes, evolves or assimilates throughout the history. Besides Primordialist

and Perennialist, there are some other schools of thoughts in the study of nationalism. These are, for example, Modernist and Ethnosymbolist. Modernists' views of nation are primarily based on Marxist ideologies that believe that the creation of nation and nationalism is centred on the result of colonialism, imperialism, capitalism, industrial and democratic revolution. Contemporary modernists think that migration of the communities plays an important role in the formation of new nation. Besides Benedict Anderson and Ernest Gellner, Eric Hobsbawm belong to the school of modernist ideologies. Nation, according to Eric Hobsbawm, is a modern construct that changes and evolves from time to time. He refers to several conditions like political, economic, and administrative ones that play a significant role for the birth of any nation. He mentions three historical facets that can be involved at the time of imagining the nation: 1. "Historic association with a state 2. Long-established cultural elite, 3. A capacity for conquest" (Hobsbawm 2013, n.pag). Pavel Shatev in this respect rightly says:

> . . . the nation is, above all, unity, a certain human community. That union is neither racial nor tribal, but a historically formed human community. There are four basic and main elements in each nation: the unity of language, that is, the nation is created as a result of long and regular communication in one language; common territory, since common life would be impossible without common territory; the historical continuity, that is, the common life of several generations; and unity in economic life, that is, the economic connection. (qtd. in Conev 2019, 6)

However, the Ethnosymbolist School rejects the ideas of primordialism, Modernism and Perennialism and instead focuses on myths, symbols, signs, traditional beliefs and the like. Among the Ethnosymbolists, John A. Armstrong, Anthony D. Smith and John Hutchinson are notables. An Ethnosymbolist helps to create a modern nation-state that has a link and commitment towards ancestral ideologies.

> Historically, ethno-symbolism has appeared as a critique of the theories and ideas that primordialists and modernists have for nations and nationalism. . . . ethnosymbolists believe that nationalism is a fruit, and feeds of national myths, the collective memories of nations, traditions, and the symbolic identification with the heroic past. Namely, ethno-symbolic, the biggest reason for the nationalism to emerge in certain peoples is living in the

> past, and its presentation as the best model for living in the future. (Conev 2019, 6)

In order to understand Tibet as a nation or Tibetan activities in the diasporic worlds, ethno-symbolist approach is quite acceptable. Tibetan prayer flags, Windhorse, Tibetan religion, Buddhism, Mandala etc. all are the symbols of Tibetan ethnic identity or these collectively form Tibet as a nation.

The concept of nation steadily takes a different dimension in the world of transnationalism and multiculturalism. Constant interactions between different cultures and their ideologies create an essentially pluralistic view of the nation. In the era of globalisation and cosmopolitanism and also due to the technological advancement, the linkages between / among countries have increased. Media, internet, websites, twitter, Instagram, Facebook, WhatsApp, satellite television and so many other sites have connected various nations and created a transnational bonding. Diasporic communities are very much connected with these. From the diasporic space they mostly imagine their nation through these media.

The diasporic individuals carry with them the memory of their original homeland. That is why the creative writers in their representation go back to it again and again. There are also diasporic websites that speak of the cultural heritage, religious principles, the story of transnational movements and other relevant issues related to their homeland. Dispersed / dislocated people scattered in different continents come together and share their thoughts, ideas, and feelings through these mass media. Many individuals hold dual citizenships and due to this the concept and the definition of nation changes and takes a new dimension. How the idea of nation takes a different direction for the diasporic individuals/communities would be discussed in the next two sections.

Diaspora, Transnationalism and Exile

Diaspora studies, as a discipline, has widened its domain in the 21st century. It has expanded its scope and covered more areas such as history, politics and economics, religion, and the like. It has become more interdisciplinary in its approach than ever before. The publication of the journal *Diaspora: A Journal*

of Transnational Studies in 1991 was a landmark event. In the introduction of the book entitled, *Diasporas: Concepts, Intersections, Identities* (2010), Kim Knott and Seán McLoughlin talk about a research programme on diasporas, migrations and identities which was launched at the Museum of Immigration and Diversity in the East End, London. This programme, as they observe, offers "high quality research on diasporas, migration and identities across the arts and humanities . . . and encourage interdisciplinary collaboration in and beyond the academy" (Knott and McLoughlin 2010, 3). This interdisciplinary programme also deals with theoretical aspects and 'empirical study of diaspora.' One of the important challenges of diasporic studies is

> to engage with the realities of settlement the political contingencies and relationships of diaspora space, as well as the narratives of travel and circulation, and the location of diasporic subjectivity. (Knott and McLoughlin 2010, 83)

Programmes like the above not only explore diaspora's relationship with various aspects of human life but also probe into the nature of diaspora from specific regions of the world. Since we are concerned in this thesis mainly with diaspora-nation interface in the context of Tibetan and Nepalese transnational migrations, we need to discuss critical aspects of diaspora theory and various concepts related to it. In the earlier section we have already discussed the theories of nation.

The term "diaspora" suggests voluntary or forced migration of substantial numbers of individuals or communities from "homeland" to "host land." Etymologically, the term "diaspora" comes from Greek words "*dia*" which means "through" or "across" and "*speirein*" meaning "to scatter," "to sow" or "to disperse." Thus, the word refers to the scattering of uprooted people throughout the world. Originally the term referred to the scattering of the Jews from Palestine to different parts of the world: ". . . for more or less two thousand years the term diaspora was used mainly in relation to the prototypical Jewish diaspora" (Knott and McLoughlin 2010, 9). Now it is used in a larger sense, as an umbrella term to refer to a number of categories of displaced people: the immigrants, the expatriate, the expelled, the exiled, the refugees, and the like. Knott and McLoughlin rightly point out that

> [f]rom the 1960s and 1970s, usage of the term 'diaspora' came to be extended to other groups with experiences of large scale scattering due to homeland trauma, including the Armenians, Irish and eventually the Palestinians. (2019, 9).

'Diaspora' invites us to hold together in creative tension notions of 'home' and 'away' while, at the same time, un-settling and questioning both" (Knott and McLoughlin 2010, 79). This 'creative tension' will make positive outcomes like producing literature, building friendship, understanding self-identity.

William Safran too underscores the shift that has taken place in the meaning of the word diaspora:

> . . . the exile of the Jews from their historic homeland and their dispersion throughout many lands, signifying as well the oppression and moral degradation implied by that dispersion. . . . Today, "diaspora" and, more specifically, "diaspora community" seem increasingly to be used as metaphoric designations for several categories of people— expatriates, expellees, political refugees, alien residents, immigrants, and ethnic and racial minorities *tout court*—in much the same way that "ghetto" has come to designate all kinds of crowded, constricted, and disprivileged urban environments, and "holocaust" has come to be applied to all kinds of mass murder. (1991, 83)

Safran's definition of the term 'diaspora' would be useful to highlight both the Tibetan migration and the Nepali diaspora. In many places, after dislocation, Tibetans are placed in camps like Manju Ka Tilla and considered to be sources of danger to the nation they arrived at and its natives. Racism in Western nations is rampant. Tibetan ghettos like Dharamsala or 'Little Tibet' and Nepali ghettos like 'Little Nepal' in the U.S become the temporary spaces of the refugees or immigrants.

Walker Connor defines diaspora as "that segment of a people living outside the homeland" (1986, 16). However, Safran rejects Connor's definition of diaspora which, according to him, is not very specific and therefore difficult to accept it as a 'workable definition.' Safran further expands Connor's definition and applies the concept of diaspora to the "expatriate minority communities." He refers to the following characteristics of diaspora:

> 1) they, or their ancestors, have been dispersed from a specific original "center" to two or more "peripheral," or foreign, regions; 2) they retain a collective memory, vision, or myth about their

> original homeland—its physical location, history, and achievements; 3) they believe that they are not—and perhaps cannot be—fully accepted by their host society and therefore feel partly alienated and insulated from it; 4) they regard their ancestral homeland as their true, ideal home and as the place to which they or their descendants would (or should) eventually return—when conditions are appropriate; 5) they believe that they should, collectively, be committed to the maintenance or restoration of their original homeland and to its safety and prosperity; and 6) they continue to relate, personally or vicariously, to that homeland in one way or another, and their ethnocommunal consciousness and solidarity are importantly defined by the existence of such a relationship. (Safran 1991, 83-84)

The last three points mentioned in the above extract will be crucial in our discussion of Tibetan diaspora which prominently displays these three exilic features in their behaviour patterns and activist movements. Diasporic Tibetans consider Tibet as their 'ideal' homeland and they want their 'original homeland' back from Chinese atrocities. To free Tibet, they have created an alternative space through 'virtual communication' or by face-to-face interaction in the exilic world. It has helped them create a pan-Tibetan identity. This thesis will also test whether these features can be traced in the Nepalese diaspora as well.

From the above extract, it is also clear that the diasporic individuals or communities create a binary between homeland and hostland. They consider homeland as an 'ideal home' or 'original homeland.' They imagine their home from the diasporic world and constantly think about its 'safety and prosperity.' In the Tibetan case, Chinese atrocities, violence and colonial exploitation have disrupted the peace in Tibet. Tibet is no more safe and peace. Safran also speaks of alienation, nostalgia, dispersion, relocation and acculturation in this context. All these are palpable in the everyday life of the immigrants. Such issues of relocation and acculturation will be the main points in the context of Nepalese diaspora. In the novel *Seasons of Flight*, Manjushree Thapa's protagonist Prema leaves Nepal and acculturate with the 'real America.' The same is true with other ghettoised Nepalese who look forward to the better opportunities in Nepal. The response to the diasporic conditions which depends on the particular history of migration of the specific group and the immigrants' relationship with the 'home' country, are crucial factors in determining the nature and intensity of their feelings of filiation to their ancestral land and their affiliation to the country of

their present residence. Generation also matters in this respect. As for example, the first-generation Tibetans has lived experience of Tibet and they have the clear conception about their ancestral nation. On the other hand, the second-generation Tibetans have not seen Tibet directly. Tibet is located in their imagination. However, these two groups have similar perspectives and notions about Tibet and they are fighting for the 'Tibetan cause.' In the Nepalese case, the first-generation Nepalese are deeply rooted to their traditional, cultural and religious roots. But the second-generation Nepalese are looking forward to the promises of the diasporic land to a greater extent. A gradually emerging urge of embracing the new country as the 'home' country is also not unusual. In such a context we also need to reconsider the generally accepted homeland/hostland binary. This thesis will try to keep this point in consideration.

Robin Cohen mainly focuses on five kinds of diaspora: (a) Victim diaspora, (b) Labour diaspora, (c) Imperial diaspora, (d) Trade diaspora, (e) Deterritorrialised diaspora.

From the above mentioned five kinds of diaspora, 'victim diaspora' (which means the expulsion or banishment of any community from their homeland, for example: Jews, Africans, Irish, Palestinians and Armenians) can be used to situate Tibetans' complex situation after Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet. Exile, imprisonment, trauma, genocide and violence are the results of victim diaspora. In the same way imperial diaspora (for example: migration of British people to different British colonies) which are the result of colonialism and imperialism can be used in the case of Tibetan diasporic situation. When an individual / group migrates to another nation to work for some periods, this is called labour diaspora. Many high skilled or unskilled workers look for jobs in the international market. Poverty or unemployment mainly leads them to choose the path of migration. Although Cohen has discussed the labour diaspora in the context of the indentured Indians, this kind of labour diaspora is also found in the Nepalese case. Trade diaspora refers to the "diasporic networks of traders" in different parts of the world. For instance, Cohen here refers to Chinese and Lebanese trade diaspora. In deterritorialised diaspora, "ethnic groups can be thought of as having lost their conventional territorial reference points. They

become in effect mobile and multi-located cultures" (Cohen 2010, 124). Roma, Sindhis and Parsis are the instances of this kind of diaspora.

Graham Huggan mentions two important points regarding diaspora:

> that diasporas need to be more carefully analysed in the twin contexts of (a) their historically unstable terms and frames of reference, and (b) their often extreme degree of political volatility, a volatility highly likely to be connected with the linked narratives of colonialism/imperialism and global capitalism that necessarily inform most understandings of the word 'diaspora' today (Huggan 58).

By 'historically unstable terms,' Huggan refers to the evolution of the term, specificities of the conditions of each transnational movement and changing paradigms of analysing diasporic movements. Now the whole diaspora theory needs new orientation as the scenario of imperialism and colonialism is taking new forms. The focus is now not limited to the Western colonisation. The new kinds of non-Western colonisation like Israeli colonisation of Palestine and Chinese imperialism in Tibet become the part of new political reality.

Sheffer in his book *Diaspora Politics* (2003) talks about the politics of the dispersed communities who "regard themselves as being participants in nations [hostland] that have common ethnic and national traits, identities and affinities" (2003, 11). This new nation too becomes their own as they try to adapt to the new nation and tries to trace common grounds between the two communities.

Sheffer introduces another dimension to the diaspora studies which involves the issue of citizenship and belonging to a state/nation. He refers to two kinds of diaspora: (a) The Stateless diaspora, (b) State linked diaspora. Stateless diaspora suggests a kind of diaspora where the immigrant/ exilic communities are not connected/ linked to their state of origin. However, they possess a collective identity which are mainly based on ethnicity. Such examples of stateless diaspora are found in the case of Jews, Armenians, Gypsies, and Greeks. This concept of stateless diaspora can be applied to the Tibetan case where the Tibetans in exile are unable to connect physically with their lost nation, neither can most of them acquire citizenship in the countries they are settled now. In state linked diaspora, the diasporic groups have the concrete notion of their homeland. In Nepalese case, the state linked diaspora is applicable.

The term ‘diaspora,’ as James Clifford opines, is ‘a travelling term in changing global conditions’ (1994, 302). Traveling here suggests “dwelling and travelling within and across nations” (306). It implies a hybridising process in ‘new global conditions’ (306). Clifford further talks about two important concepts – ‘roots’ and ‘routes’ which are very much important in understanding the territorialisation and deterritorialisation of communities. ‘Roots’ here suggests an inalienable link with the homeland. Normally, it indicates that the cultural roots of the immigrants lie in the land of origin where they belong. Later if they migrate elsewhere, live there for a long time and adapt the cultural norms of the new place, they may develop new roots in that place. Routes, on the other hand, refers to movement, a kind of a travelling culture in which digging roots becomes difficult. These two terms are usually considered as antithetical.

These diasporic movements can be caused by different reasons. They can be voluntary or involuntary – forced expulsion, war, or for personal, religious, economic, professional and academic purposes. Behind the migration of an individual or a group, both push and pull factors play an important role. Push factors are the negative aspects that very often compel one to leave the original homeland. These may include war, political upheavals, conflict, famine, disease, poverty and the like. Guido Dorigo and Waldo Tobler defines these two factors thus:

> the push factors are those life situations that give one reason to be dissatisfied with one’s present locale; the pull factors are those attributes of distant places that make them appear appealing. (1983, 1)

The pull factors, as evident in the above comment, are the positive aspects in the diasporic land which tempt or encourage one individual or group to leave their original homeland. These factors include better job and education facilities, religious and cultural freedom, political stability, health facilities, good climates or family links. Georgiana Tataru points out that push and pull factors are not ‘diametrically opposed,’ they are in fact two sides of the same coin. Both of them are ‘equally important’ (2019, 14). In the Tibetan case, push factors and in Nepalese case, pull factors are the major cause of migration.

We need to pay attention to the phenomena known as 'transnationalism' and 'exile.' Exile is the oldest form of diaspora whereas transnationalism is a new form of diaspora. Exile indicates both a socio-political isolation from both the homeland and the nation of present residence as well as a mental state or mindset of the migrant. Regarding the concept of exile, Martin Baumann rightly remarks,

> The term 'exile' is resonant with ideas of forced emigration, displacement, social and political marginalization of an individual or a group of refugees. It aligns to experiences of loneliness, foreignness, homesickness, and an enduring longing to remigrate to the places of origin (2011, 19).

Due to socio-political upheavals or war-torn situation in the homeland, one is forced to leave one's homeland. People are compelled to migrate to a foreign land and this kind of migration is not voluntary in nature. An individual may also be expelled by the governing regime in the homeland.

> Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its rue home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted. (Said 2000, 138).

Baumann further says that it is 'a state forced upon individuals, groups or a nation' (2011, 19). Exilic subjects may take refuge in an asylum in the foreign shore.

Baumann makes a clear distinction between the term 'exile' and 'diaspora' in the following way,

> Exile is contrast to diaspora, is seldom associated with religious connotations and semantics. It appears that its use relates more explicitly to political persecution and forced flight caused by a nation-state than does 'diaspora'. The latter, particularly in recent discourse, appears to relate to a state of enduring consciousness of living away from home, adapted to the new social and cultural context. In contrast, contemporary connotations of exile are resonant of a state of sojourn, estrangement and homesickness (2011, 23).

The definition of exile in Baumann's term can be appropriately applied to the state of Tibetan refugees who will appear strongly as literary characters in the fictional works discussed in this thesis.

Regarding the gazing of exilic subjects towards non-exilic one, Said further remarks,

> Exiles look at non-exiles with resentment. They belong in their surroundings, you feel, whereas an exile is always out of place. What is it like to be born in a place, to stay and live there, to know that you are of it, more or less forever? (Said 2000, 143)

The phrase 'out of place' refers to the exilic condition of the diasporic subjects who feels unmoored.

Due to political or other reasons, these diasporic people are obviously not welcome in their original homeland. Regarding such exilic issues, Safran makes an interesting observation:

> A cartoon appeared in *Le Monde* several years ago, showing an old man who says: "I have never lost hope of returning to my homeland some day. However, I no longer remember where I came from." Some diasporas persist—and their members do not go "home"—because there is no homeland to which to return; because, although a homeland may exist, it is not a welcoming place with which they can identify politically, ideologically, or socially; or because it would be too inconvenient and disruptive, if not traumatic, to leave the diaspora. In the meantime, *the myth of return serves to solidify ethnic consciousness and solidarity* when religion can no longer do so, when the cohesiveness of the local community is loosened, and when the family is threatened with disintegration. (91, emphasis added)

The above remark underscores the fact that even though the connection with the homeland is absolutely absent, the originary ethnic links persist in the diaspora which serves to intensify a sense of oneness, a kind of a solidarity.

Often due to personal, political and socio-cultural problem in the homeland, many feel comfortable to stay within the diasporic space. They do not want to return to their homeland. In this context, these people may be more than willing to acculturate to, even assimilate in, the culture of the new space. In such a context, the sense of exile may not be permanent. Thus, Baumann considers 'exile' as a 'temporary' or 'transitory' state.

We may now turn to another important term – transnationalism. The term 'transnationalism' was first used by Randolph Bourne in his article "Trans-National America" (1916). Rainer Baubock and Thomas Faist "argue that the

two critical terms – diaspora and transnationalism – carry the birthmarks of distinct imaginaries, research puzzles and disciplinary styles of reasoning" (2010, 123). Regarding the commonalities and differences between the two terms – diaspora and transnationalism, Faist opines,

> While diaspora is a very old concept, transnationalism is relatively new. Not only in public debates but also in academic analysis, the terms have fuzzy boundaries and often overlap. (2010, 11)

In diaspora one may find the sense of nostalgia in a more prominent way. Interestingly, Thomas Faist observes that the two terms 'diaspora' and 'transnationalism' are 'awkward dance partners' (2010, 9). This is "a phrase that points out both the existence of collaborative partnership and the presence of uneasiness in their relationship" (Lahiri 2019, 116).

Regarding Faist's definition of the term diaspora and transnationalism, Lahiri feels that Faist

> must have their mutual coordination and juxtaposition in mind – both participating in the exercise of cross-border movement but having distinctive 'birth marks' and living styles of their own. The occasionally visible different notes they play during their performance together often create the jarring notes. (2019, 125)

He further describes the difference in the following way: "Since people often migrate as part of the movement of, and in the shape of capital itself, the terms "diaspora" and "transnationalism" can be used together to refer to the broad phenomenon of man capital flow beyond the national border" (Lahiri, *Diaspora Theory and Transnationalism*, 2019, 3).

Jana Braziel and Anita Mannur say that transnationalism has "large, mere impersonal forces – specifically, those of globalisation and global capitalism" (2003, 8). In this era of globalisation and cosmopolitanism, transnationalism is a new phenomenon. Technological advancement has widened the scope of transnationalism and networking works as an important tool to connect the idea of transnationalism with Harvey's formation of the idea of 'time-space compression.' David Harvey uses this concept of 'time-space compression' to indicate how technological innovation or digital media is condensing time and space. Technological innovations like mobile, internet, telephones, fax, WhatsApp, Instagram, Twitter and also in the case of travel – train, flight, jets

etc. have condensed time. Due to this technological advancement, people can be easily connected with other people. It offers a viable platform to the communities to express their opinion and arriving at decisions regarding their movement. This helps a quick gathering of dispersed people. This global cultural flow is also described by Appadurai in five ways: (a) ethnoscapes, (b) mediascapes, (c) technoscapes, (d) financescapes, and (e) ideoscapes.

Ethnoscape refers to migration or flow of people to different parts of the world. He remarks,

> By ethnoscape, I mean the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals constitute an essential feature of the world and appear to affect the politics of (and between) nations to a hitherto unprecedented degree. (1996, 33)

This indicates how the migration of people or any community from one nation to another put an impact on the politics of other nations. It also affects the economy of other nation.

Regarding mediascapes, Appadurai opines,

> Mediascapes refer both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and disseminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, and film-production studios), which are now available to a growing number of private and public interests throughout the world, and to the images of the world created by these media. These images involve many complicated inflections, depending on their mode (documentary or entertainment), their hardware (electronic or preelectronic), their audiences (local, national, or transnational), and the interests of those who own and control them. (1996, 35)

Mediascapes play a significant role to connect groups, disseminate ideas and information, and to create an image of anything through the representation of media. Like ‘time-space compression,’ ‘mediascapes’ too would be useful to interpret Tibetans’ and Nepalese’ way of using the networking sites to connect their communities dispersed in different parts of the world. He defines technoscape in the following way,

> By technoscape, I mean the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technology and the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and informational, now moves at high speeds across

> various kinds of previously impervious boundaries. Many countries now are the roots of multinational enterprise: a huge steel complex in libya may involve interests from India, China, Russia, and Japan, providing different components of new technological configurations. (1996, 34)

Many diasporic communities are successfully using these technology and electronic media for their purpose. The power of modern information technology carries all Tibet-related news even to the generally "cyber-shy" Chinese authorities and to the Chinese people, some of whom respond to Tibetan issues with concern and sympathy. In the case of the Tibetans, as the discussion above shows, the websites and the digital media are employed for the purpose of regaining their lost homeland. Hence mediascape and technoscape have been two significant tools for the 'ethnoscape' to create profound impact worldwide.

Technological innovations that have facilitated human and virtual movements, as mentioned earlier, have blurred the boundaries between nations. This phenomenon tends to replace the idea of one's belonging to a singular nation with that of belonging to two or more nations. Clifford opines:

> . . . dispersed peoples, once separated from homelands by vast oceans and political barriers, increasingly find themselves in border relations with the old country thanks to a to-and-fro made possible by modern technologies of transport, communication and labor migration. Airplanes, telephones, tape cassettes, camcorders, and mobile job markets reduce distances and facilitate two-way traffic, legal and illegal, between the world's places. (1997, 247)

Clifford's comment on 'border relations' between diaspora and the old country' is indeed very appropriate. The 'two-way of traffic' that he speaks of amounts to what we term in this thesis as the 'interface' between the diaspora and the ancestral nation state. This interface can be established through multiple kinds of activities – economic (e.g., sending remittance to home country), cultural and academic (e.g., joint programmes), political (e.g., government policies regarding diasporic communities such as Indian Government's decision to celebrate Pravasi Bharatiya Divas or PBD), and so on. This aspect with the 'border relations' in mind will be discussed in the next section of this thesis.

Nation-Diaspora Interface

From the perspective of diasporic location, the concept of 'nation' is usually conflated with that of 'home.' Home is supposed to be a 'place of origin' which "may be a locus of nostalgia and nightmares" (Stock 2011, 24). It "is imagined, recreated, longed for, remembered in the present through the diasporic imaginary" (Stock 2011, 24). Stock further connects past, present and future in the context of remembering home in the following way:

> The act of remembering is always contextual, a continuous process of recalling, interpreting and reconstructing the past in terms of the present and in the light of an anticipated future. (Stock 2011, 24).

There is a constant conflict between the memories of their original homeland and the ground reality of present circumstances in which they live in the hostland. History and myths of migration on the one hand and dreams of returning to the homeland, creates a dialogue between the nation and the diaspora.

Avtar Brah speaks of the possibility of the ancestral nation becoming a land of no return. In the case of old coolie diaspora or slave diaspora, the prospect of diaspora was impossible. The word 'return,' a crucial thought in the diasporic imaginary, is used here not exactly in the sense of a visit to the homeland which is possible in the modern age of easy and quick travel. But the sense of comfort and natural acceptability now available in the hostland may render it difficult for the diasporic individual to stay long in the ancestral nation. The host nation may in a natural course become a desirable site of stay and settlement. This does not mean that the old place has no room in his memory. On the contrary, there may be a sustained presence of the ancestral nation in his memory, and images associated with the land may trigger his/her urge to revisit the place. Having this fact in mind, Brah asks, "Where is home?" and then answers, "On the one hand, 'home' is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination. In this sense it is a place of no return, even if it is possible to visit the geographical territory that is seen as the place of 'origin.'" (1996, 189). The fact of living abroad, of getting acculturated there makes it psychologically impossible to get back to the originary land and settle there again. This implies that the land out there in the

distance is geographically approachable but psychologically untenable. In view of this, the lived experience in the diaspora, the material reality faced by the immigrant are integrated in the consciousness of the person and are transformed in a sense of homeliness. Brah articulates this feeling in the following way:

> On the other hand, home is also the lived experience of a locality. Its sounds and smells, its heat and dust, balmy summer evenings, or the excitement of the first snowfall, shivering winter evenings, sombre grey skies in the middle of the day…all this, as mediated by the historically specific everyday of social relations. In other words, the varying experience of the pains and pleasures, the terrors and contentments, or the highs and humdrum of everyday lived culture that marks how, for example, a cold winter night might be differently experienced sitting by a crackling fireside in a mansion as compared with standing huddled around a makeshift fire on the streets of nineteenth-century England. (1996, 189-190)

In the new nation one may encounter several conflicting emotions but nevertheless is willing to stay there as a sense of attachment grows. Time spent there and the concomitant experience, both sweet and sour, accrued there thus transform the attitude of the diasporic individual and ushers in a changed perspective regarding the meaning of the 'nation.' The binary of the homeland and the hostland dissipates and they are stitched together. The idea of the 'home nation' becomes amorphous to a great extent. Generation factor plays an important role in this respect – the first generation diasporics, more than the later generation, feel this state of mind. Interestingly, the notions and the definitions of the homeland, nation and home may change their connotations over decades.

> Home can be remembered, lived, longed for. Notions of home are fluid and bound to change as one moves in time and space. Rather than referring to one single home, in diasporic settings feelings of belonging can be directed towards both multiple physical places and remembered, imagined and/or symbolic spaces. (qtd. in Stock 27)

This remark clearly concentrates on how the notions and meaning of home changes over time and space. In this respect, the idea of 'borrowed homeland' is significant which will be discussed in more detail in chapter on Tibet.

In such a situation the interface between the homeland and the hostland takes place. The zone of interface is obviously an interactive and collaborative zone. It suggests that in all probability one's sense of belonging is not really limited

to one nation, to the ancestral one, but to the host nation/s as well. The boundary line between the ancestral nation and the host nation/s gets blurred and the diasporic subject crisscrosses this new, 'borderland' consciousness that marks the contours of his/her to and fro journey. For an uncertain period both physical and symbolic activities embrace both the lands, both the cultural spaces. This space, ambiguously spread out, is a meeting point, a space that serves as a kind of dialogue. So, the idea of the binary between the two nations which was a dominant thesis for a long time in the Diaspora Studies does no longer hold good.

In the context of the above, we can see that a diasporic individual is subjected to two kinds of pressure:

a. that of acculturation / assimilation in the 'hostland'; and
b. that of nostalgia for the 'home nation' and a desire to return there, if situations permit.

Individual or the immigrant communities, as indicated before, begin to be familiar with the foreign culture. They start to understand dynamics of different socio-cultural lives of the hostland. In this process "adaptation to a different, usually hegemonic culture takes place" (Lahiri *Diaspora Theory and Transnationalism* 2019, 155). Due to contact with other cultures for a long time, one begins to acculturate in the alien land. In this process of cultural adaptation, one begins to follow other's cultural ideology, belief system, habits, rituals, language and so on. Although the immigrant's mind remains possessed of their own cultural roots, the discourse and interaction between cultures help them to acculturate with the alien culture. In the process, immigrants or exilic communities begin to surrender their ethnic cultural values to the hegemonic culture. The politics of diasporic space compels them to acculturate with the foreign culture. "When assimilated, members of the ethnic groups cannot be culturally differentiated from the members of the mainstream group" (Lahiri *Diaspora Theory and Transnationalism* 2019, 156).

The diasporic individual, most naturally, approaches the ancestral nation from a hybrid cultural location. Although hybridity is originally a biological term, it

subsequently came to mean the amalgamation and mixture of different cultures. The concept of hybridity is very much in use in the postcolonial discourse. Regarding the idea of hybridity, Ankie Hoogvelt rightly says, it is "celebrated and privileged as a kind of superior cultural intelligence owing to the advantage of in-betweenness, the straddling of two cultures and the consequent ability to negotiate the difference" (2001:158). Homi Bhabha further defines hybridity as a liminal space where the sign of both the 'originary culture' and the 'culture of adaptation' are found to be intermixed. In this unique or distinct space, one gathers several experiences related to their two cultural zones which help them identify and create a new identity. In this in-between space, according to Bhabha, "cutting age of translation and negotiation" (Bhabha 1994, 38) takes place. It is the Third Space of enunciation. Identity in the third space for the immigrants is more flexible in nature. The third space is a space which is found in the form of cultural negotiation and interdependence. It is a 'productive' space that creates 'new possibility' where the various components of diverse cultures are interweaved. Bhabha refers to this space "an ambivalent site where cultural meaning and representation have no 'primordial unity or fixity'" (Bhabha 1994, 54). The third space "initiates new signs of identity, and innovative sites of collaboration and contestation" (Bhabha 1994, 1). This idea of third space is found in Nepalese diaspora which will be interpreted in more detail in the chapter on Nepal.

In this multicultural space, the identity of an individual or group begins to reform and they start to acculturate with the new nation. As Tariq Modood rightly points out, "Multicultural accommodation works simultaneously on two levels: creating new forms of belonging to citizenship and country, and helping sustain origins and diasporas" (Modood 2005, n.pag). Stock refers to

> Memories of home are no factual productions of a fixed past. Rather they are fluid reconstructions set against the backdrop of the remembering subject's current positionings and conceptualizations of home. (2011, 24)

At the time of maintaining the heterogeneous culture in the foreign shores, one creates complex diaspora, the term used by Pnina Werbner.

Regarding the connection, interaction, and the interface between nation and diaspora, Sheffer remarks,

> Members of such entities maintain regular or occasional contacts with what they regard as their homelands and with individuals and groups of the same background residing in other host countries….Among their various activities, members of such diasporas establish trans-state networks that reflect complex relationships among the diasporas, their host countries, their homelands, and international actors. (9-10)

Diasporic individuals/communities keep contact with other members of their groups living both in the homeland or hostland. By remaining connected with the people of same ethnicity, they create an international network. This network of relationship, which is primarily built due to the cultural, economic, nationalistic reasons, creates a third space where nation and diaspora meet, collaborate and interface. These contacts create dialogues, offer investment opportunities, and generate employment. Diasporic individuals' multiple contacts, affiliations, transnational connections and multidimensional identity formations are spoken of in the above quotation. Diasporic subjects through different activities create a 'trans-state networks' between homeland and hostland. Robin Cohen also suggests that the term "diaspora can be used to describe transnational bonds of co-responsibility even where historically exclusive territorial claims are not strongly articulated" (1997, 7-8). It indicates an interface between two or more nations that creates a transnational space or bonds between nations. This puts emphasis on co-responsibility between / among nations.

From their diasporic space, immigrants send remittance to their homeland. By investing money, they remain connected economically. Many scholars, scientists, researchers or the like contribute to the human resource development by providing some useful / intellectual ideas. They often join at NGOs that provide various services to the communities of the nations. From the diasporic space, many writers have written so many good works and won reputed awards. This interface creates good will that spills over to the world.

The nation-diaspora dialectics become more visible when at the zone of virtual networking. With the advancement of technology, different media and networks have connected dispersed communities. Technologies or online platforms like

Facebook, Twitter, email, diasporic websites, digital broadcasting websites and other media have connected home nation with the host nation, one diasporic community with another, and have created a 'cyber-groups.' These networking sites erase the literal border and create an uninhibited space of communication. "Cyberspace allows the expression and development of diversity because almost anyone can express themselves online" (Knott and Sean McLoughlin 2011, 168). This helps individual or communities to connect with their original homeland. This subsequently helps to create 'electronic chat rooms' (Knott and Sean McLoughlin 2011, 165). These online 'chat rooms' have given ample scope to connect and interact with the communities who are living both in the homeland and hostland. It creates a 'third space' where the zone of communication becomes easier. Tibetan exilic community, for example, has been living largely in the 'third space.' Victoria Bernal rightly opines,

> The Internet may be changing the experience of diaspora by offering a third space – neither here nor there – which may be particularly useful for diasporas who feel themselves in two or more places at once or live with a sense of dis- location. This third space also offers new opportunities for collaboration and co-production between diasporas and compatriots in the home country. (2011, 170)

The above remark clearly points out several opportunities that the third space provides to both the communities of homeland and hostland. The connection, interaction, and collaboration between the nation and diaspora create a zone of co-production. A constant negotiation between these two nations creates a new space. Although the acculturation process is found at this stage through constant negotiations, the sense of nostalgia slows down the process of acculturation and keeps alive the memory of the homeland. However, the sense of new home or new nation is very much there. Traces of both nations among the diasporic communities are found at this third space. This moving body from the homeland to hostland transforms into a transnational body. The plurality of nations creates a dialogue between the old nation (i.e. the homeland), and new nation (i.e. the hostland). This dialogue or collaboration is internationalised and forms a worldwide ethnic consolidation from where they address their original homeland.

In the case of both Tibetan and Nepalese diaspora, the concept of Pan-Nepalese and Pan-Tibetan identity based on ethnicity can be traced. They address and imagine their nations from the diasporic world. Writing on diaspora very often gives birth to the mixed notion of hybridity.

> Hybridity appears as a convenient category at 'the edge' or contact point of diaspora, describing cultural mixture where the diasporized meets the host in the scene of migration. (Kalra 2005, 70)

This point of collaboration, coming together and a kind of gathering of the scattered people creates a zone of nation-diaspora interface. This nation-diaspora interface would be discussed while discussing diasporic Tibetan and Nepalese texts in the next two chapters.

Chapter 3

Representing the Nation: Tibetan Diasporic Writers

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This chapter will analyse how Tibet and Tibetan exilic lives are represented in the literary works by Tibetan diasporic writers. The analysis will chiefly concentrate on two novels: Tsering Namgyal Khortsa's *The Tibetan Suitcase* (2015) and Thubten Samphel's *Falling Through the Roof* (2008). These novels represent not only the Tibetan diasporic world but also hold up a picture of tension between nation and diaspora that the diasporic subjects have to consistently undergo. They demonstrate how a zone of interaction and collaboration between the world of diaspora and that of the ancestral nation, created out of the interaction, gives rise to an acceptance of the idea of the plurality of nations.

Thousands of Tibetans were compelled to leave Tibet after the Chinese invasion of Tibet in the 1950s. After this forced dislocation from their homeland, they were relocated to camps in India, Nepal and Bhutan. Many of them even migrated to the U.S., Canada, U.K., and different other parts of the world. They cannot ever forget this history of displacement and the story of their struggle. They usually consider Tibet as an independent nation that belong to the Tibetans and wish to regain their homeland someday. They dream of returning to the 'Free Tibet' sometime in the near future. As they lack political and military power of their own, they have to initiate and sustain a political movement in order to draw global attention and also subsequently to put pressure on China which has clamped a repressive regime in Tibet. With time they have realised that writing, both creative and critical, is an important and effective medium of projecting their condition:

> The flame of patriotism and the desire for a return to the homeland filter through their literary works. These authors writing in English nurture [the idea of] a free Tibet. . . They address issues related not only to their longing for their distant homeland, its culture and the political situation there but also to their own lived experience in the diaspora. (Goswami 2019, 1)

Tibetan diasporic writings in English have widely captured the issue of nation-diaspora relationship. Tibetans have a unique history which we have already

discussed in the Introduction of this thesis. They have been living in exile and from this exilic location they are now looking nostalgically at their nation. Tibetan literary works produced from the diasporic space invariably create a bridge between nation and diaspora by invoking their historical and cultural history. In this respect, Khortsa remarks:

> Exile is the mother of most writers. The immigrant experience, the anxiety of dislocation, the agony of being out of place, provides a fertile breeding ground for writers and artists. It is in this island of expatriation, far away from the comforts and the familiarity of the homeland, that one is often forced to come to terms with the self. (2006, 5)

Tibetan writings in English (see figures 1 and 2), thus, are mainly born in the exilic space. This genre is gradually emerging as an important area in Diaspora Studies. Some important works written by Tibetan authors have been mentioned in the introductory chapter. In order to reach the worldwide audience and highlight the conditions of the Tibetans in Tibet and of those in the diasporic world, Tibetan writers prefer to write in English. Some of the works written originally in the Tibetan language have also subsequently been translated into English. One of the common issues in these works is the representation of nation-diaspora dialectics. Through their writings they also highlight the lived experiences of the Tibetans in Chinese occupied Tibet (see figures 3 and 4).

Tsering Namgyal Khortsa's *The Tibetan Suitcase*

Tsering Namgyal Khortsa, whose novel *The Tibetan Suitcase* will be discussed in this section, is a Tibetan diasporic writer settled in Himachal Pradesh, India. Being a diasporic writer, he has expressed the pangs of exilic experiences of the Tibetan communities in his writings. Khortsa who was born and brought up in India, completed his MA in journalism from the University of Iowa. His journalistic works have been published by some of the major publishing houses like *Asia Times, the Asia Sentinel, Himal Southasia, India Today,* the *South China Morning Post and Global Asia*. Khortsa has also written three important books: *Little Lhasa: Reflections on Exiled Tibet* (2006), *His Holiness The 17th Karmapa Ogyen Trinley Dorje: A Biography* (2013) and *The Tibetan Suitcase*: *A Novel* (2019). His short fiction appeared in *Yellow Medicine Review: The Journal of Indigenous Culture Arts and Literature*. His short story entitled "The

Season of Retreats" has been anthologised in *Old Demons, New Deities: 21 Short Stories from Tibet* edited by Tenzin Dickie. Khortsa's writings are primarily based on the history of Tibetan, and its culture, religion, politics. They also deal with the Tibetan virtual world and the exilic world of the Tibetan community.

Tibetan writings in English are received "with some amount of cynicism" (Khortsa 2020). Khortsa writes in the English language, and at the time of writing *The Tibetan Suitcase: A Novel*, he faced several challenges. It was seriously believed that Tibetans could not write novels in English. He opines,

> The most common question that people ask me, with a tone of mild disbelief, when I say that I have written a novel is: 'Is it in English?' This perhaps shows that a novel – by which I mean a European novel – as a form is so new in the Tibetan context. (Khortsa 2020)

He further remarks,

> To convince my readers, I show them the process of how it is being written, lock [,] stock and barrel. Readers will see how the protagonist is not only reflecting on the dearth of Tibetan fiction but also learning how to write a so-called 'Tibetan novel in English' in the novel (it is a bit like an introduction or a user's manual embedded in the very book they are reading). (Khortsa 2020)

The above two quotations rightly point out to the fact of incredulity in the Tibetan and non-Tibetan readers regarding the idea that Tibetans can write in English. There is no tradition and model of Tibetan English writing to speak of. Tibetans had not been historically exposed to learning English language and its literature. The only available model for literary writing is to be found in the works written in the Tibetan language. It was believed that Tibetan lived experience and socio-cultural norms can only be conveyed through the Tibetan language. That is why, it was a challenging task for Khortsa to write a novel in English about his community. He questions the European style. He observes,

> Ideally, the themes of exile, diaspora, language, identity, and migration seem like perfect material for fiction. I even go so far as to question if traditional fiction – what Milan Kundera calls as the 'European novel' – is actually the right form to tell the story of Tibet at this moment. (Khortsa 2020).

There is a long tradition of exilic fictional works in English and European languages. The Tibetan authors living in exile have acquired proficiency in the English language through their trainings in schools, colleges and universities either in India or elsewhere in the West. Therefore, in English language, they can find an appropriate model for expressing their exilic content and diasporic consciousness. It is quite evident that Khortsa is influenced by the traditional European style of writing and he finds the materials for his fiction from the exilic world. He tries to break the myth that the Tibetans cannot write novels in English. He accepts the challenge and establishes his position as a novelist.

Khortsa's *The Tibetan Suitcase*: *A Novel* (2019) had first appeared as an e-book edition in the year 2013 in the United States. This book was first published in print version by Blackneck Books in the year 2019. However, it has not been critically reviewed from an academic angle. There are some significant changes in the print version of this novel. Regarding the changes he made from e-book edition to print version, Khortsa remarks:

> I had, however, underestimated the challenges of writing a full-length novel, especially one that is set in the Tibetan community, and the road to publication was not as smooth as I had expected. I published the novel as an e-book in 2013 in the US, hoping that I would bring out a print edition later. And while I was looking for publishers in India, I found the time to add an ending and a beginning to make the narrative more complete. (Khortsa 2020)

As an exilic Tibetan writer, it was also a challenging task for Khortsa to find out a publishing house as there was hardly any tradition of Anglophone Tibetan fictional works. It appears that he felt the need for a little bit of development of the story and perfection of narrative style. The time he received while searching for a publisher for the print edition provided him some opportunity to make some revisions in the beginning and the ending. While writing *The Tibetan Suitcase,* Khortsa follows the mid-18th century's traditional European pattern and style of writing novel. He selects an epistolary form which reminds us of the works of the British novelist, Samuel Richardson. The novel is written as "a series of letters and in the form of diary entries" to make the situation more realistic (Goswami 2019, 2). The reason for selecting an epistolary form for writing this novel, Khortsa opines:

> I decided to write most of it in letters for several reasons. For one, it was the best way of writing about long-distance relationships (in our case, often, long-distance nationalism). Secondly, I realized that writing letters to imaginary beings were, for better or worse, something I was quite good at. (Khortsa 2020)

He further says,

> The discovery of the epistolary style, therefore, was a major technical breakthrough for me. I feel this style worked in the context of the narrative of a diasporic community scattered around the world, and especially suited for the material I was working with. (Khortsa, 2020)

Thus, the novel is the result of a unique experimentation with form and content.

An important inclusion is "The Editor's Notes" in the beginning of the novel which is not usually a part of the novelistic conventions. In "The Editor's Note," Khortsa discusses a real- life situation that motivated the writing of the novel. Dawa, a real-life character, gave Khortsa a suitcase full of letters and documents and requested him to turn the content into a book. He told author to publish this book posthumously. Khortsa accepts this challenge. After reading the contents of the letters and other documents, he decides to write an epistolary novel. However, in order to convey a sense of wholeness and bring integrity to the novel, he begins to collect information about the letters. He requests Iris Penington and Brent Rhinehart, Dawa's friends and also narrators of some parts of story, to provide him with some more information in this respect. Khortsa also gathers copies of the magazines where Dawa's works were published. He says,

> I have not done anything except correct a few typos here and there and add notes and datelines to the letters. None of the letters are mine, except some entries that I wrote, making the book partially fictionalized. (Khortsa 2019, 8)

Khortsa is acting both as an editor and a novelist here. Dawa Tashi has become a character in this novel. This work is partly autobiographical and partly fictional. Khortsa has arranged, selected and edited the contents and given these fragmented materials the shape of a novel. He is the first Tibetan writer in English who has employed such stylistic techniques. He himself remarks, "Many readers are also quite flabbergasted by my style because I broke so many

rules. And the great thing about the novel as a form is that it pushes the author to break the rules so that it is 'novel' or new [work]" (Khortsa 2020).

The title of the novel, *The Tibetan Suitcase,* can be interpreted in various ways. The word 'suitcase,' on the literal plane, refers to the suitcase which was handed over to Khortsa by Dawa Tashi. Khortsa's suitcase, more broadly, refers to the Tibetan cultural tradition. In Tibetan culture, multiple stories are woven and this gives the novel an onion layered style: stories within stories. Khortsa has used journal entries, 'bricolage of letters,' application letters, and newspaper articles to shape this book. Details such as providing dates, months, years and places to each entry make this novel more realistic in nature.

Let us contextualise the story now. The story is primarily based on Dawa Tashi, the protagonist of the novel, who is torn between two worlds: homeland and hostland. The prologue of the text contextualises the setting of the novel and introduces Dawa Tashi. The setting of the novel is very much significant as it creates discourses and introduces characters who debate about supernatural powers of Tibetan and Chinese monks, and get involved in comparing their power. Magical prowess, which is an integral part of the traditional indigenous Tibetan knowledge system, is considered to be a strong weapon to fight evil forces, and this aspect has been reflected in some Anglophone Tibetan literary works such as Jamyang Norbu's *The Mandala of Sherlock Holmes* (1999), where Sherlock Holmes and Professor Moriarty, both students of a school of magic, fight each other with the help of magical power. Holmes, a symbol of the Good, triumphs over Moriarty, a representative of the Evil. Interestingly, Moriarty was shown as aligned to, and acted as an agent of, the Chinese who were bent on dethroning the Dalai Lama. It is quite in consonance with such cultural beliefs and practices that Khortsa too introduces this magical prowess in the novel.

The prologue begins with the story of Peter Wong's haunted apartment which he discusses with his friends, Sir Gareth Bond, the family lawyer and John Paswani, a Sindhi businessman, at The Himalayan Kitchen Restaurant. Wong is a 'permanent fixture in Hong Kong's high society' and 'close to the members of the Chinese politburo in Beijing' (Khortsa 2019, 14-15). Their discussions

focus on two categories of monks – Tibetan and Chinese. Wong believes in the superiority of the Tibetan monks who can easily control supernatural happenings. Paswani remarks, "Tibetan monks were excellent at taming ghost. . . Chinese monks are quite useless in these matters. You must get the Tibetans. I am sure they can help you" (11). They narrate different stories of Tibetan lamas who have miraculous and magical power and how they use it to control ghosts. Wong further says, "And if you want to die in peace, you need a great Tibetan lama" (14). We are then introduced to Dawa Tashi, the protagonist of the novel who started living in this 'haunted apartment' in Hong Kong as a 'meditation teacher and a guru.' We are also introduced to Professor Khenchen Sangpo who is a renowned scholar and a famed lama. Peter Wong met him on a visit to Taiwan and told Khenchen that he had opened a meditation centre and he needed someone to look after this. Khenchen's long-time protégé, Dawa who "happened to come out of a three years retreat in the mountains of New York" (17) was requested to join the meditation centre because, as Khenchen points out, it would help Dawa familiarise with various kinds of work related to Tibetan Buddhism. All these discussions of the power of controlling the ghosts and supernatural elements suggest that the Tibetan lamas can rule the Chinese soul which is an important factor in the fight between Tibet and China. It is described in the following way,

> Remember our land might be ruled by China but we rule the Chinese mind. You don't have to set yourself up as the Great Karmapa lamas of Tibet who once had the mighty Chinese emperors kneeling on their feet. But just hang out with the ordinary folks, listen to their grievances, and keep smiling. Nearly half the Chinese population consider themselves Buddhist and that's a lot more than we can ever handle. The goal is to free the Chinese mind first. *You cannot have a Free Tibet without a Free China*. (Khorsta 2019, 18; emphasis added)

The supernatural elements such as ghost (and control of the ghost) that appear in the story have a functional role. While the non-Tibetan characters such as Paswani and Gareth both stereotype the Tibetans as natural monks, having supernatural power, the Tibetan belief-system accommodates supernatural elements. Their religion, their myths and legends speak of supernatural powers. However, in the novel, the reference to the ghost and the taming of the ghost represents aspects of a 'nationalist power.' Tibet, as we know, has historically

been locked in a political rivalry for a long time. Contesting China in not conceived in terms of mere physical prowess – the mind game is also considered to be an important weapon. As a nation, Tibet is visualized as having a strong national resource in spiritual and supernatural power. This gives an edge to the Tibetan nation over their Chinese counterpart. Khenchen Sangpo, himself a Tibetan, considers Tibet as having a strong supernatural power that was used in the past for the defence of the country. The superior mind-power and control of the enemy mind was part and parcel of the Tibetan political prowess. At the personal level, Sangpo believes that the same power can also be reinvigorated and exercised at the present moment to combat the Chinese political aggression in Tibet as the Tibetans have superior supernatural power.

The above extract also suggests three important aspects:

1. It is necessary to change the mind of the Chinese people. The Chinese communist ideology has been imposed on them where the sense of Buddhism, religiosity and humanism seem to have no place. The Chinese regime prioritises materialism, greed and hunger for power over what Buddhism represents. The Chinese people are traditionally Buddhists. They have Buddhism in their blood. The changes in their ideology and the changes in their mindset will inevitably have impact on the overall Chinese policies towards Tibet and the Tibetans.
2. It is the responsibility of the speaker (located in diaspora) to think of Tibet's liberation – a duty that a Tibetan cannot avoid.
3. Spiritual power is prioritised over physical power.

The novel concentrates on the discussion of two opposite and opposing worlds – China and Tibet, Western and Eastern world. It captures not only the conflict between Chinese and Tibetan Worlds but also reflects on the tension between nation and diaspora. Khortsa unravels another story which is mainly related to the life of Dawa Tashi. In his journal, Dawa says that he has a story to tell:

> And it's been one hell of a ride from my roots in India to my education in the US, especially my time at Appleton University where I learned to drink beer, and my strange relationship with Iris, and her unparalleled beauty, to my retreat in the mountains of New York where I learnt a great deal about meditation, to my current incarnation as some kind of guru or instructor. (Khortsa 2019, 27)

In this journey, Dawa faces several challenging situations. 'Dwelling' in routes, he has not stopped trying to trace his roots. This attachment to both roots and routes generates a unique search for identity in him. His journey from India to America, then his return to India again gives him a lot of experiences. His desire to become a creative writer, his love relationship with Iris, his transformation from a meditation teacher to a writer and a researcher, his search for the roots from India – all these have been narrated by Khortsa here. Interestingly, his diasporic experience in India and the United States are quite different and this becomes the main thrust of the novel. This will be discussed at length in the next section.

Khortsa, in the novel, deals with three prominent terms which are very much relevant in the context of the displaced Tibetans. These are: 'home,' 'homeland,' and 'borrowed homeland.' These originate from an observation made by Dawa Tashi:

> You know India is my *home*, but Tibet is my *homeland*. Since I cannot return to my homeland, I have returned to India [from the United States]. How interesting it is that I have *to borrow a homeland so that we can at least have the pretence of returning?* (Khortsa 2019, 59; emphases added)

While 'homeland' here refers to the ancestral land, the country of origin, the two other terms are associated with the diasporic space. The Tibetan characters feel that Tibet is their 'homeland.' It appears that the two words – 'home' and 'land' – that combine the compound word ('homeland') convey, when taken together, both a topography and a sense of comfort and shelter in that space. It is a kind of 'dwelling' in which all the elements of nature and those of domestic and civic life merge and make the act of dwelling natural and spontaneous. It is a 'land' that accommodates peace of mind and rootedness not only in the 'place' but also in its old ancestral culture. 'Home,' on the contrary, is, in Avtar Brah's formulation, not the same as the 'homeland.' According to her, the idea of 'homing desire' is quite different – it "is not the same thing as the desire for homeland" (Brah 177). One can turn a place not located in the ancestral place 'homely' in the sense that it is quite peaceful and comfortable for one. In this sense, India, for many Tibetan exiles, have become a 'home' where they can

live their own lives peacefully and fruitfully. Khortsa refers to India as a 'home' in this sense.

Interestingly, however, 'home' and 'homeland' are often used interchangeably. In the following extract from Stock the finer, nuanced differences have not been kept in mind:

> It may have been left recently or generations ago; it may not exist anymore or be the destination of regular 'home trips'; it may be a locus of nostalgia and nightmares; it may feel welcoming or strange upon return visits or it may never have been that homey in the first place. (2011, 24)

Stock's idea of home/land, however, offers valuable insight. In a life of constant roaming, the memory of the home/land appears again and again irrespective of the diverse material conditions under which one had to leave the place. Since it is a country of the past, the originary space, and since its memories are spread like tentacles in one's mind, one is bound to go back to the past simply because its sounds and scenes continue reverberating in the alleys of the mind. It is such a powerful voice that even unpleasant, traumatic memories cannot stop this passage. Although "not all the diasporas sustain an ideology of return" (Brah 177) to the homeland and although the homeland one used to know has disappeared for good due to political reasons from the face of the earth, the memory of the past keeps on visiting simply because "home is a mythic place of desire in the diasporic imagination" (Brah 177).

Contemporary Tibetan refugees who left their homeland more than seven decades ago cannot make "regular 'home trips'" to Tibet which does not exist anymore in the same old way. Their visits there will be unwelcome to the Chinese regime that control their territory and lives inside it. It is 'a locus of [both] nostalgia and nightmares.' Their own experience of displacement is nightmarish and the narratives of their friends and relatives who are left behind are depressing. Yet the exiled Tibetans have pleasant memories, both personal and ancestral, to fall back on. Looking back from a different 'land' such as India and the United States, they look upon the 'homeland' as an abstract, ideal space.

Naturally a sense of nostalgia[7] (the word consisting of nostos (return) and algos (pain))[8] still informs their living in the new place.

Dawa considers India as an alternative to their original homeland. It is a place that approximates the 'homeland' but is not exactly an equivalent to it. This approximation is felt on the basis of cultural affinities, historical bonding, and the friendship, support and refuge offered to the Tibetan refugees by the Government of India and its people ever since the Tibetans' displacement from their 'homeland.' It offers comfort and peace of mind to a great extent but not the sense of rootedness that is expected in the 'homeland.' It is an act of substitution in the clear absence of the original. It is a 'home' likely to be temporary. Thus, to Dawa, India is a 'borrowed homeland' because it provides them a temporary space and a 'home.' It is intended to be 'borrowed' by the Tibetans only for a short period of time. This concept underlines the desire latent in the exiled Tibetans in India for an ultimate return to their original homeland which in reality may never happen. Nevertheless, the 'return' factor is strong in the diasporic imaginary, particularly in the mind of the members of the first generation. For them "[t]he act of remembering is always contextual, a continuous process of recalling, interpreting and reconstructing the past in terms of the present and in the light of an anticipated future" (Stock 2011, 24).

In the case of Dawa, 'home' is such a space which he had never seen. It is not a 'welcoming space' as it is under Chinese colonialism. That is why, he feels a deep attachment to his 'borrowed homeland.' Here, the boundary line between 'homeland' and 'borrowed homeland' is blurred. Dawa's memory of home is not related to his homeland only. He has a strong nostalgic memory for India. Here, the memories are not centered on the memory of any fixed ancestral past. These memories are fluid and subjected to change based on one's recent position. In this respect, Stock observes "Memories of home are no factual

[7] "Nostalgia is a slippery word; it can be experiential - based on one's own personal memories - or it can be cultural - based on collective memories or cultural myths" (Delisle 2006, 389).

[8] "From the outset, nostalgia was equated with homesickness." (Sedikides and et all 2008, 304).

productions of a fixed past. Rather they are fluid reconstructions set against the backdrop of the remembering subject's current positionings and conceptualizations of home" (24).

In the very beginning of the novel, Khortsa represents the problematic picture of Tibet as a 'homeland.' Being a second-generation Tibetan, he himself never visited Tibet. Due to Chinese atrocities, it is very difficult for him to visit it now. The 'nation' is thus almost inaccessible for him from the Indian diasporic space. He believes that from their parents and forefathers he has inherited nothing but "trauma, sadness and loss" (Khortsa 2019, 35). This inaccessibility intensifies the nation-diaspora binary as Tibet is considered to be an ideal homeland offering stability, a condition exactly opposite to what one experiences in the exile. This tension between what is and what could have been is projected through Dawa's restless state of mind manifested in his decision to journey to the United States. But wherever he goes, Tibet as a homeland lies at the back of his mind, influencing him and motivating him to inform the world about its history:

> I am sure a lot of people do not know much about the country. So here is my two cents worth of Tibetan history: Tibet is a landlocked Himalayan nation currently under the rule of the People's Republic of China. Throughout history though, *Tibet had been managing its own affairs, as a de facto independent nation*. Yet to look at Tibet from the idea of nation-state is a complicated one because the concept of the "nation" itself, as we understand now, is a product of colonialism. (Khortsa 2019, 27; emphasis added)

Tibet, in the past, as Dawa mentioned in the letter, was divided into two geopolitical areas: 'Bod (Tibet) and 'Bod Chenmo' (Greater Tibet). The British divided Tibet into the "'Inner Tibet' (sometimes known as geographical Tibet) and 'cultural Tibet' (ethnological Tibet, places while being Tibetan in race, religion and culture was not directly under the rule of the Lhasa government)" (Khortsa 2019, 28). Tibet, as has been mentioned earlier, is now under Chinese rule and lost the status of 'de facto independent nation.' There is a huge controversy about the status of Tibet as a nation. In the introduction of this thesis, we have already discussed the different kinds of opinions existing in the academia in this regard. Many writers have problematised this issue and showed

their concerns by highlighting their own opinions. Khortsa provides us glimpses of socio-cultural debates regarding the geo-political position of Tibet as a nation in the novel too. He has created a platform where the characters participate in the debate[9] about Tibet as a nation. The Tibetan and Chinese scholars in the novel hold diverse opinions about the issue. Khortsa has created varied opinions/discourses to highlight two important aspects: firstly, he points out to the political opinions of various characters regarding Tibet as a nation and the way the politics of representation plays a dominant role in this respect. Secondly, as an exilic Tibetan, his role is to draw global attention to the 'Free Tibet' issue and 'the Tibetan Question.'

Dawa Tashi's diasporic worlds, as represented in the novel, are India and America. Although both India and America are his exilic worlds, his ways of looking at these two nations are somewhat different. He was born in a 'foreign' land. He was born "in a house with a thatched roof" in the Indo-Tibetan border of the Himalayas which was built by the Central Tibetan Relief Committee. Dislocated from the homeland, he faces constant identity crisis as a Tibetan. He did not receive any birth certificate and was deprived of Indian citizenship. He writes, 'Though I was born in India, I did not become an Indian citizen – only a very "welcomed and an honoured guest." I grew up as a foreigner, technically as if I were a backpacker, a *perpetual tourist*, before I returned to wherever I belonged' (Khortsa 2019, 28; emphasis added). The concept of 'belonging' is very problematic for the exiled Tibetans and this is suggested by the words and phrases "welcomed and honoured guest," "foreigner" and "a perpetual tourist." In the history of Tibetan exile, the issues of citizenship and statelessness have

[9] While Julia Zhu, a biology student, receives threat calls for supporting Khenchen, some other students do not support Zhu. David Zhang denies the fact that Tibet was ever an independent country. Zhang says, "Tibet has always been a part of India" (Khortsa 2019, 167). This is sheer ignorance. When in Brent Rhinehart edited journal *Meridian*, Tibet is mentioned as a nation, Ting Changwu wrote a letter to the editor mentioning that "Tibet has always been part of China since time immemorial. Nobody can dispute this fact. It is only false information spread by the Dalai clique that makes the world think Tibet is an independent nation" (Khortsa 2019, 159). He further mentions, "It is wrong for a Tibetan to claim that, and it is also wrong for Americans to encourage and perpetuate such false information" (Khortsa 2019, 159).

been of primary concern as they have been denied citizenship in India where they are issued some documents such as Registration Certificate (RC) and Identity Certificates (IC) by the Government of India. Although the office of the Tibetan government-in-exile is located in Dharamsala, India, the Indian government does not recognise it. This government in exile provides the Tibetan refugees 'Green Books (Lagdeb Janggu or Rangzen Lagdeb)' as a mark of identification which is used for tax collection purpose. This lack of citizenship status has greatly affected the refugees. Thubten Dorje, a Tibetan in exile, for instance, asserts,

> We aren't Indians. We don't get benefits. We can't buy land. There is no Indian citizenship for us. There is only a residential certificate that we have to renew once a year. We can't take loans, no buying lands, and we can't get good jobs. You can apply for Indian citizenship, but it's very difficult to get. We pay taxes to the Indian government, and one tax to the Central Tibetan Administration too. (Falcone and Wangchuk 2008: 167)

Interestingly, many second-generation Tibetans who are involved in Tibetan activism have been known to refuse Indian citizenship. The sense of patriotism and the dedication towards their homeland are reasons behind this refusal. In this respect, Pia Oberoi notes that

> second-generation Tibetans in exile are entitled to Indian citizenship under Section 3 of the Indian Citizenship Act of 1955, and asserts that most second-generation refugees refuse this entitlement. Oberoi also cites an [sic] United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) Executive Committee Report in which Indian officials reported that Tibetan refugees are technically permitted to become Indian citizens. (2008, 167-168).

Citizenship offers a sense of certainty, along with a sense of rootedness and belonging. The stateless person is a 'perpetual tourist,' one who lives like an exiled person, one who is always on the move, not by choice but by circumstances. The 'borrowed homeland' does not offer a stable solution in this regard. This mindset of a wanderer does not allow one to stay put in one single place but forces one to venture out on the route. Tashi is torn between two worlds: a world which is a 'borrowed' one (India) and a world where he dreams to go (America). He wants to leave his present home, Dharamsala. He observes,

> . . . I do not see anything exotic and alluring about sitting in a monastery reading Tibetan texts written in ridiculously stylish or arcane prose – though quite beautiful, mind you – or in selling sweaters in the streets of Mumbai. Instead, the idea I have of American campuses (from watching those Hollywood movies) – beautiful gothic buildings covered with ivy leaves, manicured lawns, and populated by attractive students having a great time while being taught by the best minds in the world – is closer to my dreamland. (Khortsa 2019, 30-31)

As the above extract indicates, he was attracted to the glitter of the spectacular West. In his dream he imagines America as a 'paradise.' However, the sense of dilemma, in leaving India, which he considers as a "borrowed homeland," is very much prominent in his mind. This dilemma makes him restless and his thoughts ramble. At the time of leaving India his mind is preoccupied with several questions:

> I am kind of sad that I will be leaving India in two weeks. But then, why did I write to Appleton [University for a Creative Writing course] in the first place? To escape Dharamsala and this great country of Hindustan? But why? Why do I believe that I will become a better writer just because I will be breathing American air? (Khortsa 2019, 36)

At this stage of his life's journey, he decides to move to the United States, a decision that testifies to his status of 'a perpetual tourist.' Khortsa employs Dawa's stay in the United States and his disenchantment with the alluring land as a strategy to establish the fact that India, and not the United States, is ultimately his preferred 'home,' and may be even his 'homeland.'

The creation of a 'vicarious' homeland, the process of the 'home' being turned into a 'homeland' and 'return' to this home-turned-homeland from the United States is a unique representation of the novelist. Dawa, in the novel, was constantly remembering the things which he will miss after leaving India, his 'borrowed homeland.' He considers his home, Dharamsala, as "a strange mixture of Tibet and India" which provides him "a nice feeling, an idea of home and the great landscape of this place" (Khortsa 2019, 59). A reasonably strong sense of nostalgia works even in the case of his borrowed homeland. This sense of nostalgia both for the 'homeland' and for the 'borrowed homeland' leads to the interface between nation and diaspora. The impossibility of living in the original homeland makes him consider the option of considering India as a

substitute for that 'homeland.' But substitutes, as we have pointed out earlier, can never be like the original. Thus, India cannot be a 'homeland' at the present moment in the sense he looks upon it, although it may be possible for the future generations. But a perceptible reader can feel that Dawa is perhaps in the process of adopting the country as nearest to his soul (after Tibet, of course). But at the same time, he feels himself to be on the route, further considering the option of moving forward to another land which too, conceptually, may be his future 'home.' The concept of the 'home' therefore is not rooted in a single country but in a given generation the meaning of the 'homeland' mostly remains rather stable. In this process, 'home' may become associated with the diasporic space as well, if it is not outright hostile to immigrants like him. But the 'homeland' for the first generation does not shift – it remains rooted in the ancestral country. He may experience a sense of nostalgia like any other Indian but his nostalgia again will evoke community-based images of longing. Dawa states,

> I will miss the milk tea, the gulab jamun, the rickshaws, Mr. Nowrowjee's store, beer at the Mclloss Bar, the dal and roti and the wonderful breakfast of parantha on Jogiwara Road. I will miss the Thekchen Choeling Monastery, and miss making rounds of the temple. I will miss the Tibetan folk dance and music, and I will miss the Tibetan New year celebrations. I will, of course, miss the protests, the dissent and demonstrations, which have been perfected to a high art by my countrymen. I will miss Bodhgaya and Benares and the beautiful women who come there. I will miss everything about it: the centuries-old temples, the verdant fields, and the rivers that flow from the highlands of Tibet to the Indian Ocean. (Khortsa 2019, 36)

The longings listed in the extract suggest that India is on the brink of being turned into a 'homeland' and this operates vicariously on his senses. He consoles himself by saying that he "will return to this *borrowed* but beautiful homeland [i.e. India] of mine" (Khortsa 2019, 37; emphasis added). In a letter to his childhood friend Tashi, Dawa compares his childhood days in the Himalayas with a "barren and flat place called Appleton" (Khortsa 2019, 37). This sense of contrast suggests that he is accepting these two diasporic locations, India and America, differently. The United States cannot be his 'home' because it is overtly a racist country which discourages him to settle there. Dawa describes how Tibetans are stereotyped there,

> I also have graduates coming to seek advice [in America], and some simply to see what an actual Tibetan looks like, as if I am some endangered animal in the zoo. And I was sick of telling them, especially the Taiwanese, that not all Tibetans are monks or lamas. (Khortsa 2019, 50)

The incident in which he got into a brawl in a restaurant in the US is an instance of overt racism. In the restaurant, he encountered a bartender who looked upon him as an exotic person. He did not know anything about Tibet. He is enraged at his racist jibe and gives a 'Khampa punch' to him when the bartender took him for a Chinese or a Japanese. Tibetans are homogenised with other similar racial communities. Dawa asserts that Tibet is an independent country with a rich heritage about which the other person is absolutely ignorant of: "No, you son of a bitch, Tibet is an independent country. You don't know our history" (Khortsa 2019, 52). He is not ready to compromise with the prestige and honour of Tibet as a country of origin. America, therefore, can never be a home. Such stereotyping, racializing and bestialising of Tibetans have created hurdles in the acculturation process. The author strategically takes him to the US so that he can experience the contrast between Tibetan's experience in India and that in America.

In America, he also misses his cultural and religious practices. The cultural affinity and religious connection between India and Tibet have helped him create a strong bond with India. Tibetans generally find a link between Tibet as a homeland and India as their home. India acts as a substitute, a replacement for Tibet, which America can never be. Buddhism is introduced as a link that reminds him of the old Tibet which is replicated in Dharmasala. India is the birthplace of Buddha the great and that functions as a great motivation. He can see the people of his communities, his culture, and roots reflected in India. He finds a link between Tibet as a homeland and India as their home. India has all the great sites of Buddhism and Tibetan refugees have visited the caves of Buddhist gurus and renovated these places and subsequently built hundreds of monasteries and stupas around India. That is why he ruminates:

> … perhaps I should go back to India, to be *closer to the great and vanishing culture and people of the old Tibet*, not least my own aging parents who are not in their best health. It's indeed interesting now that *I am drawn back to my own culture* – rather

> than the culture of the West . . . that I am supposed to be studying. Rather than reading Western literature, and Western theories conjured up by dead white men, I am looking inwards into my own culture, my own roots. (Khortsa 2019, 48-49)

After his return to Dharamsala from Appleton, receiving the news of his mother's illness, Dawa's passion to learn more about Tibetan Buddhist heritage, Tibetan language and mountain culture intensifies. He wants to receive teachings from the monks. He says, "If you want to know more about the Tibetan psyche, I suppose you need to befriend the Himalayas" (Khortsa 61). The Himalayas intersect both India and Tibet. It is associated with Buddhism, religiosity and spiritualism. All these bring the two nations closer. In fact, the Himalayas provide the right environment for remembering Tibet. From Dharamsala, Dawa imagines his ancestral homeland. He says, "Everyday, I saw the tall, majestic mountain range of the Himalayas, behind which lay our ancestral homeland" (Khortsa 2019, 64). This physical proximity makes him nostalgic – the environmental similarities between Tibet and Dharamsala provide adequate reasons to the exiled Tibetan for considering India as their "second home." Although he does not have any first-hand experience about Tibet, he discovers an inherent link between Tibet, his 'homeland' and India, his 'home,' the two significant terms we have explained earlier. He says,

> Whenever I am in America, I would start missing India. And when you are stuck in India, we start missing Tibet, which seems to have given us this beautiful present, this gift of nostalgia, and the license to dream and yearn for a fabled land of our great forefathers that always seem out of reach, eternally elusive. (Khortsa 2019, 113)

Interestingly, in this extract, three different nation spaces – America, India and Tibet are projected and they seem to have been arranged hierarchically – at the bottom lies America which the speaker leaves in exasperation because of the racist treatment meted out to him. He then arrives in India, a country he missed during his stay in America. India is a nation space where he did invest his emotion as a result of which he felt a 'homing desire' for it in its absence. The sense of absence was felt acutely in terms of his association with old places, familiar faces and languages, known sights, food items and sartorial styles. He was born here and he lived here. The entire topography and socio-political spaces are familiar to him. It is for these reasons that he categorises India as his

'homeland,' as we have already seen. At the top of his hierarchical choice however is Tibet, a land experientially out of his reach. Yet it is strongly lodged in his imagination and nursed with care and affection in his mind. Like his compatriots, it is the object of desire and nostalgia. A 'fabled land of our great forefathers,' Tibet seems elusive, out of reach. Yet a whole brigade of Tibetan people now in exile, consistently dream of attaining the unattainable, a dream that inspires thousands of patriots to launch a popular 'Free Tibet' movement, to wrest Tibet from colonial forces. Tibet, their 'homeland' is not their 'home' at present as they are not living there. In this sense India is their 'home' that carries, according to this interpretation, the sense of lived experience. But given the sense of homeliness they feel in India, it is like Tibet but then also not quite. It is a 'borrowed land,' the phrase suggesting a temporary period during which they will live here in an environment of amity and peace but at the end of that period they are supposedly destined to relocate in their homeland.

Now we may discuss the role of Buddhism in creating a contact zone. Culture of the homeland is continued even in the diasporic space. Khortsa shows how Tibetan Buddhist philosophy and '*terma* or treasure teachings' of Tibet have greatly influenced people across the world. For the diasporic Tibetans, it is a link between nation and diaspora. Buddhism is foregrounded in the novel because it helps in strengthening the Tibetan nationalistic feelings. The role of Buddhism is significant here in three ways:

a) to inform the world about the power of Buddhism which informs Tibetan identity and nationalism; b) to inform the world about how the Tibet has been occupied by an evil colonial power which has inflicted untold pains on a people who practice Buddhism; and c) to raise the consciousness and awareness of the world regarding the political dimensions of the Tibetan cause and seek global support.

Khenchen Sangpo Rinpoche, a well-known Tibetan scholar and Professor, plays a major role in this context. Through his research, he creates a connection between nation and diaspora. He observes,

> I am still extremely proud of the great spiritual, literary, and intellectual heritage of my country, and I consider myself

> tremendously lucky to be part of this storehouse of original knowledge – knowledge as vast as the sky as deep as the ocean. (Khortsa 2019, 133)

Sangpo's "descriptions of pre-Buddhist Tibet were as detailed as they were fascinating, especially how he described the roots of Tibetan rituals and practices and all the religious paraphernalia that pre-dated Buddhism, which came from India, and has its roots in old, original Tibet" (Khortsa 2019, 48). His opinion clearly points out to the fact that Tibet has great religious and literary heritage. He confirms the connection of roots between India and Tibet.

Dharamsala which also plays an important role in the lives of the Tibetans becomes a prominent centre of Buddhist culture. It is the administrative centre of the Tibetan Government in exile. Politically and culturally, it attempts to substitute the original Tibet. Hence, for all Tibetans in exile, it is something nearest to what Tibet stands for them. It becomes the centre of attraction particularly for Buddhist philosophy. Many Chinese monks and nuns attend and learn Buddhist teaching from the Dalai Lama. Dharamsala has turned into a place of attraction for tourists, therapists, anthropologists, journalists and artists. Even Buddhist scholars have started debates over apparently contradictory issues such as science versus spirituality and physics versus metaphysics. Dawa and Khenchen Sangpo start writing about Tibetan issues in their magazine, *The Himalayan Quarterly*. Dawa, for instance, deconstructs the stereotypical idea that Tibetans are all monks. In order to know more about Tibetan culture and to do further research on Tibet, Iris[10] comes to McLeod Ganj, Dharamsala. She

[10] This story takes a different direction when Iris visits Dharamsala for her PhD work and comes in touch with another character, Pema who was born in Tibet but in the early 1990s had escaped to India. He was a well-known Tibetan writer and an expert on China. Pema who escaped to India in the early 1990s was very much "knowledgeable about Tibetan history, an expert on China" (Khortsa 2019, 92). He plans to join a conference on meditation and philosophy where Iris too will join. Dawa often visits Pema to hear him talk about literature. Pema had a good sense of humour. Very often he cracks jokes about Tibetan culture. Dawa says, "He took serious jabs at Buddhism and was very cynical of Buddhist monks and the whole idea about celibacy. He is full of strange ideas like turning all Tibetan monasteries into museums and resorts, teaching arts and handicrafts to the monks – and yes, organic farming – as if he is writing a college paper about Buddhist economics. He told me he was quite relieved that he was out of Tibet" (Khortsa 2019, 91). Pema's activist nature, his knowledge of Tibetan

comes closer to "little Tibet," where she discovers book shops, Tibetan institutes, Tibetan libraries, Tibetan restaurants and Tibetan children's village. Iris spends a lot of time in the library where she gets access to a lot of Tibetan and Buddhists texts with 'dakini scripts.' Dawa and Iris registered for a seminar on Buddhism held in Dharamsala where they meet students and scholars from all over the world like India, Denmark, France, Spain, Trinidad and Nepal. This indicates how Tibetan Buddhism is flourishing in the global space. They attend an orientation session in Delhi where they meet participants from different parts of the world. So, Delhi and Dharamsala are such cultural zones where different nations meet, interface and share their ideas. Tibet and Tibetan Buddhism have influenced them a lot. Many Chinese pilgrims from Hong Kong, Taiwan and the mainland China come to attend a teaching session of a high-ranking Tibetan monk. Iris[11] planned to join the "Kalachakra" and receive a very special teaching. At INALCO (National Institute for Oriental Languages and Civilizations) in Paris, Dawa encounters a grey-haired man who compares the Tibetan exilic condition with "the idea of simulacra. . . where the copy is more real than the original" (Khortsa 2019, 103). He further observes that "Dharamsala exists to make Lhasa real" (Khortsa 2019, 103). The phrase 'simulacra' here refers to an imitation of something or an image reproduced or represented by replacing the reality. The existence of Dharamsala makes it possible for the Tibetans to continue their cultural practices, their religious beliefs and their social values in the diasporic space. As they don't have any option to continue such practices in Tibet, Dharamsala here becomes an

literature and his political poems have greatly impressed Iris, and for her dissertation oriented work, Iris decides to visit Kathmandu with Pema. As a result, Iris is involved in a serious relationship with Pema and distancing creates a gap between Dawa and Iris.

[11] From Brent's journal, we came to know that Iris was adopted at the age of three or four from a school in the Himalayas. She had no birth certificates. She was eager to know her biological parents from her adopted parents. That is why, she did not look like Caucasian. Her grandparents were Nepali living in Dharamsala. Her mother's name was Durga and she got pregnant by a Tibetan monk named Pasang who had left the army and was nowhere to be found. She was adopted by David and his wife and her real name was Shanti. Iris decides to discover her cultural roots.

alternative zone where they can better perform socio-religious practices than in their original homeland.

Many characters in the novel work on Tibet-related issues to disseminate knowledge about Tibet, Tibetan culture and Tibetan Buddhism. Khenchen Sangpo, at the Institute of Advanced Indian Studies at Shimla, for example, worked as a distinguished visiting fellow to work on his novel, "a retelling of the Tibetan Gesar Epic." In Kham, he was a monk-student who had left Tibet in 1958. He was the first Tibetan contributor to the *Journal of the Maha Bodhi Society*. He taught in different universities in Lucknow, Delhi and Allahabad. He also held a professorship at Santiniketan. Khenchen and Dawa are passionate about good literature and are involved in the formation of a forum for independent intellectual discussion. Khenchen is one of the external advisors of an American student Erik's doctoral thesis. Erik receives his doctoral degree in Buddhist Studies and was involved in teaching Buddhism at a liberal Arts College in New York.

Khortsa, by introducing such characters tries to point out how Tibetan culture and Buddhism have started crossing the border of a single nation and flourishing in different parts of the world. Khortsa as an author is primarily interested in spreading the message that although Tibet is no longer an independent nation, in a world of globalization and cosmopolitanism, Tibetan culture, language and Buddhist philosophy are being gradually included in the curriculum of world literature. It is interesting to note that not only Tibetans and Indians are involved in the learning and research on Buddhist philosophy but many other non-Tibetan scholars are also working on it in Western universities. Although exile is a difficult state for the Tibetans, it has served as a fertile ground for creativity. Khenchen's magazine,

> had received tremendous publicity in the Tibetan community, not just in India, but overseas as well. Subscription requests came from Switzerland, Canada, Denmark, the US, Japan, Australia, and even from Estonia. (Khortsa 2019, 81)

His magazine kept on flourishing and "growing in size and frequency" all over the world. During their visit to a Burmese Buddhist temple and to a Tibetan Centre (in Paris), Dawa and Khenchen see that the centre subscribes different

Tibetan magazines such as *Mandala*, *Shambala*, *Trincycle* and *Bodhi* and had a wonderful collection of Tibetan Buddhist books. Khenchen tells Erik, "Let the creative juices flow. *When you do not have a home, you must learn to seek asylum in pages*" (Khortsa 2019, 82; emphasis added). Tibetan exodus, thus, helps Tibetans build a creative and cultural zone. Khenchen observes,

> We escaped the PLA [People's Liberation Army] who were trying to nab us, period. For all its agony, anguish and indignities, ours is a glorious escape – we began to transform the world through our departure. (Khortsa 2019, 82)

Khenchen Rinpoche was also invited to deliver his talk on "the idea of Tibet?" at the Oxford Union. He delivered the longest lecture on the tragedy and politics of Tibet. When a student asked him, "what do you think the Western world should do about Tibet?" Khenchen answered,

> To be honest, there is still hope. We have *lobbied*, we have *made films* and we have *written books*. Now, what all of us need to do is to reflect on the fact that *everything is impermanent, including the Chinese regime*. (Khortsa 2019, 107; emphases added).

These are parts of Tibetan activist works. At Dharamsala, 'Students for a Free Tibet'[12] plays an active role in this regard. They invite Khenchen to deliver a lecture on Tibetan Buddhism.

All these indicate that Tibetan Buddhism and creative works are intimately associated with a desire to connect Tibet with their lived experience, to revive Tibetan values in their day-to-day life and to inspire Tibetan people in the diaspora to resort to a movement that will free Tibet from Chinese colonial aggressors. Although Tibet as a nation no longer exists in the modern geopolitical history, it is still alive through religious symbols, metaphors, cultural practices, and memories. Tibetan Buddhism is practiced throughout the world. Many universities in India, U.S., U.K., and different parts of the world offer courses on Tibetan Buddhism. It helps the Tibetans keep their religion and culture alive. Many non-Tibetan people are also influenced by Tibetan Buddhist

[12] I went to a store run by the Students for a Free Tibet (SFT) which is an organization led by a group of Tibetan students, activists and supporters. This organization contributes to the Tibetan cause through nonviolent action. They produce their own merchandise and sell them in their stores (see figure 5).

culture. It also helps Tibetans to secure the support of the non-Tibetan population for the free Tibet movement. Emerging Tibetan creative works in English also play a crucial role in this respect as these help to spread the Tibetans' story throughout the world. Some colleges and universities also offer courses on Tibetan Anglophone literature.

Representing the lived experience of the Tibetans in diaspora is not very difficult for Khortsa as he himself is part of the diasporic space. But portraying the lived experience of the Tibetans living in Tibet and facing colonial exploitation in their everyday life is a rather difficult task as inside information hardly cross borders and reach out to the diasporic Tibetans. An author, therefore, has to depend upon scanty pieces of information and first- hand experience of a limited number of people who managed to visit China. Khortsa too with much difficulty retrieved the history of the brutal Chinese colonial practices and traced the impact of the Cultural Revolution on the Tibetans through various fragmented narratives. He intends not only to show Tibetans' lived experience in China but also to elicit a global reaction against the Chinese regime. For this purpose, he has consciously introduced, in the novel, some characters who visited China.

Khenchen, one such character, received full residency status in the United States and a U.S. passport. He visits China with some students in connection with a research project. He greets this opportunity with enthusiasm, "Now, it is my time to go back to Tibet to see my own land" (Khortsa 145). He has many relatives there. Cultural Revolution, however, had snatched many lives including those of some of his family members. He becomes nostalgic about 'his homeland.'

Khenchen encourages Tibetan and non-Tibetan American scholars to join him in his travel to Tibet. He observes, "You will see how one of the most powerful countries in the world is colonizing one of the greatest civilizations on earth" (Khortsa 2019, 146). China as a superpower imposes its hegemonic power over the marginalised Tibetan community. Tibet and its great civilisation, as Khenchen observes, is under China's surveillance and is under constant threat. China is hostile to Dalai Lama and accuses him of being "a 'black magician,' a 'devil with horns,' a 'fake Buddhist' and what not" (Khortsa 2019, 146). Tibetan

culture is also facing great danger as it is being controlled by the colonial regime. Hence Khenchen indeed is running the risk of being challenged by the hostile forces in Tibet.

However, Khenchen was welcomed in Tibet like a 'lost son' by his own people. When he arrived, thousands of Tibetans gathered to give him a warm welcome. He recognised his friend Lama Ngawang who had returned to Tibet from India and who joined the guerrilla force on Nepal-Tibet border. However, he was also under close Chinese surveillance. When he was invited for dinners to various houses,

> he listened to countless stories of murder, mayhem, and wrongdoing by the Chinese army – and many by the Tibetans themselves during the Cultural Revolution. He *recorded* them, *took notes* and *listened*, often with tears rolling down his eyes, to the story of how his parents had been killed by the Chinese, as well as his beloved cousin, Abu Chung Chung, whom he missed dearly, and who had seen him off when he fled to India. (Khortsa 2019, 152-153; emphases added)

These memories are not positive ones. Khortsa highlights the tragic memories of brutal killing, murder and escape. Khenchen records all these memories to keep one's history alive. As a researcher and a writer, he would convert all these memories into stories. Khenchen also heard about the news of his father's death:

> He died in action in Lhoka, after killing at least 200 Chinese soldiers. Your father could easily have fled Tibet, but he decided not to, because someone had to stay back to fight the Chinese as His Holiness made his escape. But even though he is no longer alive, he remains etched in the people's memory as a great man and a great fighter. (Khortsa 2019, 153)

Through the foregrounding of the sacrifice of iconic figures like his father, Khortsa conveys the fact that many Tibetans preferred to stay back in Tibet and continue to resist Chinese aggression. The number of people who sacrificed their life is huge but instances of such sacrifice hardly come out into the open. These instances also underscore the importance of staying put on one's own ground, claiming one's own right to it, and never to submit to the hegemonic forces. By referring to Khenchen's father and his fellow fighters, Khortsa reveals the ground reality of Chinese aggression and the Tibetans' resistance to it. Khenchen's mother had also been punished for her husband's involvement in

anti-Chinese movement. She was murdered brutally in front of the whole community of Damkhang. Khenchen conducted most of the meetings with the members of the Tibetan communities secretly so that they did not face any harassment after his departure. He also gave them Dalai Lama's pictures. He enjoyed the 'heavenly beauty' of Tibet but was also shocked to see how the beautiful land faced Chinese oppression. Hundreds of monasteries have already been destroyed.

Khenchen sees how Lhasa had transformed into "an unimaginably Chinese city" (Khortsa 2019, 157). This transformation of the Tibetan world into a Chinese world is the result of China's autocratic regime. Lhasa was once the capital of Tibet and the Dalai Lama's headquarters. Before the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet, it was a free space where Tibetans could freely practice their religious and cultural life. Khenchen notes,

> The most depressing transformation was the ubiquitous presence of Chinese security officials who stood vigilant at every corner, with walkie-talkies that crackled with their transmissions . . . Tibet was no longer the Tibet that it used to be. (Khortsa 2019, 157)

This is an act of Sinicization - a colonial strategy employed by China. The civil space has been militarised resulting in the denial of common human rights to Tibetan people. Every civilian is put under surveillance and is harassed and even killed at the slightest suspicion. Visitors, particularly diasporic Tibetan visitors, are most vulnerable. It is no wonder, therefore, that Rinpoche is arrested while travelling inside Chinese controlled Tibet. The Chinese authorities alleged that "he was endangering national security" (Khortsa 2019, 160). For an autocratic ruling regime, this is a common enough excuse for arresting 'outsiders.' For the immediate release of Khenchen Sangpo, the US state government lodged their protest against the Chinese government and condemned "such acts of random detention of US citizen" (Khortsa 2019, 161). Along with Khenchen, two of his students, Michael and Ella were also arrested on charges of espionage. Roberto Caravaggio who was a professor of Tibetan Studies at Macalester College in Minneapolis, opines, "It is unbelievable that just walking around in his homeland can be considered as a crime" (Khortsa 2019, 160). It is alleged that "the detained scholar had been sent by the Dalai Lama's government in exile to destabilize the motherland" (Khortsa 2019, 162). A rare, sacred early 19th

century text was allegedly found in his possession. The arrest invited protests from US government, global human rights organisations, Tibetan activists in the diaspora and other civilian bodies.

International Association of Tibetan Studies (IATS) also condemned the incident and writes, "By arresting him, China has violated the basic human rights as enshrined in the UN Declaration of Human Rights which China ratified and signed" (Khortsa 2019, 163). Regents of the Appleton University also sent a letter of protest to the Chinese embassy in Washington DC. They also communicated to the Embassy that Khenchen's trip to Tibet was only for academic and personal reasons. He was not involved in any politics. Tibetan government in exile, the International Campaign for Tibet (ICT) also raised their voice against it. Dorjee Dhondup, the president of Tibetan Youth Congress also condemned China for its actions. Tibetans carried Tibetan flags and banners like "Release Khenchen Sangpo Now," "Free Tibet," and "Long Live the Dalai Lama."

Prof. Khenchen Sangpo was finally released after two months of international pressure. Khenchen shared his experience of living in a Chinese prison. Khenchen said,

> They interrogated us, handcuffed us and, at one point, even threatened to use cattle prods on us. I came to know firsthand the brutality of the Chinese Gulag. (Khortsa 2019, 182)

Such listening, recording and noting of the traumatic stories of Chinese atrocities, and witnessing the brutal treatment of Chinese oppression against Tibetans constitutes an act of seeking justice. Witnessing is important but recording the witness's account and bringing them to the public space are no less important as these invite, initiate and facilitate the process of seeking justice. Thus, bringing the witness out into the open is an ethical act in itself. It implies that witnesses become part and parcel of the narrative of the protest. 'Bearing witness,' says Kali Tal, is indeed "an aggressive act" (1996, 7). Representation of the event – a kind of a testimony – is a political act. Khenchen was really performing a political act in the context of Chinese aggression. He looked into the experience of the Tibetan victims in Tibet, visualised them while recording, and himself fell victim to Chinese oppression – he had 'first-hand'

experience of the colonial brutality in the 'Chinese Gulag.' Philip Hallie, in the context of Jewish Holocoust, observes that

> [n]arratives need narrators, and storytellers have much to do with the nature and style of their stories. For me, ethics is partly a matter of autobiography, partly and matter of history and philosophy. Personal candour is part of narrative ethics for me. (qtd. in Kali Tal 1996, 4)

Khenchen who was collecting micro-narratives of the people was actually collecting materials for a history of the people. His own name, his own victimhood becomes part of both his own autobiography and the history of the nation. It is 'a speech act' in the sense Shoshona Felman et al. uses it: "To testify – to vow, to tell, to promise and produce one's own speech as material evidence for truth – is to accomplish, a speech act . . ." (qtd. in Kali Tal 1996, 54). Felman here emphasises the need for production of evidence where there had been none. This, as mentioned earlier, is an ethical act in itself. This ethical act connects his 'homeland' (Tibet) with his 'home' (India mostly but can theoretically be any other diasporic space) where he, or for that matter any exiled Tibetan, lives at the moment.

What Khortsa highlights in this novel is the importance of cultural roots and Tibetan cultural and religious heritage. He effectively highlights the nation-diaspora tension by introducing some new perspectives on the ideas of 'home,' 'homeland' and the 'borrowed homeland' which have been analysed above. The analysis of the novel provides answers to two of my research questions. It has mapped the trajectory of how the nation-diaspora binary operates. It also reveals how Khortsa, as a diasporic Tibetan writer, gazes ideologically on his own nation. Besides The novel also ends with so many questions unanswered as Khortsa wanted to create a space for the reader to think. He says, "And I also wanted to leave room for readers to imagine (or feel for themselves) what is not mentioned in the book, in deference to the Tibetan culture of reticence and taciturnity rather than turning myself into an all-knowing chatterbox" (2019, 8). The novel, *Falling through the Roof* which will be analysed in the next part, also exemplifies Tibetan exilic life and their cultural heritage in India. It also offers a significant perspective, that is, Tibetan resistance movement in the diaspora.

Thubten Samphel's *Falling Through the Roof*

Like Khortsa, there are several other Tibetan writers who have represented their nation from the diasporic space. The exilic world has given them a lot of experience which they have represented in their writings. In this Part, I shall deal with Thubten Samphel's *Falling Through the Roof* (2008) which portrays the Tibetan exilic consciousness.

Thubten Samphel, a Dharamsala-based Tibetan diasporic writer, was born in Tibet in 1956. In 1962, he came to India and subsequently served the Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) for 38 years. In one of his interviews, he recalls his memories of Tibet,

> I also experienced as a child the impact of the Chinese occupation of Tibet and the poverty the Tibetans were reduced to because of the sudden influx of soldiers of the People's Liberation Army. (Goswami 2023, 180)

However, he was able to escape poverty and Chinese atrocities. His journey from Tibet to India was not an easy one. He narrates this troublesome journey in the following way,

> Fortunately amid all this poverty, and iron-fisted rule, my brother, his wife, and I were able to escape under the shadow of Mt. Everest to Nepal. From Kathmandu, we trekked through the breadth of the Himalayan kingdom and reached the Indian border at Raxaul. From there we hopped on a train to Varanasi where we were told His Holiness the Dalai Lama was giving a set of Buddhist teachings. To cut a long story short. I landed at the Tibetan Children's Village, a school set up for young Tibetan refugees. From there a group of three Tibetan girls and I were sent to Dr. Grahams Homes, a mission school in Kalimpong, West Bengal. The education I received at Dr. Grahams Homes was a liberating experience because it exposed me to the wider world. (Goswami 2023, 180)

Asked about his journey as a writer, he mentions, "Since the memory of Tibet was very fresh in my mind I felt [that] telling the Tibet story to the wider world was critical to the Tibetan people. This was the beginning of the stirring in my mind to become a writer" (Goswami 2023, 180). Like Samphel, many writers believe in the same approach that they need to write down their cultural history

and the memory of their lost home. Writings, here, become the narrative of their dislocation from the homeland and relocation to the hostland.

Samphel feels that in India, Tibetans in exile "have the freedom to pursue" their professions and observes that, "the freedom we enjoy in India has allowed the Tibetan refugee community to rebuild Tibet in exile" (Goswami 2023, 181). This clearly indicates a contrasting picture because Tibetans in Tibet are under threat and they have to go through the experience of colonialism. But in India, they have got the opportunity to build their government in exile, and reconfigure their culture and religion. This free life in India has also given them the prospect of writing and publishing their story and history.

Samphel's *Falling through the Roof* explores the tragic situations of the Tibetans in Tibet and in the diasporic space. The title of the novel has both literal and metaphorical significance. Tibet has been known as the 'Roof of the World.' 'Falling' suggests Tibet's fall as a nation after the Chinese occupation. Samphel observes, "Many consider Tibet as the Roof of the World and we Tibetans habit that roof. One day fell through the roof and landed in exile" (Goswami 2023, 184).

Falling Through the Roof deals with the sense of loss and belonging, the loss of Tibet and belonging to a non-violent cause. The novel takes up the story of a group of young Tibetans studying at Delhi University who try to keep the issue of Tibet alive for themselves and their community. It is divided into five parts: "The Delhi Days," "The Lama's Stories," "The Protest Demonstration Generation," On the Silk Road to Shambhala," and each part contains several sections alongwith a prologue and a glossary.

This novel mainly concentrates on two spaces – India which is a diasporic land for the exilic Tibetans, and Tibet which is a lost space after Chinese invasion. It lives on only in the imagination of the exilic Tibetans. Samphel has captured the diasporic consciousness of the exilic Tibetans in the novel. The plot of the story mainly focuses on the Tibetan resistance movement against China. He introduces some characters who are mainly students of Delhi University and they form two groups – Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) and Tibetan Communist Party (TCP). Dhondup Kunga, Phunstok and Gyalsten belong to TYC and Tashi,

Samdup and Tsering Migmar belong to TCP. Although they have different ideologies – the former has faith in Buddhist philosophy and non-violence while the latter believes in violent movements and communism – they have the same objective – to free Tibet from China. These two political entities represent two standpoints which are polar opposites. All these second- generation characters are not fully aware of Tibetan history, cultural roots and heritage. Thus, Samphel introduces the character of a lama, Drubchen Rinpoche who has a great knowledge and scholarship about the Tibetan cultural roots, Tibetan Buddhism and religion. The lama introduces the biography of Drubtop Rinpoche in this context as this biography will further help the characters to investigate and pursue research on the relationship between Tibet and India. He tells stories about Tibet and its cultural history to Dhondup and Tashi, the second-generation Tibetans who have no direct experience of the 'old Tibet.' Samphel introduces the character of the lama as a father figure who influences the Tibetans to follow the path of Buddhism and non-violence and encourages the diasporic Tibetan youths to find out their cultural roots in India. The motif of the retrieval of cultural heritage is significant here for the second-generation Tibetans. Finally, Tashi forsakes the communist ideology and returns to the fold of Buddhism.

The character of the lama paves the way for a nation-diaspora link (i.e., a link between Tibet and India) by leading the second-generation Tibetans through inculcation of cultural and nationalist values in India. Like Khortsa's *The Tibetan Suitcase*, this novel too narrates journeys of some characters – Tashi, Tsering Migmar and the lama himself – into the Chinese-controlled Tibet. This journey motif is necessary for exploring the lived experiences of the Tibetans in Tibet as well as to discover the cultural roots of the exiled Tibetans.

As has been discussed in the "Introduction" of this thesis, Tibetans were dislocated from their homeland and relocated to different parts of the world after the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet in 1950s. Such dislocation generated trauma in the psyche of the Tibetans. Tibetans have gone through a long traumatic phase. They are physically and psychologically tortured and humiliated. Their escape from Tibet was a traumatic one. The memories of escape were very haunting for them. Relocating to the foreign shore was not an easy one for the Tibetan refugees. This novel problematises the Tibetan exilic

experience by portraying the community's dislocation from their cultural roots and relocation to a different cultural ecology in India.

The prologue of the novel provides a picture of the Majnu ka Tilla as the setting of the story. The exilic Tibetan community has settled down in this camp in Delhi during the 1960s and early 1970s. The birth and the evolution of the colony is narrated here. The place was "a ghetto of desperation, a jungle representing the elemental struggle for survival" (Samphel 2008, 3). Samphel offers a vivid description of this place:

> They [the Tibetan refugees] awoke everyday in the heat and dust of despair . . . there was no way they could get out of the trap, out of this poverty, out of this mess which was a product of history's injustice. More than most Tibetan refugees, Majnu Ka Tilla Tibetans were the real victims of imperial ambitions asserted and realised. (Samphel 2008, 3)

He further narrates their sense of the loss of the homeland, their hopelessness and their feelings about this 'uncertain home.'

> For a long time, no one wanted to do anything about these people. They were beyond help and hope. Their *camp* was a dark, illegitimate secret, an orphan that no willing parent would step forward to claim. Not even their own community. It stood there like an *uncertain home*, an embarrassment . . . (Samphel 2008, 3, emphases added)

Tibetans have thus metaphorically fallen from the roof to the dark dungeon of hopelessness after the Chinese aggression. After dislocation they face hostile physical conditions and are psychologically devastated. The camp was seedy, almost dungeon-like. Tibetan refugees "led a fringe existence" (Samphel 2008, 4). The word 'fringe' suggests that they were not really the part of mainstream, they were regarded as people on the margins.

However, the situations have now changed. They went on struggling for existence and were looking for the betterment of material and mental conditions. Through sheer will power, intensive labour and through economic success they gradually settled down in their life in India. Samphel here makes a comparison between the old and new Majnu Ka Tilla. He opines,

> The tables have been turned. Now Majnu Ka Tilla finds itself at the very top of the Tibetan refugee heap. It is humming with

> entrepreneurial industry and sparkles with a nervous Chintatown energy, an enclave of ethnic exclusivity, feeding on a *precarious prosperity*. Majnu Ka Tilla is the money town of the Tibetan exiles, attracting the energy, ambition and dreams of the young, transforming place into a brave imitation of Khathmandu's Thamel. A commercial capital, a meeting- point, the hub of refugee enterprise. The MTV generation of Tibetan exiles has given the place a halo of cultural orientation. (Samphel 2008, 4; emphasis added)

The commercial success, it may be noted, is described as 'precarious prosperity,' a prosperity that is built upon a precarious foundation of the Tibetan camp space in Majnu ka Tilla. Underneath the development lies the history of political frustration, economic precarity and cultural ambiguities. Traces of poverty and underdevelopment make their presence felt in the fissures and cracks that appear here and there in what was a camp earlier. This prosperity, in short, is built on the debris of old hopelessness and distress. It is a case of uneven development. It has become a space of cultural negotiation, 'ethnic exclusivity' and some sense of homeliness.

This homeliness is more clearly perceptible in another enclave situated in Dharamsala. In the novel, Dharamsala is a unique pace where Tibetan refugees gathered and took shelter. Later, they created Tibetan Government-in-exile. It is the residence of the Dalai Lama. In this way, a nation in absence has emerged. It has been transformed into a 'borrowed homeland' (the term has been explained in Part I of this chapter) for them. The socio-political and religious-cultural ecology built up here offers comfort and succour to innumerable refugees who arrived here as destitutes and built up their life afresh. Dharamsala as a space is thus a commentary on the homemaking exercise. It is no wonder, therefore, that the arrival of the refugees here is called a 'homecoming' in the novel, a home away from home. A 'home' is built in the absence of the original 'homeland' (the significance of the terms 'home' and 'homeland' used in Khortsa's novel have already been discussed in Part I). Interestingly, Samphel, in the section titled "Dharamsala," has used the sub-title "Homecoming." It points out to the fact that Dharamsala becomes a temporary home for the refugees. "It felt," as Dhondup observes, "like homecoming" (Samphel 2008, 250). The whole place was covered with "prayer flags, prayer wheels and prayer poles" that pierced the blue, cloudless sky. According to Dhondup, "Here in

Dharamsala an echo of old Tibet still lingered" (Samphel 2008, 253). The socio-cultural environment of the "old Tibet" is re-established here – this 'borrowed homeland' approximates the ancestral 'homeland. It is a "Little Tibet" in Dharamsala. It evokes the sense of an alternative homeland. It is from here that they also launch a movement for a free Tibet.

We shall now focus on an important aspect of Tibetan activities – they are passionately engaged in the project of retrieving facts and figures about the lost nation of Tibet and attempt to retell the old stories. Most of the second-generation Tibetans have not visited Tibet physically. Tibet as a nation exists only in their imagination. The function of memory is significant here. In one of the articles entitled, 'Memory' published in the journal *Tibetan Review,* Tashi, the second-generation Tibetan, remarks:

> We, our generation of Tibetans, are the true children of Tibet's age of *Orphans*. *We have no memory*, having been robbed of it by either *deliberate forgetfulness* or by Chinese bullets or treacherous Himalayan passes and left lying in deep green crevices and buried in snow, ice and human indifference. (Samphel 2008, 14; emphases added).

The word 'orphans' clearly denotes Tibetans' lack of identity and the loss of their ancestral roots, a nowhere generation. Remembering the past is part of the process of sustaining the cultural roots. For the Tibetans, memories have been stolen or buried by the Chinese invaders. Forgetfulness is often induced by the trauma caused by Chinese atrocities. Lack of political support and army power had often compelled first generation Tibetans to dismiss their desire to return to their homeland. However, for the first-generation Tibetans, the memory of their ancestral homeland is still fresh.

Tashi further talks about two important aspects which are related to memory, one is amnesia (forgetfulness) and the other is anamnesia (remembering). In this respect, he notes,

> I remember and I remember it all. *The world I remember is not necessarily the world I claim as my own*. But it is the world I was born in. If any man could base his wealth on his memory, I am exceedingly rich. I have lots of memories, memories to share and memories which are an education in themselves, painful and expensive. Memory is what we want to forget but are forced to

> remember. Memory is the interplay between sleep [and] wakefulness. I myself was in this state when I was sprawled on the bed, half asleep, one eye closed, permanently, one eye watching the restless ceiling fan. I was rummaging through the confused depths of my aching head for something to lay claim on, for patches of mildewing memories, for scrapes of old Tibet. (Samphel 2008, 14-15; emphasis added)

Memory, as hinted in the above quotation, is not an easy thing to erase from one's psyche. Circumstances often forces an individual to recall their past that they left behind. This interplay of memories makes his mind restless. Regarding memory, Stock remarks,

> memories, both personal and collective, form the frame of reference we all use to meaningfully interpret our past and present experiences and orient ourselves towards the future. This means that migrant's perception and dreams of home and belonging are fuelled by memories of prior homes, by notions of where 'we' came from. (Stock 2011, 24).

From thus views memories as a kind of 'frame' through which the past and the present get involved in a dialogue which effectively produces visions of the future. The past is not forgotten, on the contrary it plays an effective role in fashioning the future which will be born out of the visions generated by the dialogue. Tashi's reflectiveness in a state between sleep and wakefulness is thus not unproductive at all.

In order to make the members of the new generation Tibetans aware of their identity, it is necessary to inspire them with stories of iconic figures and inculcate in them a spirit of nationalism. Telling stories is necessary because it will instruct them about the history of the nation and its centuries old relationship with India. Lama's character in the story is instrumental in influencing them ideologically and to ignite in them the flame of patriotism and to make them proud of their cultural heritage. He plays the role of the story teller because he is the right person to do so. He is vastly learned and well versed in the historical and religious knowledge of the community. He influences the Tibetans to follow the path of Buddhism, non-violence and reincarnation. He encourages the diasporic Tibetan youths to find out their cultural roots in India. He also motivates them to undertake researches on the religious and cultural affinities between India and Tibet through the exploration of religious locations.

In this way he helps to form a connection between the nation (Tibet) and the diasporic world.

When the narrator, Dhondup Kunga and his friend Tashi, the Delhi University students, meet the lama, he looks "like a ngaba, someone endowed with magical tantric powers, or so older Tibetans believed of people like him" (Samphel 2008, 7). When Tashi asked the lama about his own journey, he said that he had run away from Tibet like a scared fox and he did not fight against the Chinese because he is a good Buddhist. The lama, Drubchen Rinpoche, is the abbot of Drubchen monastery and biographer of all the reincarnations of Drubtop Rinpoche. He starts telling them stories of the Tibetan scholars, specially about the first Drubtop Rinpoche. According to the lama, "the history of Tibet is encapsulated in the life of Drubtop Rinpoche" (Samphel 2008, 10). Lama selects the biography of Drubtop Rinpoche as the perfect medium for proper teaching/learning. In his biography, one may get all the information about Tibet, and the religious and historical connection between Tibet and India. History plays a significant role in this narrative. This biography addresses the history of Tibet.

The lama narrates several stories to Tashi and Dhondup – the stories of Tibet, the story of the first Tibetan scholars, the reincarnations of Drubtop Rinpoche, the story of the Tibetan script and so on. Samphel incorporates the stories in the section "The Lama Stories" to represent the cultural history of Tibet. The lama starts by telling the stories of his childhood in old Tibet. He said that he was born as Namgyal Dadul in 1925 in Chamdo and later he was taken by his uncle to the Drubchen Monastery in Kyitsel. According to the lama, the stories are his gifts to Dhondup and to that generation of Tibetans who missed the opportunity of having lived in old Tibet,

> You may have been born in Tibet, but you haven't lived in Tibet. There's a difference. *There's a little less of Tibet in you than in us.* Our memory is greater, *our burden heavier*. In a way you *have been liberated from Tibet*. Whereas, we are *enslaved to the country by our memory* . . . Old Tibet, the Tibet of my childhood was a wonderful place until the Chinese communists turned it into hell. (Samphel 2008, 57; emphases added)

Through this comment, the lama refers to generational differences. and those who were born in the exilic space and had not seen Tibet directly. According to the lama, those who were born in Tibet but had to leave the country due to Chinese invasion have sustained memories of old Tibet which continue to haunt them. They are 'enslaved' to the country because of their memory which does not allow them to forget the past. They are helpless in the face of this overwhelming memory – it is a kind of a burden that prevents liberation for a new life of hope, acculturation and prosperity. They will ever remain Tibetan in mind. Members of the second generation, on the contrary, are relatively liberated persons as they are not held back by memory since they have no such memory. Unencumbered, they can move forward towards a new life in the diaspora, and will not be torn between the past and the present. Whatever memory they have are inherited from their parents. Thus the main difference between the two is that first generation Tibetans are more oriented to the past rather than the future while their children are more forward looking and more hopeful about their future. He subsequently refers to the 'Old Tibet' as a 'wonderful place' and recalls his childhood days there. How this place has been turned into hell due to the Chinese communists is also mentioned by the lama here. In Khortsa's novel *The Tibetan Suitcase*, Khenchen also speaks of Sinicization and provides several instances of Chinese violence and atrocities.

He moves on to the story of Tsensong Dorjee, the One-Eyed Golok who was a great warrior and had Amdo and Kham under his rule. When Dhondup asked the lama why they had kept telling them the Drubtop Rinpoche stories, the lama replied that there are two reasons for his telling of the stories, one is to inform the young Tibetans about Tibet and the other one is that he has to write the biography of the 19th Drubtop Rinpoche whom he served. And for that he had to fulfil his duty of finding the authentic reincarnation of the 19th Drubtop Rinpoche. According to the lama, the authentic reincarnation of Drubtop Rinpoche would have the necessary requirements like "Prophesies, omens, physical features and dreams" (Samphel 60). Digging up the history, according to lama, is necessary to discover the roots of connection between India and Tibet. For the young Tibetans, it is also necessary to know the history, myths, biography, and the invention of Tibetan script.

The lama further narrates the story of Drubtop Rinpoche[13], and his invention of the Tibetan script which was started in the seventh century with king Songtsen Gampo. He narrates the story of the encampment of the Drubtop Rinpoche and his journey to Kashmir where he met Birupa. Drubtop Rinposhe became the disciple of Birupa and spent seventeen years in India. In India he learnt Sanskrit, philosophy, psychology, Buddhist tantras and became the master of Buddhism. Rinpoche returned to Tibet with his invention of the first "Tibetan script." As the lama observes,

> It's not just any script . . . It's the word! The word! The one that makes us speak, the one that makes us remember and store what we remember for those in future to learn again and again and remember and pass on to others through the endless cycle of birth and death and rebirth. (Samphel 2008, 24)

The lama also tells them how the 19th Drubtop Rinpoche was killed by the Chinese communists.

Being a second-generation Tibetan, Dhondup becomes fascinated by the stories:

> I never knew why the stories the lama told me fascinated me, drew me in and clung to me. Perhaps in his stories I felt that the old Tibet, which moulded the world in which the lama lived, would not die and would perhaps come alive in its telling . . . In the back of my mind, I thought that I would be able to discover a piece of myself, my reflection, in the stories the lama told me. (Samphel 2008, 65-66)

Telling is important as it passes the history of the nation to the next generation. It helps a proper identity formation. Divorced from this tradition and heritage in a diasporic land, one can form only a fragmented self. One experiences a fuller life when one lives in Tibet, and participates in the 'nation' even if vicariously, through the stories. Old Tibet comes alive in imagination.

It is really very difficult for the Tibetans to revisit Tibet occupied by the Chinese. As mentioned earlier, Tibetans in Tibet are still under Chinese surveillance.

[13] Like the Lama and High Lama, Drubtop Rinpoche is a lama of Tibet whom the Tibetans consider as their guardian. The reincarnation of the Drubtop Rinpoche occurred in an enthronement ceremony where a person is enthroned as a Drubtop Rinpoche.

They regularly face brutal treatment from the Chinese regime. It is impossible for the Tibetans born and brought up in diasporic spaces to be directly in touch with their cultural and religious roots. In this respect, stories, oral or written, narrated by those who have direct lived experience in Tibet are significant sources of knowledge. We shall discuss how the characters in the novel involve themselves in finding the old Tibet and in the process search for the roots. The Lama's stories, as mentioned earlier, serve that role in this novel and motivate second-generation Tibetans in India to begin empirical research. The effect of the stories is, however, more far-reaching than academic research. They influence an entire generation in exile. The findings of the research will also enlighten them about the Tibetan cultural and religious activities and inculcate a sense of pride, patriotism and nationalism in them. The lama advises the Tibetan youths like Dhondup and Tashi to search for the Tibetan cultural heritage in India, to find out the historical and religious interaction between Tibetan lamas/scholars and the Indian scholars/monks. Tashi and Dhondup who were very much involved in political activism feel motivated by the lama's suggestions. Following the suggestion, they engage themselves in tracing Tibetan cultural heritage in India and cultural affinities between the two countries.

Dhondup is one such person who gets involved in an academic project. He plans a trip to Ladakh all the way through Kashmir. He acknowledges the fact that the famed Drubtop Rinpoche of history received his teachings in Kashmir and is interested in discovering "the exact spot where the first Drubtop Rinpoche meet Birupa" (Samphel 2008, 157). Lama's advice to procure photographs clearly indicates his interest in having documentation of important historical sites with which the memory of Tibetan icons is associated.

The lama claims that the location of the meeting between Drubtop Rinpoche and Birupa was called Pallahari which is the origin of Tibetan culture. Discovery of the site would recover a hidden history and would encourage second generation Tibetans to know more about Tibetan past. The lama is really in a research trail and raises questions that demand answer: "Is there still a place called Pallahari in Kashmir now? It's like Shambala, everyone longs for it but no one finds it. Pallahari is just a place in a story" (Samphel 2008, 158). Both Pallahari and

Shambala are synonymously used to refer to the same mythical place. Following the lama's suggestion, Dhondup, Tashi and his wife Metok along with two of his friends reached Kashmir in search for the hill with 'a cave and rock' where Drubtop Rinpoche received his knowledge of Buddhism. They contact Mr. Namgyal, the owner of Lhasa restaurant, and Professor A. P. Bamzai who could help them find the hill as they have vast knowledge of Kashmir. Mr. Namgyal's comment – "That's a tough one. It's very old history . . . But sure, Kashmir was once a Buddhist kingdom, but to identify the place where they met, that's going to be extremely difficult" (Samphel 2008, 172) – clearly gives a hint that there is a definite cultural and religious connection between Tibet and Kashmir. Samphel describes Kashmir as "A hidden valley, a Shangri-La!" (Samphel 2008, 169). Shangri-La is mythical imaginary place. Both Tibet and Kashmir are homogenised here.

Professor Bamzai suggests that they should establish the fact that Srinagar was the place where Drubtop Rinpoche met Birupa[14]. Professor Bamzai says that they would need some incontrovertible evidences to establish their argument. To get some clues, Dhondup reads from his notes of the lama's reading of the biography of the first Drubtop Rinpoch where they find a reference to a great water expanse that seemed a big lotus in bloom.

Professor Bamzai identifies Wular Lake as the 'great expanses of water' mentioned in the Biography of Drubtop Rinpoche. Bamzai starts ruminating on how with the help of Mr Gupta, the Srinagar branch director of Archaeological Survey of India, he went to a hill named Shankaracharya and discovered the ruins of a Buddhist temple built in the era of king Ashoka. From the ruins, the archaeological team found "coins offerings, little Buddha statues and terracotta figures of tutelary deities" (Samphel 2008, 181), belonged to the Ashokan era. Following the suggestion of Professor Bamzai, Tashi and Dhondup start their

[14] He picks up Kalhana's *Rajtarangini*, the chronicle of Kashmir, written in the twelfth century. He goes through some of the pages and finds that during the reign of king Ashoka, Srinagar was known as Puranadishtana and later in the 7th century, the official name of the place was Pravarapura, but not Pallahari. Tashi remarks, "Perhaps Pallahari could be a Tibetan corruption of Puranadishtana or Pravarapura. Pronunciations change when rendered into another language" (Samphel 2008, 176).

journey to Shankaracharya hill and find the cave[15] and the Tibetan script invented by Drubtop Rinpoche.

Besides the discovery of the cave and rock, Tashi and Dhondup come across Professor Bamzai's theory on Kashmir's evangelisation of Tibet. The theory claims that the Tibetans were converted to Buddhism by the Kashmiri Buddhists. As Dhondup remarks,

> Professor Bamzai's theory was an affirmation of our historicity: a people with a past, bad or good, but still a people with a past. Because we had a past we were a people with a future. This thought made me happy because refugees were dismissed as people without a future. That's why we were called refugees, seeking refuge and shelter in someone else's future. We were the gatecrashers fleeing our present and gatecrashing into a future defined and shaped by somebody else. Tashi's and my fall from the eastern-most spur of Shnakaracharya Hill landed us in our past. Yes, we had found our past, at least some of it, and this was an omen that numerous possibilities lay in future. (Samphel 2008, 194)

The quest for the past of the community is thus inextricately linked up with its future. A community without a past is usually a community without a future. In order to move forward it must dig up its cultural past. The discovery of the cave and rock by Dhondup and Tashi in the novel is thus an immensely significant event as it will supposedly instil confidence in the community psyche and make it confident enough to carve out a future for itself. The current generation

[15] But there was no cave and rock on the hilltop. From the copy of the lama's stories, they get the clue that the cave mentioned in the biography of Drubtop Rinpoche was in the east-most spur of the hill. So, Tashi and Dhondup go to the eastern spur of Shankaracharya hill beside the ruins of the Ashokan temple and reach a precipice. The bottom of the precipice was covered with heavy over-growths. Tashi starts throwing stones down to the bottom of the hill to determine if there was any rock beneath the over-growths. When Tashi flung a big stone aiming at the jungle below, the stone produced a loud sound after hitting a rock. Meanwhile Tashi lost his balance and fell down from the precipice. Dhondup tried to grab him but he failed and plunged down. Both of them lost their consciousness. But luckily, they fell on a heavy under-growth of shrubs. When they regained consciousness, they found the cave and rock before their eyes: "Yes, we had found Drubtop Rinpoche's cave and rock! Our wind-horse had never flown higher, nor with such accuracy" (Samphel 2008, 188). Professor Bamzai and the members of the Archaeological Survey of India reach the place and got the whole area cleared.

reinvigorated by the knowledge of its meaningful past, can get itself engaged in meaningful activities that will pave the way for a meaningful future. One of the future possibilities is to develop a suitable plan to launch a strong nationalist movement to free Tibet from the clutches of Chinese aggressors. The building up of the tempo of the movement and gather support of exiled Tibetans as well as state and non-state forces in the diaspora is not only linked up with their future but will also initiate and expand nation-diaspora linkages.

Tibetans have an immense curiosity to know about the religious connection between Tibet and the diasporic world. They attend various courses related to Tibetan Buddhism and culture. In the context of the novel, Dhondup, his wife Skelsang and her parents went to Bodh Gaya to attend the Kalachakra rituals. According to Buddhist belief, Kalachakra means "wheel of time." The aim of Kalachakra ritual is to bring the "world peace and harmony." Many scholars or individuals from different parts of the world attend the Kalachakra teachings, festivals and tantra. Skelsang's father believed "anyone who receives these teachings will go directly to Shambala in his next life" (Samphel 2008, 239). Such beliefs are usually found among Tibetans. In Khortsa's novel too the reference to the Kalachakra teaching is mentioned. Iris along with other scholars from different parts of the world start learning Kalachakra teaching. It indicates that such teaching and practices catch the global attention. Kalachakra teachings also created an urge in Dhondup to go to Dharamsala where he digs up more religious and cultural history of Tibet.

Dhondup was assigned by the director of the library of Dharamsala the task of collecting Tibetan folk narratives. The library was planning to publish a book on the topic. Dhondup started interviewing people, collecting stories from different areas of Tibet –

> I made myself busy, interviewing people, picking their brains for folk tales from different areas of Tibet. . . if in our small community, I heard some old Tibetan had died, I thought there went a story untold, unrecorded (Samphel 2008, 256).

His retrieval project is mainly based on interviewing old people – to know the old place and understand the phenomenon of displacement.

Tibetan characters' search for their roots through research, investigation, gathering information and other cultural negotiations in the diasporic world is significant here as Samphel tries to create an academic and cultural bond between the nation (Tibet) and diasporic world (India and beyond). As Tibet is beyond their reach, they utilise their 'third space' that is the diasporic space as a platform to pursue research, form protest and attract global attention to the Tibetan cause.

We need to focus on how the Tibetans in India launch protest movements in India against China. Khortsa makes a very important comment on the lack of visibility of an enemy in material form against whom Tibetan anger and movement can be directed:

> 'We have a very different campaign because our *enemy is invisible*. You don't see them face to face.' Yet their goal is to send out a message about how deeply the youth of the world care about the people in Tibet. (Khortsa 2008, 78; emphases added)

This extract is taken from Khortsa's essay entitled "Of Exile and Activism." Here he clearly provides some idea about the Tibetans' struggle for freedom. Their 'enemy,' that is China, is 'invisible' to them. As they have no scope to interact physically with the Tibetans in Tibet, they imagine Tibet as their nation. They use the exilic space as a platform to gather and interact with Tibetans located in different parts of the world, to collaborate with them and protest against Chinese oppression. It also helps them create a pan-Tibetan identity. Through protest, they want to spread the message that Tibetans will not stop. From distance, they will fight till the end. In this novel too, such examples of protest are found where both the groups – TYC and TCP participate.

The novel *Falling through the Roof* provides a picture of how the Tibetan resistance movement is beset with intense ideological conflict. Samphel does well to project this picture as Tibetans are widely perceived as a peace-loving, non-violent people whose loyalty to the Buddhist principles is unquestionable. Samphel dispels the impression by representing the other side of the picture as well, a picture of a section of people who believe that a non-violent method of resistance will fail to achieve its goal. They believe that fighting China requires a knowledge of the history of other struggles in other countries against colonial

forces and lessons should be learnt about the methods of how to combat such forces. That is the reason why Tashi keeps several books which are related to Marxism, Communism, Che Guavara and Mao. He thinks that only Buddhism and ideology of non-violence cannot make Tibet free. He has a clear perception about his own ideological position and identity.

Besides Tashi, Dhondup and two of their friends – Samdup and Phunstok – are members of Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC). But Tashi and Samdup secretly plan to form a Tibetan Communist Party (TCP) in Delhi. They believe that communism is the only thing that can connect the Tibetans in exile with the Tibetans living in Tibet. "The main aim of the party [TCP] is to "prepare the Tibetan exiles" for independence. They believe the Tibetans should be able to unite, without any internal disagreements on minor issues, if they want to make post-independence Tibet a happy place to live in" (Samphel 2008, 52). The news of forming TCP, creates a conflict between Dhondup and Samdup. Dhondup believes that the Tibetan refugees who are mostly poor should rise in revolt and the communist party should help them to do so. Samdup has a firm belief in communism. Gyaltsen, the president of Delhi TYC, criticises Tashi by saying that Tibetan Communist Party was like a drop of blood that polluted the "purity of the milk of the Tibetan struggle" (Samphel 2008, 43). Tibetans have fled Chinese communists and that experience will make them shy away from further embracing communist ideology. Gyalsten argues that history of Buddhism in Tibet is long and Tibetans cannot forsake their culture which is deeply immersed in Buddhist spirit and principles.

Fighting against China assumes more importance because of their current status of 'stateless' people in India. Statelessness is not an ideal condition and the Tibetan people cannot accept this for an indefinite time. That is why taking a strong position against China is urgent. Samphel in his representation shows that taking such a position is not an easy thing because the community members have to sort out the ideological issues and come up with strategies of fighting a strong enemy. Samphel also demonstrates that adoption of different strategies is possible. Characters, in the novel, do not stop arguing in favour of their own positions. They experience their stateless situation. Dhondup's wife Skelsang's remark in this respect is noteworthy: "You're all frustrated and angry. You need

to constantly remind one another that you are a people without a home" (Samphel 2008, 213). So, her comment reinforces the issue of homelessness, existential crisis of the Tibetan refugees and emphasises the urgency for a strong resistance movement. It is interesting that she does not spare India which is widely considered to be a friendly country that has provided shelter to thousands of Tibetan refugees. She asserts that the psychological situation of the Tibetans in India is colonised both by China and India. Their bodies and minds are controlled by these two nations. As a result, they are unable to take any decision and the conflict is obvious in their discourses:

> It's because your body is owned by China and your mind colonised by India. Contradiction, contradiction, having the misfortune of being caught between two cultures. . . you people are the victim of two big suspicions. Because of this you are a split people, psychologically. (Samphel 2008, 215)

Riven in between the twin colonising forces, one violently visible and the other working invisibly on the minds of the Tibetans, the community as a whole and the individuals within it find themselves in a schizophrenic condition that destabilises the will to launch a common unified movement to regain Tibet as an independent political unit. She seems to indicate that India has its own political compulsions and the Tibetans are made to accept these compulsions. This exerts a great impact on the Tibetans' will to fight the China. But the hindrance that India creates is hardly visible to the common eyes. As a result of the hurdles created both by China and India, the Tibetan community in India has been rendered schizophrenic, one that is riven within, unable to take a strong position.

Gyaltsen announces a protest demonstration against the Chinese minister visiting Delhi. The TYC members including Gyaltsen, Dhondup, Phunstok, Nyima, Dolma, Pema, Tashi and Samdup gather in a school room at Majnu Ka Tilla to chalk out their plan for a demonstration. The team members fill the school room with armours, posters, placards, Tibetan flags, printed "Free Tibet" slogans etc. They gather information about the minister's lodging at the Hyderabad -House and his plans to go to the Rasthrapati Bhavan at Raisina Hill. They gather the information that, "the Chinese foreign minister was visiting India to revive the Hindi-Chini-bhai-bhai days." (Samphel 2008, 122)

Samdup also proposes a protest demonstration where both TYC and TCP would participate equally. Gyaltsen orders Dhondup to pen a petition to the Chinese foreign minister addressing two major issues; first, it was made clear to the Chinese government that the Tibetans would fight for their freedom to the bitter end. No negotiation would be accepted. Nothing could prevent Tibetans from re-claiming their birth right and dignity. Secondly, it was claimed that China had no right to initiate any discussion on the border issue between Tibet and India. Only the Tibetan people could make any decision on the Indo-Tibetan border. In order to get more support, the TYC members invite a powerful Indian politician, Shri Raj Narain, who offers his support for Tibetan cause and promised to install the Dalai Lama on the throne of the Potala Palace. When the motorcade of the Chinese foreign minister reaches Raj Path, the TYC supporters raise angry slogans: "China, quit Tibet" (Samphel 2008, 140). Tibetan national flags and "Free Tibet" banners cover the whole place. They are quite successful to create a strong protest movement. Interestingly, both TCP and TYC, despite their different opinions, look forward to the same goal. Thus, both TYC and TCP utilise the diasporic zone, in this case India, to demonstrate against China and its policy.

In the novel TCP is unable to create any powerful impact against China. The TCP group collapses at the end. Tashi, the opinionated and confident communist, now moved away from his ideological stand and turned into a luminous Buddhist lama.

The last chapter of the novel entitled, "The Year of Protest and Other Years" is a documentation of the protests that took place between 1987 and 1989. The year 1987 has been declared as the "year of protests." The TYC started conducting protest rallies every year on 10th March to Dharamsala. The Tibetan refugees staged a demonstration in Lhasa on September, 1987 and it triggered a cycle of protest rallies in Tibet:

> However, the September 1987 demonstration and the demonstrations that followed in Lhasa electrified Dharamsala, like nothing else had ever done. The refugees felt that the Tibetan people had given their verdict. The efforts of the exiles, however feeble, to bring international attention to the dismal situation in Tibet was sanctioned and bravely supported in words and deeds

> by Tibetans in Tibet. That gave new courage to the exiles. (Samphel 2008, 279)

The above quotation indicates that political negotiations still continue between the Tibetans in Tibet and those in the diaspora. There still exists a strong emotional bond between them. In both "words and deeds" Tibetans in Tibet support and look forward to the exilic Tibetans' activist movements which have attracted global attention to the "Tibet question."

In any discussion of Tibetan exilic life probing into the ground reality in Tibet is necessary because it is intricately connected with the search for roots from the diasporic space. Loss of roots means loss of identity. To search the roots, it is necessary to establish one's identity. The identity of the diasporic community is usually defined in terms of nationality, language, ethnicity, religion and culture. In the diasporic world, the identity is fluid and flexible. It is subjected to change depending on the cultural contacts between the native and the diasporic communities. In "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," Stuart Hall remarks,

> 'Cultural identity' can be thought in terms of one, shared culture, a sort of collective 'one true self', hiding inside the many other, more superficial or artificially imposed 'selves' which people with a shared history and ancestry hold in common. (Hall, 2003. 234)

Tibetans, as mentioned earlier, are living in a state of limbo. Being refugees, they are living in a space of nowhere and have an urge to relocate themselves to their homeland. Samphel describes how three exilic characters – the lama, Tashi and Tsering Migmar – visit Tibet. Apparently, their purposes are different. The lama wants to revisit his homeland before he dies. Tsering Migmar had a political motive behind his visit. He wants to make the Tibetans conscious of their rights. For him making them familiar with communism is the best way for that purpose. Tashi's purpose, on the other hand, is to find out Tsering Migmar who was taken to be lost. The experience that they gather in Tibet is quite similar. They gathered knowledge about how the Chinese policies in Tibet has transformed the 'old Tibet.'

Most of the exilic Tibetans long to visit their homeland which they left behind. The lama shares his experience in the following way:

> I am a happy man. I've fulfilled my life's dearest wish, to see my monastery before I die. I have also accomplished other important tasks. I have completed writing the biography of the nineteenth Drubtop Rinpoche and I have succeeded in discovering him . . . It's hard meeting people you knew as children. Suddenly meeting them as adults! It's hard explaining what happened in between. Perhaps for them and certainly for me. (Samphel 2008, 263)

On the other hand, Tashi hands over his diary to Dhondup in which he inscribed the experiences that he gathered from his journey to Tibet. Tashi's journey from the diasporic space to his nation is significant as it has some cultural significances. He is overwhelmed and enriched after witnessing the beautiful landscape of his homeland, and visiting places of religious and cultural heritage. The first entry in the diary dated 6th July, 1983 describes Tashi's journey to the Mahadeva island which is called the Blue Lake. He meets Sherab, the abbot of Drubchen Monastery and goes to lake Kokonor where he comes to know of the mythical history of the lake. After visiting Lhasa, he observes, "To Tibetans, it is the City of Gods and the respiratory of their cultural wisdom and faith" (Samphel 2008, 270). He also visits his birthplace Shigatse where he finds that everything is sullen and the people of the city has been living in an oppressive atmosphere. He remarks,

> Shigatse is a place that has been robbed of its pride and now lives in self-hate and double humiliation, humiliation of having been overshadowed by Lhasa [the centre of Chinese power centre] and then the humiliation of having been forced to lend a reluctant hand of cooperation to the new conquerors from further afield. (Samphel 2008, 271)

This clearly indicates the impact of Chinese atrocities in Tibet. Mount Kailash and the waters of Manasaravar leads to Tashi's spiritual awakening. It led him to change his ideology and embrace non-violent spiritualism.

Around September, 1989 Tsering Migmar returned from Tibet. Both Dhondup and Phunstok are shocked to see the drastic change in Tsering's personality. He appears in a monk's robe with a shaven head. Tsering Migmar reveals that he had escaped from prison and reached India all the way from Lhasa in the disguise of a monk. Being a refugee, he needs to hide his identity. Tsering also confesses that he was a member of TCP and remarks, "Tashi and Samdup wanted to start a revolution in the exile community while I wanted to mobilise

the Tibetans in Tibet." (Samphel 2008, 281). He wanted to sensitise the Tibetan masses about their own rights. Tsering also narrates how Tashi used to give teachings to the Chinese students of the monastery. Tashi used to give them lessons on Buddhist culture and philosophy by making them familiar with the Tibetan land and Mother Earth.

After reaching Tibet, Tsering observes,

> The Tibet he returned to was different from the Tibet he had left behind. Corruption, seeping from China, had reached Tibet and made his work that much easier. Money bought a lot of things, even in Tibet. He discovered that money and the power of money ruled China. China's communist enthusiasm had died with Mao. (Samphel 2008, 285-286)

There is, thus, huge difference differences between "old Tibet" and "new Tibet". China's materialistic greed and hegemonic power has transformed this spiritual land to a land of corruption. As a Tibetan proud of his heritage, he is pained by this negative development and makes the following statement even when he was nabbed by the police at some point of time:

> All his life he had been proud to be a Tibetan. Why deny the fact at this critical time? Why deny being a Tibetan, why deny being Tsering Migmar? His patriotism swept aside his common sense. Tsering Migmar, the political animal, decided to take over Sherpa Kusho, the shrewd, cautious businessman. He sprang from his chair. 'If it makes thing easier for you, I am Tsering Migmar and I am a Tibetan. (Samphel 2008, 290)

The novel ends at a point when Dhondup starts ruminating over his beloved homeland. He comments, "Beyond those mountains, just a hundred kilometres away as the crow flies, is Tibet, the country of our dreams" (Samphel 2008, 305). Before going to Ladakh, Dhondup in his dream also sees that he is going to Tibet, the roof of the world and visits Shambala which in Tibetan mythological memory is located in the North-West of Tibet. He sees Shambala as a promised homeland. He also sees some ancient explorers such as Huen Tsang, Sven Hedin and Aurel Stein. In dreams and imagination, Tibet keeps on appearing. In his subconscious mind Tibet takes a larger space. As a second-generation Tibetan refugee, he has not physically visited Tibet and directly experienced how Tibetans live in Tibet. Dreams here become the only medium

of fulfilling his dormant desire. Thus, the process of imagining Tibet from the diasporic world is a continuous one.

The analysis of the novel reveals the intricacies in the exilic minds that gesture towards understanding the lost homeland and in the process face serious challenges. Positioned in the interface between the diaspora and the homeland, the exiled Tibetan acknowledges the importance of bonding between Tibetans in Tibet and Tibetans in diaspora. S/he also feels that all attempts should be made to pursue and maintain the link in all possible ways.

In both the novels, the writers highlight the Tibetan exilic situations and describe how the characters face difficulties in the diasporic world. On the one hand, Khortsa's novel, *The Tibetan Suitcase,* talks about the binary between homeland and the 'borrowed homeland' and also about the conflict that the protagonist faces in the hostland. The nation-diaspora tension has been presented through the journey of the character Dawa. It subsequently refers to several other related issues such as Chinese atrocities, violence, and exploitations against Tibetans. On the other hand, the movements of the diasporic Tibetans against the Chinese occupation of Tibet are found mainly in Samphel's novel *Falling through the Roof*. Like Khortsa's 'borrowed homeland,' Samphel introduces the idea of 'homecoming' in this novel. Both the novels focus on some common issues: Dharamsala as a place of movements and protests; the popularity of Tibetan culture and Buddhism among the researchers; the picture of Tibetan's life in the exilic world and so on. Both the novels deal with the journey of the characters to Tibet and explore the situations of the Tibetans in Tibet. The location of the writers is significant in this respect. Both have represented their nation from the diasporic world and the nation-diaspora conflict is very much visible in their literary representations.

Figures

Figure 1 Figure 2

Figure 1: The PhD Research Scholar with His Holiness the Dalai Lama at his residence in Dharamsala. Photo Courtesy: Photographer of the office of His Holiness the Dalai Lama.

Figure 2: Display of the images of Tibetan Writers and their books at Tibet Museum, Dharamsala. Photo Courtesy: Koushik Goswami

Figure 3 Figure 4

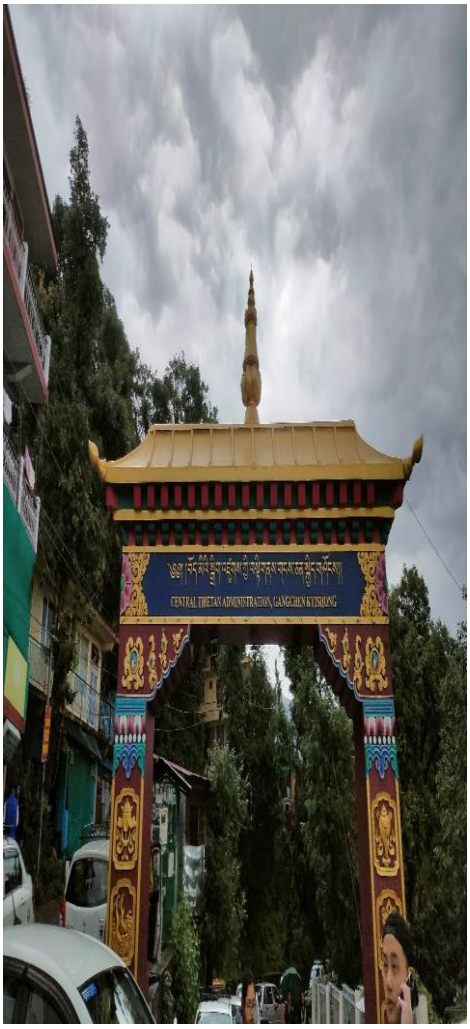

Figure 3: A Display Board at Norbulingka Institute, Dharamsala. Photo Courtesy: Koushik Goswami

Figure 4: The Front gate of Central Tibetan Administration at Dharamsala. Photo Courtesy: Koushik Goswami

Figure 5

Figure 5: The candidate in front of "Students for Free Tibet" Poster. Photo Courtesy: Mili Das Goswami

Chapter 4

Representing the Nation: Nepalese Diasporic Writers

Chapter 4

Representing the Nation: Nepalese Diasporic Writers

Located in the Himalayas, Nepal has a unique socio-cultural and political history. Its geo-political status in South Asia is often 'outlandish' as it had been largely an unknown nation to the Western world. After the massacre of the royal family on 2001 and the birth and growth of Maoist insurgency from 1996 onwards, the country went through a violent political phase. It intensified the economic and social problems in Nepal. Barring the years of disturbance (1996-2006), Nepal, as a tourist spot with spectacular natural beauty, continued to attract tourists from all over the world.

Although Nepal has a long history of emigration to neighbouring South Asian countries, the Maoist insurgency, perpetual poverty, economic crisis and lack of economic opportunities, as mentioned earlier, compelled many Nepalese to migrate to different parts of the world. However, this migration from Nepal has not been the focus of much critical discussions, at least from the perspectives of literary studies. The experiences of the Nepalese in the diasporic space have given rise to a corpus of new literary works which mainly concentrate on two spaces: nation (i.e., Nepal) and diaspora (mainly the West viewed as a space of opportunities, lure of a new land, search for new identity and roots).

This chapter will concentrate on some select texts written by Nepalese diasporic writers. It will focus on Manjushree Thapa's novel *Seasons of Flight* (2010) and some stories from her book *Tilled Earth* (2007). It will also discuss some short stories written by Samrat Upadhyay and Rabi Thapa, two more Nepalese diasporic authors. I have selected these literary texts because these are yet to be properly discussed in diaspora and postcolonial studies and because discussion of these works may yield significant insights about nation-diaspora conflict which is the main thrust of this thesis.

Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*

Manjushree Thapa is a Nepalese diasporic writer who was born in Nepal in the year 1968 and brought up in three spaces: Nepal, Canada and the United States.

She is a novelist, non-fictional writer, essayist, translator and editor[16]. Unlike other diasporic writers, Thapa is quite unique. She is deeply rooted in her homeland. She is associated with an NGO in Nepal and has a deep commitment towards her community. She remarks,

> Nepal is home. Toronto has been kind to me, but it's not home yet; it's where I'm living right now. I've had a very mixed upbringing – when I was acquiring language, we lived in Canada, then Nepal. I'm very much a hybrid, rooted in Nepal but influenced by international displacement. That was a painful way to grow up, but now I'm really glad to have had exposure to both east and west. (Hong 2014, n.pag).

The above extract brings out Thapa's attitude to her 'home' and also about the hostland. She considers Nepal as her home – her sensibilities are deeply rooted there. Old habits, old friends, old cultural conventions and impact on the topography are still strong and they still influence her day-to-day living. New influences (cultures, friends etc.) are gradually seeping in, bringing nuanced changes in her behaviour and gradually making her a person of hybrid cultural orientations. Although she is very much influenced by 'international displacement' and wants to have exposure to both the East and the West, she has not been able to accept Toronto as her home 'yet.' She is perhaps in the process of accepting Toronto as her new home (the word 'yet,' in the above quotation, gestures towards a new 'becoming' which is in the offing). But Nepal holds a special place in her writing career as she prefers to write about it by being there:

> I've always written about Nepal from Nepal. Some writers find it helpful to write about their country from elsewhere, from a distance. *I'm not one of them*; *I find being there creatively*

[16] She completed her BFA in photography at Rhode Island Scholl of Design and MFA at University of Washington. *Mustang Bhot in Fragment* (1992) is her first book followed by *The Tutor of History* (2001) which is her first novel. *Seasons of Flight* (2011) and *All of Us in Our Own Lives* (2016) are her other two novels. She subsequently wrote *Tilled Earth* (2007), a collection of short stories. Her non-fictional works include *Forget Kathmandu: An Elegy for Democracy* (2005), *A Boy from Siklis: The Life and Times of Chandra Gurung* (2011), and *The Lives We Have Lost* (2012). She has also translated and edited many significant works such as *The Country is Yours* (2009).

> *inspiring*. I get back to Nepal once or twice a year for long stretches, which is very important to me. (Hong 2014, 2; emphasis added)

It clearly indicates how she is different from some other diasporic writers. Her comment on the distinctiveness of her writing strategy her uniqueness is significant and she does not only criticise other writers who write about Nepal from the 'third space' but also establishes herself as a writer of superior quality ("I'm not one of them"). She has a deep sense of responsibility towards her nation. She is quite aware of the realities in Nepal. Her works highlight the 'bad politics' and 'floundering democracy,' Maoist insurgency, Nepalese migration, diasporic consciousness of the Nepalese communities, the nation- diaspora conflict and other related issues. She combines in her works 'national' sentiments with diasporic consciousness. She remarks,

> What is interesting now is that so many Nepalis have migrated west. The conversations I have with my compatriots in Toronto could easily be taking place in Kathmandu. Nepal is one of those countries where everyone is traveling and living elsewhere for a while. Nepali identity is very transnational right now. (Hong 2014, n.pag)

She efficiently draws on her own experiences to portray the characters in her creative works. The novel, *Seasons of Flight*, was published in 2009. It portrays several issues related to diasporic situations such as cultural dislocation and conflict, identity crisis, nostalgia, acculturation, assimilation and the like. All these issues are embedded in the migrant experiences of Prema, the protagonist of the novel. The novel is primarily based on Prema's journey from her homeland, Nepal, to the diasporic world, the United States of America. This journey is not only territorial but also psychological. It is psychological because the novel is set during the time of Maoist insurgency and civil war. Such upheavals create a deep psychological impact on the members of Nepalese communities. Prema takes a bold decision. She leaves her war-torn country for the US after winning a Green Card[17] in lottery. Interestingly, throughout her

[17] Green Card lottery in Nepal refers to the DV or Diversity Immigrant Visa Lottery. In order to increase diversity of government, the United States Department selects Nepal as one of the nations, eligible for the lottery as the number of immigrants sent in the last five years from Nepal to the U.S. are less

journey, unlike other diasporic women, she is searching for her own self and asserts her individualism. Her migration is voluntary. She does not only look forward to the diasporic opportunities in the foreign land but also wants an alternative space where she can make her life complete.

Before analysing different aspects of the novel relevant to our thesis, we need to tell the story in brief. Thapa uses flashback method to narrate and evoke the past, to project the memoryscape. Memories, here, are converted into stories. Although the novel begins with Prema's settlement in America, her past is recollected through memories. Prema lives with her sister Bijaya and father in a small village in Nepal. She lost her mother in her childhood. After completing her primary schooling, Prema comes to Kathmandu, the capital city of Nepal, at the age of seventeen and studied forestry. Although Prema belonged to a poor family, her father always supported her in pursuing her career. He was a liberal man. However, the picture was not same in the case of Bijaya. Bijaya joins the Maoist group because, on the one hand, she dedicates her life for the sake of her country. She is inspired by patriotic spirit. Maoists were recruiting a member from each family. At the time of leaving for Kathmandu, Prema takes, as a memory, ammonite, a lustrous stone, Shaligram, which is given to her father by a Hindu ascetic. Eventually, she is hired by an NGO which been working for the development of the people at Hill Bazar in Nepal. They provide interest free loans to the poor people so that they can rear chickens and goats. They also provide other facilities including health camps and vaccination drives, and non-formal education classes. She works with Trailokya, a senior forester. However, she "felt that they [NGO] were coaxing the poor, who already consumed so little, to consume even less" (Thapa 2010, 16). Prema always looks forward to a well-paid job. Her friends are leaving for the Western countries for better prospects. Prema follows their path. With the help of 14-years old Kanchha, the son of a retired Gorkha soldier, who was working in a cybercafe putting the banner 'ATOMATIC GARANTEE GREEN CARD,' Prema fills in the American Green Card lottery form and waits for the result.

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than 50000. The United States encourages the people from Nepal to apply for DV Lottery.

Prema has been in a relationship with Rajan who works in an NGO's poverty-alleviation programme. He was very much passionate about politics and in his student life he actively joined the communist student union. For the first time she had a sexual intercourse with Rajan at Maya Lodge. However, "the issue of the future had never arisen between them" (35). The news of winning the lottery changes Prema's life. "She was getting a chance to leave one life and start another one" (58). Even after some initial hesitation, she finally decides to leave Nepal and takes the help of Rajan's friend Harihar dai, a middleman who provides his nephew's details. The nephew would help her a place to live in and finding a job in America. Prema starts learning English and learns more about the history, culture and politics of the US. She starts taking driving lessons. After reaching America, Prema follows Harihar's nephew's instructions and goes to live in 'Little Nepal,' a ghetto where members of Nepali diasporic community mainly live. She meets her host family – Neeru and Sushil, and starts working in the restaurant named Shalimar where Neeru and other women work. Neeru helps her by providing information about the diasporic world – how to get the state of California identity card, where to buy phone card and check email, how to apply for credit card and also about several prospects in the foreign land including the social security, unemployment benefits and health care. Although she enjoys their company and homely atmosphere there, she does not want to keep herself confined to 'Little Nepal.' She decides to go beyond 'Little Nepal.' Her character is quite similar to Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine in the novel *Jasmine* (1989). Jasmine too leaves 'Little India,' a ghetto, to enjoy the free life in mainstream America.' Prema does not search for news about Nepal in the Internet. After leaving Little Nepal, she struggles to find a job in America. Unlike Nepal, America is a multicultural country. Prema is in a cauldron with people of multiple ethnic background radically different from Nepal. Ultimately, she finds a job at a store called Korean Supplies but she is paid a meagre wage which is below the subsistence level. She starts missing her compatriots of Little Nepal and her family in Nepal. She is in a liminal stage where both nostalgia for Nepal and its culture and an urge for acculturation in the new land are strong. However, it was only a temporary phase. The first step she takes to know the new country is to strike a relationship with Andy

Campbell, a foreigner in order to "allay her hunger [physical and sexual], her wanting [money and job]" (127). With him she had a casual sex. A sexual act is not just a union of bodies, it also aspires after a knowledge of the other person and his or her culture – an attempt to come out of one's own self and know the other. However, her physical, sexual and psychological hunger remained. She is still in an uncertain state of mind and is not able to figure out what she has been desiring. As a homecare attendant, Prema starts working for Esther King, an old lady, who has been suffering from dementia. She also develops a new 'American' (not Nepalese because it follows a different cultural code) relationship with 33-years-old Luis, a Mexican, who is the general administrator of a company. Prema enjoys Luis's company and meets his ex-wife Tina and his daughter July and celebrates Christmas. She also meets Luis's mother and his family. She leaves the company of two housemates, Meg Williams and Susan Kitterow, and goes to live with Luis at his flat. This marks a shift as she moves beyond an unstable hostel life to a more personalised space and relationship. Meeting non-Nepalese families also orients her towards an American lifestyle. She gets intimate with Luis and learns intricate ways of making love. Both of them start learning each other's language. Luis tries to learn Nepali and Prema tries to learn Spanish. From Luis, Prema also comes to know about his father, Carlos Reyes-Garcia and also about the history of Guatemala from where he hails. There are similarities in the situations in Guatemala and Nepal. Both the countries are war affected. Guatemala's political situation is quite similar to the political situation in Nepal. However, both Luis and Prema have personal problems. Luis has to pay for loans and his financial status was not stable. He is constantly talking to Prema about his ex-wife, Tina who is now married to Christopher. For meditation and to relax themselves from the conflicting situation, both Luis and Prema visit Tina and Christopher's guru Mata Sylvia, a preacher of Hindu religion. Prema is torn between two worlds – Nepal and America – and does not find any peace anywhere. She looks forward to live a 'free life' yet cannot sever her links with Nepal. Although she tries to acculturate with American culture, she could not stop herself thinking about her friends in Little Nepal and her family in Nepal. She revisits old places which she has left behind. She meets Meg and Susan and revisits Little Tibet and meets

Neeru and Susan in their new place. Without informing Luis, she also sends emails to Trailokya and Rajan in Nepal and calls her father. Luis fails to decode her world. Following a quarrel, Prema leaves Luis's flat and goes to live with Neeru and Sushil. Prema uses to visit wetlands and after meeting Fiona, a lepidopterist and an environmentalist, she comes to know about the El Segundo Blue and Fiona and other's mission to preserve biodiversity. She joins a new job in California floral region. Her educational background and academic experience in forestry helps her in finding this job. However, she was in a dilemma. She could not decide whether she would live here or visit Nepal. In the meantime, she plans to visit Nepal and, in the airport, she kept seeing Luis, 'a phantom of lost love.' Even in Nepal, she does not find her own self. Bijaya who always prioritises her country over anything else rejects Prema who has chosen her own self over her country which to Bijaya is a selfish choice. Finally, she returns to Los Angles again and visits El Segundo Blue where she again meets Luis. Although she does not want to bind herself by marrying anyone or having kids, Prema accepts Luis's proposal for a 'couple of dates.' "She took a chance on the lottery, the lottery of life" (253).

We shall now discuss Manjushree Thapa's representation of the homeland. Underneath the story stated above one finds several significant issues. Thapa highlights the "poverty, politics and pollution" of Nepal. She depicts how Maoist insurgency there has impacted lives of Nepalese people. She addresses the problematic geopolitical status of Nepal to the people in the United States. Nepal as a country is mostly unknown to the common people in the Western countries. Very often, as mentioned earlier, it is considered as a part of India. Thapa is acutely conscious of this. She mentions, in her novel, that "to the foreign ear, the country's name could sound like 'nipple' or 'naples' (11). Prema assumes the responsibility of pointing out how her country is misrepresented. The dilemma that she goes through can be understood from the following extract:

> An American woman, a school teacher, earnest and frizzy, once came up to Prema and asked, 'Mind if I ask where you're from? Originally. I mean? [...] Sometimes Prema would help them out by adding, 'It is near India,' or 'Where Mount Everest is,' . . .

> sometimes she would say, 'I am from India,' because Americans had at least heard of India. (11)

In another conversation with Meg, Prema faces same problem:

> "'Prima [Prema]. Is it Italian?'
> 'Nepali.'
> 'Napoli?'
> 'Near India.'" (119)

Several issues which crop up from the above extracts are:

1. The geo-cultural existence of Nepal, a tiny Asian country, is outside the cognition of the West in general.
2. India, Nepal's big neighbouring country, has consumed much of Nepal's visibility. India as an emerging Asian superpower is much visible in global discourses as well. The global domination of the superpowers has provided small states like Nepal little visibility.
3. In the United States Nepalese immigrants are hardly recognised. Among the minority communities African Americans, Hispanic Americans and Chinese Americans are prominent whereas the Nepalese immigrants are almost an unfamiliar community. They are often misrecognised as Japanese or Chinese Americans.
4. Like Chinese or Japanese immigrants, Nepalese subjects too are often exoticised. In this respect, as we have seen in the earlier chapter, they are subjected to the same racial prejudices as the Tibetans.

Prema, like the author, is faced with a challenging job of representing her homeland. Like Manjushree Thapa, she has to define Nepal's geocultural status to the American subjects. Moreover, she must formulate what Nepal means to her in her diasporic location. At this point of time both the homeland space and the diasporic space assume critical importance to her. It is more because her identity in America is often conflated with 'Mexican' or 'Indian' identities. While it suggests possibilities of inter-cultural understanding, it at the same time sensitises herself to the 'loss' of her identity. Nepal's relative unimportance at the international level also shames her. It also develops a psychological complex in her. Living under an alien, and hegemonic, politico-social

environment leads to the collapse of the sense of 'self' as it happens to Prema. She often hesitates to introduce herself as a Nepalese and hides her true identity as a Nepalese in order to avoid the trouble of explaining her national and cultural location. At the time of looking for a job at a store, she introduces herself as an Indian to the proprietor, an elderly Korean woman. She also introduces herself as an Indian to Andy. All these indicate Prema's confused state of mind in the initial phase of her immigrant life. She does not want to face complex questions which would demand great efforts to introduce her country and her people to those Americans who are blessedly ignorant of geo-cultural knowledge of small nations like Nepal. She also appears to be not interested at this stage to be associated with Nepal which is politically unstable and economically bankrupt. She knows India's position in the global market and its familiarity in geographical map. India, among all other South Asian nations, is the most prominent and dominant nation and is very well-known all over the world. Her attitude in this respect is quite different from that of most Tibetan characters we have come across in the earlier chapter – such as Dawa Tashi in Tsering Namgyal Khortsa's novel *The Tibetan Suitcase* and Tsering Migmar in Thubten Samphel's *Falling through the Roof*. Dawa, as discussed in Chapter 3, was involved into a brawl when a white bartender misrepresented his identity and refused to accept Tibet as an independent country. He did not hesitate even to assault the bartender out of an injured feeling of a loyal Tibetan. Tsering Migmar's sense of patriotism was also revealed when he confronted the Chinese police and did not deny his Tibetan identity even after knowing that it can put him in danger. Thus, Prema represents a different ideological position.

In the novel Thapa represents Nepal as a poor country. Lack of opportunities has compelled many Nepalese to leave Nepal. At the time of studying forestry, Prema discovers that her

> friends had hatched elaborate schemes to migrate to India, or farther, to Australia, Europe, Canada and America. There was so little in Nepal, everyone just wanted to leave. And also, for those who felt they were from a shabby Third World Country, it was hard not to believe that life in a richer land was more – proper, solid. (17)

This observation draws a distinct line between Nepal as one's own nation and diaspora as an alluring possibility. Nepal is referred to here as a 'shabby' Third World country devoid of economic opportunities and the diaspora as having better opportunities for upward mobility. This is one of the reasons why Prema voluntarily migrates to the U.S. The dazzling space of the U.S. and the lure of the diaspora has fascinated her. This usually happens in the case of immigrants from the global South. As we have seen in the earlier chapter, Dawa Tashi in Khortsa's *The Tibetan Suitcase*, was enthusiastic about joining the Appleton University in the U.S. and as a scholar was attracted by the opportunities he could avail of in the diaspora. However, he faces racial discrimination and starts missing his borrowed homeland (India) and the real homeland (Tibet) and eventually returns to India. Prema, on the other hand, finds nothing peaceful in Nepal and pursues the American dream and invents a new identity for herself.

Thapa through the discourses between Luis and Prema also highlights Nepal's poverty and backwardness. Both Luis and Prema refer to each other as 'elemental.' Luis says to Prema, "There's something so *elemental* about you" (84). Luis finds in Prema 'exotic' qualities. He was shocked after hearing from Prema that when "she was growing up there was no electricity in her village; there was no radio, no television, no diversion" (84). Luis in this respect remarks, "No electricity, huh. God, I can't even imagine. See what I mean? That's so elemental" (85). In another case, Prema tells Luis that she does not have any mobile phone. There is a "telephone office" in her village now. All these appear to Luis as unusual and bring out the contrast between Nepal and America. Nepal as a backward country is far behind America's technology and modernity. Luis's interest in Nepal and its spirituality is also referred to here as "elementary" by Prema. Prema who knows her own country well realises how naivety, in conjunction with lack of proper knowledge, compels many in the West to misconceive Nepal in the Orientalist way.

Nepal is a war-torn country as well. Maoist insurgency has disrupted the peace in Nepal. The battle between the Maoist and the army has snatched away many lives. Rajan who is very much passionate about politics sums up the situation in the following way, "Ten thousand people have died, but they want more bloodshed. The king and the army are using the war to keep themselves in

power" (36). Kanchha, an employee in a cybercafe, becomes the victim of such power politics, as he is suspected to be an agent of the Maoist group and is dragged and beaten by army and later arrested by the police. His father, a Gurkha soldier himself pleads about his son's innocence. They do not pay any attention to him and drags Kanchha off the ground and destroyed his cybercafe.

Kanchha could not be traced anywhere. Rajan informs the news of Kanchha's disappearance to the International Committee of the Red Cross and petitions Amnesty International. A middleman demands hundred thousand rupees from his father for the information of Kanchha's whereabouts. In order to stop such violence, people from various classes take initiative.

> Daily, labour union members, students, political activists, human rights defenders, teachers and lawyers gathered here to press the king and the army for peace talks with the Maoist rebels. (57)

All this, however, was futile. Both insurgency and militarisation of the civic spaces combined to render civilians' life unsafe and intolerable. The problem with poor countries is that attempts at revolution there mostly slump into internecine struggles, get trapped into corrupt practices, inevitably diluting revolutionary ideology, and instead of doing away with corrupt regimes make common people vulnerable to all sorts of misfortunes. Nepal had gone through this situation during the Maoist insurgency (1996-2006). It witnessed a real 'state of exception.' The concept 'state of exception' was first used by Carl Schmitt in his books *Dictatorship* (1921) and *Political Theology* (1922). It was further developed by Giorgio Agamben in his book *State of Exception* (2005) and Achille Mbembe further developed the concept in his book *Necropolitics* (2019). By 'exception' Schmitt means to go beyond the 'rule of law' at the time of crisis of the state. Giorgio Agamben in his book *State of Exception* highlights how the government increases its power at the time of crisis or in the state of emergency and violates constitutional rights of the people. He also refers to the authoritarian power politics of community/government who impose their power over the 'other' or upon 'the bare lives.' The group of people refer to as 'bare life' who mostly include illegal immigrants and refugees are put into the camp due to their immigration status. The word 'bare life' suggests a kind of life that

is distinguished from the usual life, in the sense that they are deprived of the normal rights and responsibilities. He says,

> What happened in the camps so exceeds the juridical concept of crime that the specific juridicopolitical structure in which those events took place is often, simply omitted from consideration. The camp is merely the place in which the most absolute *conditio inhumana* that has ever existed on earth was realized: this is what counts in the last analysis, for the victims as for those who come after. (Agamben 1998, 95)

He also talks about suspension of laws at the time of crisis or in a state of emergency. Achille Mbembe in his book *Necropolitics* also talks about the politics of inequality, militariarisation, surveillance and mass killings. Nepal during the period of 1996 to 2006 went through such political emergency where insurgency and militarianism deeply affected the lives of the people. People faced political violence and death-in-life situation. Kanchha's mysterious disappearance and such political restlessness shocked Prema and compelled her to leave the country.

Thapa is acutely aware of Nepal's culture and its traditional values. She creates a tension between nation and diaspora. The two characters – Prema and Bijaya – represent two different ideologies in this regard. Bijaya is deeply rooted to her nation but Prema is looking forward to the 'promises' of the diasporic land. Prema's movement is 'centrifugal' (i.e. outward to the diaspora) while Bijaya's is 'centripetal' ('inward' or deeper inside her homeland). Bijaya joins the Maoist group willingly. She is a bold and courageous lady who had surrendered herself to the cause of the country. She wants to improve the conditions of 'bare bodies' in Nepal. When Prema leaves for the U.S., she remarks, "I hate where we're from" (Thapa 2010, 43). This hatred is not for the country but for the bad politics practiced in the country. She loves her country but she knows that her country is not in an ideal condition. She takes the responsibility of her country and strongly asserts her dedication towards her country, "'Everything I've done – I do – is for my country, for the liberation of my country, my people. How can anyone hate where they're from? . . . 'It's like hating your mother'" (241). Here, the country becomes, metaphorically, the mother and the sense of loyalty to the nation is pledged by her. So, in the case of Bijaya, the sense of nationalism is strong. As an activist, her aim is to liberate her country from the socio-political

crises it has been going through. She is deeply rooted to her homeland. She tries her best to participate in the effort to transform her society by taking action against the corrupt forces and confronting the current political regimes. She participates in the insurgency. She believes that escape from the country is no way out. Her sense of patriotism is contrasted with Prema's opportunistic and utilitarian ideology. The truth is that Prema leaves behind her home, lover and country as she prefers a way out to the diaspora.

Now, we need to turn our attention to Thapa's Representation of the Hostland. In this connection, Nepalese diasporic subjects' propensity to acculturation and new identity Formation will be discussed. Thapa, in this novel, represents the cross-cultural experiences of the Nepali communities through the female protagonist's journey. Besides highlighting the traditional Nepali society in Nepal, she also deals with two other important spaces: Nepali immigrants in "Little Nepal" in the U.S., and the mainstream American socio-cultural space (outside the ghetto). In this transnational space the memory of dislocation is balanced by the acculturation process she goes through in the new land. Throughout her journey, Prema is torn between two worlds: Nepal and the U.S. This tension is testified by her remarks, "A whole other life [in the U.S.]. Prema had never been to another country, not even to India, nearby, or to Tibet. China" (Thapa 2010, 37). She experiences her first migration when she leaves her village for Kalimpong to study forestry. In this respect, her father's remark, "You will progress, Chhori. You will lead a complete life" (42) is noteworthy. After winning the American Green Card lottery, she was in a dilemma as to whether to stay back in Nepal or leave Nepal for the U.S. to 'reinvent' herself:

> Was this not an opportunity to keep progressing? America was rich, it was – proper, solid. But wasn't it also – an agent of corporate capitalist expansionism? What would she do there? What would she do here, though? What if the army were to return to the hill bazar? . . . what if the Maoists were to come here, as they had to her birth village? She kept feeling a shivering in the marrow.
>
> *America. Nepal. America. Nepal.* (66; emphasis added)

The words in emphasis suggest how indecisively she oscillates between two choices. This represents the beginning of the nation-diaspora dialogue that goes through the mind of a prospective immigrant. She is quite aware of the political turmoil in Nepal and also is aware of the fact that women have very limited choices in Nepal, that their activities must be inscribed within a small boundary line drawn by the Nepali society for women. It is predominantly a patriarchal society where the gender disparity exists overtly. Even in the 21st century, it is emphatically patriarchal in its attitude and orientation. Individualism and sexual liberation do not exist. Prema knows the prospects and the opportunities of the diasporic land and gradually wants to move forward in life. She wants to assert her own individualism and the United States is an excellent space for realising this. Thapa, through the representation of Prema's character, has redefined the idea of Nepali women's agency and sexuality. Unlike Nepal, the U.S. is a more liberal space where one can strike mutually acceptable relationship with anybody. Prospects of these opportunities in the hostland make Prema decide to leave Nepal. Like Bharati Mukherjee's female protagonist in the novel *Jasmine*, she too decides to enjoy the freedom in America.

Prema's experiences in the diasporic land have been represented in a very subtle way. Prema does not have any idea about the U.S. She first visits Little Nepal and stays with other Nepalese people. Little Nepal plays a functional role in the novel as it provides Prema a temporary space to gather ideas about the new country, to see and judge the 'real' America from a safe base. Her host family in Little Nepal offers her information about America as a whole. Neeru remarks, "Bahini, you can't do anything in this country if you don't have a driver licence. . . . It's a nice country if you have the money" (109). Mobility, both physical and metaphorical, is an essential element in the American space; thus the ability to drive a car from place to place (this is historically an 'American' experience) and having the money to power upward mobility – to move further in the social ladder – are equally necessary in the mainstream American context. Neeru's 'advisory' will be of much help to Prema who is a neophyte in the American scene. Neeru further sensitises Prema to the knowledge necessary for the day-to-day life in the diasporic world,

> ‘EZ foods was expensive; the Lucky Money Mart – with dimly lit aisles of canned foods, frozen foods, bottled drinks and tired produce – was cheaper. ‘Cold cut sandwiches are the easiest meals.’ ‘Everything is so expensive in this country. Never buy clothes at full price, Bahini. Always wait for a sale.’ ‘Always say thank you to foreigners [Americans]’ . . . ‘You can’t just do anything you want to, Bahini, it’s not like back home. You have to figure out the system first.’ . . . ‘If you want to succeed here you have to work hard.’ (110-11)

Neeru points out that life in America is not smooth and easy for an immigrant. In order to survive one needs to work hard. She further states that life is not “like back home” (110). Prema starts working at Shalimar restaurant and comes to know about the illegal immigration. Many workers have been illegally working here. “Ganga and Shyam were illegal; ‘undocumented workers’ . . . Narayan had arrived years ago, on a student visa, now expired” (112). Neeru and Sushil help Prema to acculturate. Although Prema enjoys their company,

> but sometimes, among them, she felt stuck on the outside of America. Her compatriots spoke in the Nepali language among themselves; and their talk invariably turned homeward: the Maoist rebels, the king and the army, the faltering movement for peace. They talked of Americans – ‘foreigners’ – with some perplexity. (112)

She does not find the essence of America in Little Nepal – it appears as if it is part of the old Nepal that she has left behind – the same language, the same cultural habits, the same stories. It is an enclave of Nepalese people in the very heart of America thousands of miles away from the tiny Himalayan country. She does not feel that she actually had reached America. She desires “to see what lay beyond Little Nepal” (113). This is an important moment of realisation, a moment when Prema, now much more aware of the mainstream world around her, decides to jump into a life of chances and uncertainties necessary for a fuller immersion into the new cultural life. In order to do that she deliberately cuts off her contact with her home country, and with Little Nepal. Rootedness in a particular place and culture is a hindrance to wider experience. She takes some steps in order to ‘remove’ herself from the past and instead to focus more on the future. This attempt will effectively recalibrate her personality which will be much more oriented to America. She stopped watching Nepal related news on the Internet. “Prema [also] left Little Nepal as abruptly as she had left Nepal”

(117). She wants to move forward and does not want to confine herself to a life of constraints. "She wanted to leave, just – go. Get as far away as she could from the past" (121). She gathers information about 'real America' and wants to be Americanised. This real America, to her, is a space immersed in 'American' socio-cultural values and imbued with fast pace of life. It also means a life that does not have a ghettoised mentality. She will glide with the flow of life in the multicultural America, positing and asserting herself as one belonging to one of the many ethnic communities of the country. "She had become one of those Americans she used to look at from the buses, those Americans whose lives she had wanted for herself" (106). In this multicultural nation, she begins to follow 'American' culture. Although she is overwhelmed with some nostalgic thoughts, the trajectory of acculturation is quite evident. She starts learning more about American culture and life. She starts living in a new house rented by Henry Little where Meg is her roommate. She quits Shalimar and looks for a new job. After leaving Little Nepal, her life in the America was not easy. "Prema began to hunt the neighbourhood for 'Employment' and 'Opening' signs. . . . She passed an entire row of boarded-up shops and restaurants" (123). She finds a job at the store of a Korean woman where she never had occasion to speak Nepali. Her salary was minimum. She was missing something from inside:

> Not homesick, but something like it. She missed something. Not her compatriots. Her compatriots, she could return to in Little Nepal. She could even go back to Nepal if it came to that. That was not what she missed. (126)

This 'missed' component in her new life must have something to do with her comfort zone – the usual slow pace of life with which she had been habituated, the ancestral cultural norms, the old places, the old friends and relatives, and so on. The uncomfortable feeling emerging out of the loss of the comfort zone will now prepare her to face the onslaughts that would come in the new life.

Within the diasporic space, Prema reflects on her past. Going back to the past has a functional role in the novel. Himadri Lahiri observes,

> The desire for participating in the larger life is connected with the issue of nostalgia. Nostalgia, as a form of attachment to the old culture, plays a negative role in the immigrant's desire for

> integration to the new socio-cultural fabric of the adopted country. (2011, 127)

As a memory, in the U.S., she had taken her mother's ammonite, a lustrous stone which is the symbol of her root and belonging. From America, she calls her father and sends emails to Rajan and Trailokya and gathers information about Kanchha. Remembering the past from the diasporic space is quite common. While meeting Mata Sylvia, a preacher of Hindu religion in Los Angles, Prema becomes nostalgic. She sees behind the Mata the shelves containing several religious books like the Bhagavad Gita, the Mahabharata, the Ramayana and also some books about Osho, Krishnamurti, Ram Das, Vivekananda, Sai baba and so on. All these elements and also Mata's worship and incantation remind her of "her mother's bedroom shrine, crowded with the gods: Krishna, Parvati, Shiva, Laksmi, the avatar of Bishnu in a fossil. Had her mother felt the divine love that this Mata was whispering about?" (Thapa 2010, 180). When she listens to the history of war and insurgency in Guatemala from Luis, she starts comparing it with that in Nepal.

> . . . she had been trying to remember the war in her life by learning about the war in the lives of others. For the first time in years, Prema really thought back to Nepal. The war. She thought of her father. Was he safe? Her sister. Was Bijaya still a Maoist? Was she even alive? She thought of Kanchha, back in the hill bazaar. Had he ever been found? She felt an ancient shivering in the marrow. (168)

Prema's making connection between the two wars in two different continents suggests how violence can affect the common people everywhere. Prema also recollects her happy childhood days. Language and food also here become cultural metaphors that remind Prema of her roots. She teaches Nepali language to Luis so that with him she can establish a linguistic link that can compensate the loss of the language in a place immersed in a foreign language. Luis's reference to making "Dull-bath [lentil and rice]. A kind of Nepalese . . . Nepali, food" (77) makes Prema happy. Prema also becomes nostalgic when Neeru offers her Nepali food in America, "Momos! . . . Can you believe? Momos in America!" (197). She further says, "Neeru-didi, I lost my way" (195). Prema's search for identity is very much problematic at this stage. Once outside her

country and on a journey, she has an uncertain identity. She is in a confused state and tries to reconfigure her own identity:

> She thought of her movements from her present life with Luis to her life on the dry, grassy hill, and her life in Little Nepal, and her lives farther back…Her birth village, her school and her college years, her years in the hill bazaar. Her attachments to Rajan. The town at the base of the hills, the bus ride to the capital. Her weeks in limbo in Kathmandu. Her flight to America. Her time in transit at the Bangkok airport. She had passed the gates for Osaka, Dubai, Paris, Ankara, Melbourne, Amsterdam. She had taken the flight to Los Angeles. She had lost her way. (186)

Although she becomes nostalgic and tries to reimagine and recollect the memories of her family members and of Rajan, she begins to adapt to American culture. After the indecision she seems to have arrived at a resolute state. She becomes spellbound by the highways, traffic and other signs of development in America, "She wanted their lives for herself. She would catch the bus to Lomita, Burbank, Yorba Linda – anywhere – mesmerised by the way the highways merged and divided, divided and merged" (116). Unlike Nepal, America is a multicultural nation. The married life and family system in America are quite different from those in the traditional Nepal. Prema's job in Los Angles as a care taker of an old lady, Esthar King, provides her a lot of experiences about social and family life in America. Divorces, re-marriage, step relationship and live-in relationship are common in American society. In Luis and Esthar's family, such things are quite common. Prema learns and gathers experience from them that helps her to acculturate with American society and culture. She develops an 'American' relationship with Luis. In America, Prema feels sexually liberated. Such sexual liberation is unthinkable in Nepal.

> Thapa has included descriptions of sexual scenes in a highly sensual way. Uninhibited sexuality with a mate of one's own choice seems to have been taken as a sign of modernity that seems to initiate an immigrant, particularly a woman, into the "true" America. Prema is represented as "not–normal"(175) in this respect. Going against traditional norms, she was involved in sexual relations with Rajan, her boyfriend, in Nepal. This "ab-normality" makes her potentially an eligible adventurer to unknown lands. Her sexual involvement with Luis and others before him is shown as an act of individual agency that pulls her way from the values of traditional Nepal. (Lahiri 2017, 83)

Sucheta Majumder's remark in this respect is significant. She says,

> For immigrant women arrival in America can be liberating. Societal norms of the majority company frequently provide greater personal freedom than permitted in Asian societies. (qtd.in Lahiri 2011, 136)

At the time of meeting Luis's family, Prema receives warm love and support,

> The gathering broke up late, with hugs all around, and promises to meet soon, promises that no one would be able to keep, but which nevertheless rang warm and sincere. At the door Peggy hugged Prema, Ron hugged Prema, Ryan hugged Prema, Anna hugged Prema. Americans hugged so much. Prema hugged Matt, Mike and Mark. Peggy gave Prema another off-protocol namaste: 'I salute the god within you' (Thapa 2010, 145).

All these supports by the people of the host land helps Prema acculturate with the new society. She wants to be Americanised. She buys American dresses, a red bikini for $24.99, and flip-flops for $4.47. She visits beaches, learns swimming and relaxes in the American environment. With Luis, she listens to American music and watches American football, baseball, tennis, soccer and ice hockey. Both of them start talking about their cultural similarities and differences. They talk about the songs of the two countries. This is the way of knowing and understanding each other's culture. Prema participates in the process of acculturation by involving herself in the 'American' activities.

Nepali folk songs are contrasted with American music. Luis remarks,

> I know there's lots of differences between us, but I think there's something special between us. I think we really complement each other. I mean, even though you're from such – another – world. . . . I just feel – I think – You make my world bigger. (104)

This mutual understanding between the individuals of two communities is needed to understand each other's culture. However, Prema does not find comfort in this multicultural land.

> Prema frequently dwindles between absence and presence. In the company of Luis, Prema feels as if she finds herself assimilated to American multiculturalism but the moment she idealizes her lost realm of culture, geography, innocence, purity and happiness; she is overwhelmed by absence. Her search for presence continues throughout the novel. Prema, towards the end of the novel, renews

> her relation and reconnects with her national roots by visiting Nepali people in Los Angeles and by taking a trip back home. (Bhatt 2018, 12)

She rethinks of her past life. She

> thought of her mother, lost to the high, misty hills. . . . She thought of everyone she had loved and then abandoned over the years, everyone she had left. Her father and sister. Rajan. Luis. And she thought: maybe the subjects of our affections can be interchangeable. Maybe we can be forgiven for one mistake by not committing another. (Thapa 2010, 230)

However, she realises that her roots and identity do not lie in Nepal. Her revisit to those spaces, which she had left behind like Little Nepal, Korean store or Nepal, is not for nostalgia – the author makes Prema visit these places for the sake of the development of the plot and her character. This revisit helps Prema assessing her own position in the context of her changing attitudes and identity. "Prema not only, self-consciously, accepts her desire to reinvent her 'self' but also wants to go beyond the national borders within which her feminine subjectivity has been constructed" (Bhele 2016, 26). Her sense of guilt of not staying in Nepal and leaving all behind is not highlighted by Thapa. In Nepal, Prema finds that nothing is left for her. Lahiri in this respect remarks,

> [S]he revisits the places where she had lived earlier, not to renew his old contacts but to draw a map of how far she has moved forward in her search for the concept of America and reinvented herself. There is a "Not here" motif while visiting the places. She even goes back to Nepal in order to make sense of the cartography of her journey. Even though Nepal is a changed place now, she does not decide to settle there. On the contrary, she is constantly haunted by Luis's apparition, in airports particularly, which seems to suggest that Luis is perhaps the nearest image of true America available to her at that point of time. Their mutual interest in each other seems to be full of promise. It is because of this, perhaps, that she renews her contact with him. (Lahiri 2017, 83)

Getting a job in the California floral region, and her meeting people like Fiona, Randa, Thom, Nancy and others, who were involved in butterfly preservation in El Segundo Blue, gives her a sense of belonging. She tells Luis that "[i]t is like the work I was doing in Nepal, but better, because I am working with Americans, who are really a big problem for the environment. My work makes more of a difference – globally, I mean" (Thapa 2010, 247). She finds her interest here.

> She was free. She was in good health. She had not got rich in America, but she had enough to eat, she had shelter and clothing. She was not affected by war or afflicted by the basis for it: overconsumption. She was content. Her life was complete. (233)

Thapa effectively captures Prema's fleeting identity and her constant search for roots through the employment of the image of the life of the butterfly. The transformation of a caterpillar to butterfly is similar to Prema's transformation from her Nepalese roots to Americanisation. The title of the novel *Seasons of Flight* indicates Prema's flight from Nepal to America, America to Nepal and again from Nepal to America. The last flight seems to be the final one. She tries to reinvent herself in the new context by amalgamating two different cultures. Many people remain unchanged even after a long stay in the host nation. They fail to understand Western cultural norms and reject these.

> Physical separation from the homeland and the gulf of time often offers a romanticised view of the land one has left behind. A lot of immigrants live on cultural memory, and in a way continue their cultural habits and therefore fail to integrate properly to the new environment. (Lahiri 2011, 123).

However, Thapa's dynamic protagonist, Prema, is in favour of living a free life in America. She does not want to remain a hostage to cultural memory of Nepal. Like Prema, Jasmine too is a dynamic character who breaks the traditional barriers and enjoys her freedom in America. Both Prema and Jasmine consider the life of Nepali ghetto in Little Nepal in the U.S. and the Indian ghetto in Flushing respectively as stagnant. Their lives in the ghettos are in sharp contrast to the sparkling life of America. The immigrants in the ghettos are hardly able to come out of their traditional ideologies and old mindset. They resist the Western or any new culture. Salman Rushdie remarks,

> To forget that there is a world beyond the community to which we belong, to confine ourselves within narrowly defined cultural frontiers would be, I believe, to go voluntarily into that form of internal exile which in South Africa is called the 'homeland' (1991, 19).

However, in the initial stage immigrants need a temporary space from where it is possible to measure the mainstream life flowing outside and prepare themselves mentally to follow the tide. This transitional space is really helpful for them. Asian ethnic ghettos, according to Sucheta Mazumder, are "a genuine

response to the needs of the new immigrants who live, work or find support services there. Even highly trained professionals may find . . . their foreign credentials unacceptable" (qtd.in Lahiri 2011, 126). Although both Prema and Jasmine reject the ghetto life, as mentioned earlier, it provides a 'breathing space' to get familiar with the environment of America. Prema's looking back and visit to her roots only serve to stimulate in her a sense of discontentment with the socio-political space of Nepal. In the context of such a situation, it is easier to take a decision to settle down in the diaspora. In Thapa's representation, therefore, the old 'nation' thus gradually recedes into the background as the new challenges in the new land begin to foreground themselves. In this respect, the nation-diaspora relationship in this work of the Nepalese author is not that strong as that in the Tibetan authors' works discussed in the earlier chapter. The anxiety to connect to the homeland that is so prominent in Tibetan authors is rather weak in Manjushree Thapa.

Select Stories of Manjushree Thapa, Samrat Upadhyay and Rabi Thapa

This section will deal with a number of short stories in which patterns of relationship of a diasporic subject with both the nation (Nepal) and diaspora (U.S. and U.K.) will be traced. These stories include Rabi Thapa's "Nothing to Declare," Samrat Upadhyay's "An Affair Before the Earthquake" and Manjushree Thapa's "Friends," and "Sounds That the Tongue Learns to Make." The Nepalese characters in these stories are not strongly tied up with their nation/ homeland. They look forward to the diaspora and look for every opportunity to leave the country. If they stay back, they live mostly as disgruntled subjects. Poverty, politics and corruption in Nepal have made them discontented. This section would mainly try to find out the answers of some of the significant questions that follow: how do the Nepalese characters respond to the Nation-Diaspora binary? What are the patterns of their responses to the nation? Do their responses to the nation and diaspora resemble Tibetan's responses to the nation and diaspora? Is there any return motif in their works?

The short story writers, in general, as we shall see in this section, view Nepal as a country affected by crippling poverty, political violence, social injustices and

all kinds of negative attributes. To them contemporary Nepal appears to be the 'Waste Land.' Even when a diasporic Nepalese, driven by the desire to serve the motherland, returns to Nepal, he/she ultimately gets frustrated. It is no wonder therefore that the native Nepalese, young men and women want to relocate to the West, which is supposedly a land of gold and glitter. This scenario of hopelessness and frustration is reflected in most of the short stories to be discussed here.

In their fictional and non-fictional works, Samrat Upadhyay[18] and Rabi Thapa have narrated the lives of the Nepalese in Nepal and in the diasporic worlds. They have addressed the issues of politics, cultures, religion and the Maoist insurgency in Nepal on the one hand and how Nepalese youths are lured by the prospects supposedly available in the West, on the other. Rabi Thapa's short story "Nothing to Declare," for example, represents the desire of some Nepalese characters to leave the nation for better opportunities in the diasporic world. It focuses on the acculturation process of these characters in the diasporic space. They appeared to be influenced, rather unproblematically by the mainstream culture. One, if particularly brought up in a conventional Nepalese society in Nepal, usually takes a considerable time to get into a rhythm in the host country because weaning away from the mother culture is a long-drawn process. Immersed as the main character seems to be in the native culture and rather naïve in his approach to the culture of the hostland, Bikram in the story jumps into the bandwagon with his friends to enjoy and acculturate too early, almost overnight. Rabi Thapa as the author of the story fails to justify this rush for enjoying the surface glitter of the host society and making him participate in the acculturation process too early after his arrival. Perhaps Thapa is himself in a rush to represent the overwhelming desire of the Nepalese youth for diasporic dislocation which

[18] Samrat Upadhyay, who is born and brought up in Nepal, is a Nepali diasporic writer settled in the U.S. He is a Distinguished Professor of English and Martha C. Kraft Professor of Humanities at Indiana University, Bloomington. He has written several literary works including *Arresting God in Kathmandu* (2001), *The Guru of Love* (2003), *The Royal Ghosts* (2006), *Buddha's Orphans* (2010), *The City Son: A Novel* (2014), and *Mad Country* (2017). On the other side, Rabi Thapa was born and brought up in Nepal. He is now based in London. His works include *Nothing to Declare* (2011) and *Thamel: Dark Star of Kathmandu* (2016).

is widely perceptible in the socialscape of Nepal. The earlier Nepalese immigrants are shown as being oriented towards the cultural practices and ideologies of the mainstream culture. What should have been more appropriate is to show the characters undergoing in a cultural dilemma. This means that the immigrants, even those who have been long in the diaspora still retain strong Nepalese cultural traits while at the same time show unmistakable signs of adapting to the cultural features of the host country as well.

The story begins with a journey of Bikram, a Nepalese character to London. To him, London is an unknown place, a dream land. Prior to his departure for London, Bikram's mother like most Nepalese mothers is apprehensive about how her son will cope up with the situation in the host country where Nepalese indigenous food items will be unavailable. She "packed into the suitcase – Nepali fruit drops, pastries and caramel rocks" (Rabi Thapa 2011, 43). This means she wants to delay her son's acculturation process in London. This is quite natural and Thapa shows his understanding of the Nepalese mothers in general. For the packing of such Nepalese stuff in the suitcase, Bikram's father grumbles, "You know how they check everything these days. I'm sure you can buy all in London anyway!" (43). His father has a better understanding of the reality of the transit process and the diasporic reality. However, his mother was sure that these food items would not be available in London. She says, "No Raja, you don't get these things in London; Karki's son told me so. You can get those Indian sweets but not these. It's not the same!" (43). She has her own channel of connections which inform her of the homely reality of the Nepalese immigrants.

Seeing his mother tense, Bikram consoles him saying that "Don't worry Mamu, I'll tell them it's Nepali Ayurvedic medicine –instant cure for homesickness! And if they give me hassle I'll just bribe them with some!" (43). All these conversations indicate that Bikram's mother is very much tense with the uncertain life in U.K. By providing Nepalese food in Bikram's suitcase, she becomes the symbol of those people who have the tendency to retain the cultural roots and habits. She is uncertain about the diasporic world. Food and Nepali medicine here become the cultural metaphor.

All apprehensions did not work ultimately as there were no custom officials at the checkpoint and security was not adequate. When he was asked by the officer if he had any family in the UK, he says no. Although he did have his uncle in Reading, he does not mention that as he was forbidden to say so by his friends. He mentions that he would pursue a degree in computing at the University of Greenwich. Finally, after so many questions by the officials, his passport was stamped.

Nepal is a small country and it is very difficult for an individual to understand all the things and ways in the foreign land especially when one is travelling for the first time. The journey from Nepal to London, for a character like Bikram, is not an easy one. Heathrow appears to Bikram a 'big and noisy' place.

> As soon as he wandered out the doors he felt as if he were being sucked into its chaos. He felt disoriented – all kinds of people milling about in all directions, bumping into each other and laughing and hugging and shouting. (44)

This representation sounds realistic. He was waiting for Raghav, a Nepali friend living in the UK, to pick him up. Raghav arrived there and welcomed him to the UK. Bikram was unaware of the fact that England is a cold country. Thapa here reflects Bikram's naïve and unsophisticated attitude towards his hostland. He had clearly not done the requisite research. Raghav after drawing his jacket around him remarked, "England, this is England. If the sun shines it's like a public holiday and people run around naked. You'll get used to it" (45).

Thapa through the gaze of Bikram narrates the city of London. To Bikram, the London appears "distinctly ordinary." He describes London in the following way,

> Identical low white houses with brown tiled roofs lined the streets on both sides, fronted by ragged patches of grass and concrete. Cars were jammed into the short driveways and parked on the street. Scarecrow trees stood disconsolate over faded piles of leaves occasionally whipped up by the wind and scattered over the pavement. (45)

When they were crossing a shop outside the station, Bikram had seen some blacks and Indians and also a poster of a Hindi movie on a wall. After seeing all these, he considers the place 'a poor area' or a 'ghettos.' He asked Raghav

whether Maoists lived here or not and tried to make a comparison between Nepal and London. When he shouted after seeing "a huge plane lumbering past right above their heads" (46), Raghav comforts him by saying "You'll get used to that as well" (46).

Finally, Bikram reached Raghav's place and Raghav's room gives a sense of comfort as if he has returned home. He drinks beer and starts reliving nostalgically the time he used to spend with Raghav and other friends in Nepal. He sees Raghav's massive TV and sound system here and thinks that these were not there in Kathmandu. He says, "His [Raghav's] parents were a little on the stingy side; it was a wonder they'd forked out the money to get him started here" (46).

In comparison to Kathmandu, Raghav lived a free life in London. Raghav declares "At least I am independent now . . . Not that living in London you can save anything working in a store. Whatever, it is, it's better than just rotting away in Kathmandu" (46). In this way, he makes a comparison between his time in Kathmandu and his life in London. He worked in a shoe store in Hounslow, London. Besides Raghav, his cousin Suresh who worked in the Marriott now and Gaurav, one of the friends of Suresh, lived there. They both are from Kathmandu.

Bikram's first challenge in the diasporic space was to find a job. "His part of the rent was two hundred and fifty pounds a month! That was more than 30,000 rupees. You could rent a whole house in Nepal for that!" (47). He understands that U.K. is an expensive country, "we earn money here, but we spend it all – on food, rent, booze and dope" (49). However, after reaching London, he started enjoying with Raghav and other new friends. He, along with his friends, visits clubs, drinks beers, looks at the beautiful girls who are hardly seen in Kathmandu and participates in British disco and enjoying life here. He says, "Here I am in my first week in England and I'm in a bar full of *hapsis* doing this hip-hop handshake with a drug dealer from Somalia" (48). In a single sweep, Thapa introduces a good many spectacular items here. He begins to remember his country which is far away from his current space.

> Nepal suddenly felt far away – and perhaps not at all. Sure, his parents were thousands of kilometres away and so was the dust of Nepal, but his own Nepal, smoking and drinking with friends, was right here. (49)

In the pub, Gaurav, Suresh, Bikram, all start dancing and staring at girls. Bikram enjoys the place wholly. "He had to force himself not to stop and just stare. . . . Drunk and high and happy. London, London. He had finally made it!" (57). Here, in the very heart of London, he has discovered an alternative Nepal for himself where he can enjoy life freely with his Nepali friends. This kind of alternative space is created by most of the Nepalese characters. This space is quite different from that in their homeland. As mentioned earlier, most of the Nepalese characters first visit at 'Little Nepal' in the diasporic world which is a ghetto space and this space helps them to familiarise with the foreign space. This is needed temporally to know the life of the diasporic world. This ghetto space can be considered as an alternative space. Most of the characters in the short stories are not mentally confined to a small space, they are outward looking. Ghetto mentality for some immigrants remains in operation only for a short span of time. It is temporary space from where they map the geo-cultural, linguistic and multicultural reality of the new country. From there, they map the resources (job, entertainment and education) available in the diasporic world. In the novel, this alternative space is shown in a large scale. In the stories there are some indications and signs which show that the characters are eager to acculturate to the mainstream culture. Obviously, it is not possible for the author to elaborate the entire trajectory of an immigrant character's journey within the short structure of a short story. While reading the stories, the question naturally arises whether the characters take too much liberty with the new space too early – immediately after their arrival they seem to rush to immerse themselves in the mainstream flow of life. It appears that they escape the rigid cultural and moral norms of the home country which they had practiced all their life in the homeland.

Most of the major Nepalese characters in the literary works we have discussed are able to come out from the 'ghetto space' and try to create an alternative space away from both the homeland and the ghetto in the diaspora. This space is created to assert their individualism which in its turn gives way to a hybrid

identity. It helps them to acculturate and later assimilate with the multicultural world.

Samrat Upadhyay's story "An Affair Before the Earthquake" mainly deals with the story of anonymous lovers. It begins with the lover pensively ruminating over the departure of his beloved for America. Her plan is to visit some renowned university in the Midwest of America "where there will be a lot of greenery" (Upadhyay 2017, 190). She works at an INGO (International non-governmental Organisations). But she wants to do a degree as she "needs to move up" and she needs to be the director of her company. This migration for better education is a common enough phenomenon in Napal. Her lover is tense and apprehends that she would not return from America. Before leaving for the diasporic world, a pre-migration tension is found in the mind of lover for her beloved. The lover here is very much disturbed as he thinks that the American life, culture, language and ideologies would change her completely. He asked some questions to her, "But what if you change? What if you become like an American? . . . What if you start talking like an American? Acting like an American?" (190-191). At this stage, she consoles him that she will return in two years. He plans to marry her so that he can be officially engaged with her but his beloved hesitates to do so.

They are two completely contrast characters in the story. One is trapped by his own thoughts and live in a world of fantasy and the other is not confined by any boundary. He observes that "she was a free spirit" (Upadhyay 186). On the contrary, he identifies himself as "a spirit that is not free" (186). It means that "his life followed the same patterns, over and over" (186).

Upadhyay describes the surroundings of Nepal through the journey of the couple to different sites of Kathmandu. It portrays the picture of Nepal as a nation. They visit city centre, Thamel, Asan, Indrachowk, Kathmandu Durbar Square, some religious places like Maju Deval temple, Kasthamandap temple and the like. All these places are very attractive to the tourists and young lovers. It was in "the same office building as his." Although at the time of their conversations, the lady always talked to him with a mixture of both Nepali and English and half of the words were English, she loved to sing Nepali songs. Her singing was very

much connected to her roots. It was the "oldies folksy ones" (189). "Her singing was a deep, yearning subconscious desire to go back to a time when the Nepali identity wasn't sullied by external forces" (189). By using the word "sullied" the writer here means the damage done by the political and powerful forces in Nepal. These forces destroyed the purity and integrity of Nepal. Nepal has been affected by the Civil war. She also projects a negative view about her ancestors. She says, "Our ancestors were dirty, dirty folks" (191). This perhaps is suggestive of an inferiority complex that knaws at her consciousness. Perhaps she has been comparing the West with Nepal and had been orientalised in a fundamental way. This too motivates her to leave Nepal. As mentioned earlier, lack of opportunities, traditional beliefs, lack of moral values, poverty and politics of Nepal compelled many Nepalese to leave their homeland and look for the new prospects in the foreign land.

All the apprehensions and fears of the lover subsequently come true. The beloved did not keep any contact with him after reaching America.

> He didn't hear from her once she left for America. He emailed her, called her, Skyped her, Vibered her, contacted another Nepali at her university and had message delivered to her and received confirmation that his message was indeed delivered to her in person. Nothing! He came upon a photo of hers at a university party that someone had posted on Facebook; she was holding glass of wine, looking happy. (191)

She seems to be happy in the diasporic world and has no desire to return to her roots. The return motif does not exist. Keeping no contacts with her lover does not only refer to her disloyalty towards him but also indicates her desire not to get back to Nepal. The story takes a new turn at the end. When the lady did not return in two years, he decides not to stay in Nepal and leaves for Australia. America or the American dream has influenced many people and nations. A desire to go to America, acculturate with the American cultures and a dream to avail opportunities in the diasporic world – all these are evident in the characters. The characters, used in this story, sooner or later, decide to leave Nepal as they were deprived of many opportunities, facilities and the freedom here. An urge to leave Nepal and to settle in the diasporic world is found in almost all the characters.

The nation-diaspora conflict is also evident in some of the stories in Thapa's book *Tilled Earth* (2007). Regarding Thapa's stories in the book Navtej Sarna remarks,

> Manjushree Thapa has an abundant landscape from which to mine her short stories. She also obviously has the writer's eye to discern the possibilities in her material. Tilled Earth [sic.] touches various themes: traditional Nepalese society, with the rigidities of the caste system; the ups and downs of the development process; the life of the expatriates in Nepal; Nepal as a tourist destination and the dislocation that such tourism leaves in its wake; the experience of the Nepalese abroad; the contradictions within an emancipated Nepalese woman. (n.pag)

From *Tilled Earth*, I shall take up two stories: "Friends," and "Sounds That the Tongue Learns to Make."

The story "Friends" offers multiple images related to both the nation (that is Nepal) and the diasporic space. The narrative scheme employed by Thapa is unique as she resorts to "a fiction within a fiction" method in the story. The narrator of the story is an unnamed woman character.

> The narrative speaks of incidents that happen in real life but we discover at the end that they are the inventions of the female narrator who envisages a situation of reciprocal friendship. Such a relationship ultimately turns out to be a daydream, a work of fiction. The friendship is present here in absence. (Goswami 2016, 267)

Thapa has represented the nation-diaspora tension through the representation of her two characters: Kamal Malla who is born and brought up in Nepal and Hrishikesh Pandey who hails from the diasporic world, U.S. Kamal is a young computer programmer who is trapped in traditional Nepalese life, values and ideologies. Hrishikesh is "a Nepali who had recently returned from the United States where he had lived since childhood" (Thapa 2007, 48). The main aim of the narrator for imagining such a story is to find out answers to the question which she formulates in the following words: "Why are we, among ourselves, jealous and resentful, mistrustful of everyone? Why can we not become friends the way foreigners can – full of goodness and grace? This is what I want" (69). This is a naïve statement as 'foreigners' are not always 'friendly' and 'full of

goodness and grace"; similarly, the positive qualities can be found in the Nepalese people as well. Nevertheless, it is a profound question and indicates the character's anxiety about the 'fallen' state of the inhabitants of Nepal. The female narrator indeed desires an ideal Nepal where true friendship would prosper unhindered. This is one instance, a rare one, when the diasporic character, motivated by his concern for the homeland and a sense of responsibility, arrives at the Himalayan kingdom from the United States. However, his nationalism and idealism were destined to face failure. His gesture towards his country of origin was not reciprocated. The gulf between the nation and diaspora remained as before.

The narrative contains movement of two opposite desires: one of the characters wants to migrate from the nation to diaspora while the other, settled in diaspora, returns to the nation. Hrishikesh who is now working as a journalist in *Kathmandu Newsflash* has returned recently from the US to his homeland Nepal in search of his roots: "I wanted to find out who I really am . . . I don't really know anything about my own country" (50). His thoughts are represented in the following extract,

> Not that he regretted returning to Nepal. Every day he saw so much and learned so much about this place that was his country – what was a green card, after all; he was still a Nepali citizen. Yes, he was glad he had come home – yes, why not call it *home*; but there was no denying that life in Nepal could be – that was to say – it definitely seemed, at times, like a struggle. (53; emphasis added)

Hrishikesh calls Nepal 'home' but one notices a slight hesitation in his voice ('why not call it home') perhaps because the United States too has become a 'home' to him by dint of his long stay there and certain amount of emotional involvement and acculturation in that country. Nepal as a home is now associated with 'struggle' – not just economic but also cultural and emotional. Functionally, this return – this encounter with unpleasant reality in Nepal as 'home' – is necessary as it would confirm his eventual reverse-return to the United States which he can now embrace as yet another home. This pattern, as we have seen earlier, is also seen in Bharati Mukherjee's protagonist Jasmine. The concept of the home is made to appear flexible as it happens in the case of many diasporic subjects even from the global South.

To come back to the narrative, it is evident that although Hrishikesh stayed in the U.S. for a long time, he feels that his roots are still in Nepal. His sense of nationalism in the traditional sense of the term is not lost. What he wants now in Nepal is a true friendship and a sense of bonding. However, in the "poverty, pollution and politics" of Nepal, he could not find the qualities he idealises. The nation is confronting spiritual, moral and ethical crisis. Hrishikesh's friendship with Kamal Malla is important here. Kamal Malla who stays put in Nepal informs him that "Kathmandu's people are mean . . . They are very devious . . . I have grown here all my life, and I have seen all what they do to each other with their small-small minds" (54-55).

Hrishikesh says that, "Nepal wasn't a bad place to live. 'It's all in our minds'" (65). To him Nepal is an 'imaginary homeland,' unchanged and unchanging, old memories, ancestral stories lodged strongly in mind which have not changed over the decades.

Hrishikesh faces discrimination from R. P. Aryal, the editor-in-chief of the *Kathmandu Newsflash*. "The staff themselves – perhaps because of their limited English and his limited Nepali – kept their distance from Hrishikesh" (53). Hrishikesh starts hating Nepal when he realised that his writings in the *Kathmandu Newsflash* are criticized only because he has come from outside Nepal. He is not wholly accepted as a Nepali by the people. "We don't need a Green Card Holding Boy to telling us our religion" (67). A sense of distrust of a diasporic Nepalese is quite palpable among the members of the native Nepalese communities. So, Hrishikesh's dream of searching his roots in Nepal remain incomplete as he is not accepted by his people as 'Nepalese.'

On the other hand, Kamal Malla is rooted in the old traditional values of his homeland. He has to take care of his old parents and sisters. He has a dream to go to the foreign countries for better opportunities. However, he has certain responsibilities towards his family. He says, "I also wanted to go [abroad], but my parents. They are getting old and I am the only son. They need me" (63).

It is unfortunate that although he got the opportunity for admission at A.I.T., Bangkok, he missed it as he did not receive the letter of invitation in time. "It is

foiled by his acquaintances" (Goswami 2016, 269) who do not deliver him the letter. In this respect Kamal remarks,

> there were those Nepalis, he knew, who harmed others because they had to competing for the same limited resources. Then there were those, like the supervisor, who harmed others purely because they wanted to; envy rotted their heart, led them to hold down everyone who might rise above them. (Thapa 2007, 66)

This clearly indicates the moral degradation that many of the Nepalese people of Nepal have gone through. They find pleasure by harming others. He criticises those 'rotten selfish hearts' which are desperate to harm others. He is uncertain about his future.

> Kamal saw his future slip away. In the harsh hours of a sleepless dawn, he cursed his luck, his society, and his parents, whose traditional expectations of him had jinxed him. And he railed against his sister, whose narrow, duty-bound world he was now trapped in. He was so wracked by fury, he didn't want to continue at work. (67)

This negative representation of the nation/homeland hinges on the socio-economic ground reality which crushes individual dreams, traps men and women in poverty and family responsibility, and does not allow anyone to live in his or her own terms.

Kamal is torn between two worlds. His dream is to go abroad but he is in a dilemma,

> If he went, would his parents feel abandoned by their only son? Would his sister accuse him of failing his duties? She, who had never failed in any of her duties as a girl – woman. (58)

Kamal is uncertain about Nepal and he suggests that Hrishikesh should leave Nepal. He assures him by saying that

> [y]ou go to America . . . 'you take a job nicely, and be free, and become a Hindu saint if you want. It is much better than wasting a rotten life here . . . You don't know,' . . . 'how small-small people think here, how they destroy others to make themself feel good.' (68-69)

He is not oriented towards his homeland. On the other hand, Hrishikesh also requests Kamal to apply again at AIT, Bangkok and also advises him to leave

Nepal. So, both the characters come out from the nation-diaspora tension and are now ready to visit the diasporic world.

Thapa also represents Nepal as a tourist destination. People from different places come to enjoy the natural beauty of the country. Kathmandu is the epicentre of touristic activities where

> the Dutch, the Italian, the German, the Japanese, the French, the American, the Israeli – tourists, all – come to the memorabilia shops here to buy Buddhists mandalas, turquoise bracelets, Gurkha knives, bottled water, pashmina shawls, demon masks, rice-paper notebooks, chocolate bars, hiking boots, embroidered T-shirts that read I Love Mount Everest (45).

Nepal is represented through isolated exotic objects such as mandalas, Gurkha Knives, turquoise bracelets etc. The extract above also provides a picture of what kind of touristic activities are carried on – trekking, hiking etc. The impression they carry away is fragmentary. Many tourists visit the place to enjoy and experience the spectacular beauty of Nepal. Nepal has sale values and the Nepalese sell their Nation by selling various objects related to their culture and religion. Goswami in this respect observes:

> But selling Nepal as an exotic place also becomes the core business for the Nepalese as well. Nepal's unique territorial position and natural beauty is pressed into service for selling Nepal. Thamel, the epicentre of touristic activities is not the real Nepal. One needs to scratch beneath the surface to find what really constitutes Nepal. Problems like poverty, casteism and unemployment surface occasionally beneath the glittering facade. The Mount Everest, the highest point of the Himalayas, is spectacularly visible. The name, Mount Everest, is firmly embedded in the text books and in tourist guides which canonise it. In the story, shirts, proclaiming the words, "I Love Mount Everest" do the rounds. This serves as an excellent advertisement. The objectification of a natural spectacle through an attire of daily use is an excellent example of the materialist purpose of the Nepalese businessmen. The "shirt" has its own mobility as it will travel with the tourists not only in Nepal but also beyond it to intensify the desire to visit Nepal, latent in other foreigners. (2016, 267)

Thapa writes about how the traditional life and pristine beauty of Nepal are being transformed into a commercial market and business place. Thamel is full of restaurants, cafes and hotels. Kathmandu is now transformed into a city place

where "[m]ost of the locals have rented out their houses to hotels, restaurants and shops, moving their families to quieter neighbourhoods" (Thapa 2007, 46). Kuber Sharma, a recent migrant from the south of Nepal, "takes the growth of concrete houses around his shop as a personal insult – "Why can't I have a house of my own?" (46). He is bit worried about Nepal's transformation. Due to this touristic folk and influx and also for the urbanisation, Nepal is going through cultural threats and pollution. People are so busy in their own materialistic lives that they have forgotten the essence of friendship and the old values of Nepal.

Thapa's another story entitled "Sound that the Tongue Learns to Make" mainly concentrates on the relationship between Keshab, a poorly paid language teacher and a white American woman Sarah who is a 'highly paid consultant in Nepal.' The nation-diaspora tension is also prominent in the story. Unlike the story "Friends," this tension is narrated from the perspective of a foreigner. The story is narrated from the point of view of Sarah, an American, who is a diasporic subject in Nepal. The story begins with an epigraph that has a functional role:

> Do you speak English? I only speak a little Nepali. I do not understand. Please say it again. Please speak more slowly. What is your name? How old are you? Where do you live? Are your parents alive? Are you married? How many brothers do you have? How many sisters? How many in your family? How many children? (6)

The above epigraph points out to the linguistic difference between the people of two communities – America and Nepal. In order to interact with an individual of a different community and also to understand his or her cultural orientations, one needs to know his or her language. The word 'sounds' in the title is used symbolically as it refers to the language of a community residing in a different country. It is part of one's educative experience. In this story, Sarah's language and culture is different from those of Keshab. However, they negotiate the differences and create a mutual understanding and develop an emotional relationship between themselves:

> He was so familiar to her, and yet, at the same time, so foreign. What she liked most about him was his sweet disposition. She trusted him instinctively. He had a life quite apart from her, she knew: a very Nepali life that she could not enter, and did not really

> want to. She hardly knew what that life was like. Yet she also knew him, deeply (17).

Knowing the other and his or her culture is necessary here as it creates a link between two different cultures. Sarah wants to know more about Nepal. Both Keshab and Sarah decide to go on a trek to the Himalaya together as Sarah "had heard from all the expats in Kathmandu that this trail was safe. There were no Maoists here" (8). The reference to the words "no Maoists" clearly gives us a picture of politically disturbed Nepal. The Maoist insurgency and civil war [1996-2006] in Nepal created a psychological impact on Nepalese communities. Thapa in an interview rightly addresses such problems,

> Nepal's first democracy movement took place in 1950, but democracy lasted only a decade. The second democracy movement took place in 1990. I had just come back to Nepal after college; I was twenty-one. I was at the start of my professional life. Suddenly Nepal, which had had an absolute monarchy, had a parliamentary democracy. It was an exciting time to live through . . . The country was transforming so fast. It was very compelling to witness the changes. But before long, things were going badly. The Maoist insurgency began in 1996. I was in my mid-twenties then. At first I didn't know what the insurgency was about. I knew about the Communist movement in Nepal, but didn't realize how militant it could be. Then, June 1, 2001, after Nepal's crown prince killed nine members of the royal family and himself, the army got involved in the counterinsurgency, and that's what politicized me. With the Army's involvement, the war escalated and human rights atrocities skyrocketed. . . . The Maoists had a very strong presence there, as well as the army. A lot of people from there were killed and disappeared . . . it was a very dirty war on both sides; but that killing has been impossible for me to get over. (Hong n.pag)

During the trek, Keshab and Sarah visit different places like Helambu, Ghorepani, Lete village, Tukuche village and the like. Through the conversation between Keshab and Sarah, the problematic picture of Nepal's socio-economic condition comes out: "where the country's per capita income was dismal" (Thapa 2007, 19), "the literacy rate was thirty percent nationally, and seventeen percent for women" (19). The conservative and opportunistic mindset of young people also emerges from the following, rather sweeping, observations: "where one [lovers] cannot touch each other in public," "one could not be seen to be sleeping with an American woman" (31), and "where Nepalese used to seduce

American women" and "They'll use any means to get a visa" (29). All these are scathing commentary on the present state of the nation.

Interestingly, both Sarah and Keshab have different outlook towards Nepal. Sarah, as an American diasporic subject in Nepal, is very much eager to know more about Nepal and its culture. She also begins to learn Keshab's language. Keshab wants to leave Nepal and to settle in America by marrying Sarah but Sarah wants to settle in Nepal. Keshab's desire for migration to the West conforms to the general pattern of the Nepalese youth wanting to leave the country for upward mobility, something we have seen earlier in the character of Prema (in Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*) and Kamal Malla (in Thapa's "Friends"). Thapa's diasporic Nepalese character Hrishikesh wants to connect to the nation of origin but fails. The introduction of a female American character in the story is designed by the diasporic Nepalese author to explore yet another angle to present Nepal and it will be interesting to see whether Sarah exoticises the Himalayan nation.

The story ends with unsolved tension between the characters. Sarah's psychology has been represented by Thapa in multiple layers. Although she is an outsider, she is not like a typical Western character who tends to essentialise the marginalised country like Nepal. She needs a companion in Nepal who will understand her soul. At the time of trekking, people consider Keshab as Sarah's guide. In order to avoid people's comment, Keshab keeps distance and avoids going near Sarah. "Where were all the people? Where was Keshab? She felt utterly alone. To her own dismay, she began to cry" (26). To Sarah, Keshab is not only a travel guide. She loves him but cannot fixes her own position:

> Had it been simply for such attentions – the companionship he offered as she made her way through an unfamiliar land – that she had fallen in love with him? Had it been because she had needed a translator, a guide? Sometimes she couldn't trust her own motivation. (26)

The perspectives of Sarah and Keshab are presented in the following lines:

> It had only made Sarah try harder to open her heart to Keshab. And in any case, what could she offer him that he couldn't find in Nepali women? It wasn't as if they were planning to marry so that

> they could go to America. Of course, one could never be sure; but as far as Sarah could tell, Keshab no more wanted to go to America than she wanted to live all her life here. (29-30)

Thapa's introduction of the American character in the story is very much suggestive as she points out to the fact that in Nepal, almost all the characters are looking forward to the diasporic prospects. American characters, here, become the medium for the Nepalese characters to escape from the Nepal. Love relationships with the American characters, in this context, provide opportunities for migration to the West. The story, however, upsets this pattern. Keshab cannot fulfil his desire of the West by marrying Sarah simply because Sarah wants stay put in Nepal. Thapa's creation of the Western character is significant here. Sarah's interventions/discourses/gazes at Nepal represent an outsider's point of view which offers an alternative perspective to the readers. As a result, there is a dialogue between the native and foreigner's worldview. It creates a contact zone which is dynamic in the sense that the two involved worldviews clash and cohere, offering both the parties the opportunity to read the philosophy of life as a whole. The presence of the West in the very hearth of the and East highlights the importance of both difference and coherence which makes life more comprehensive and comprehensible. Sarah's character, in this respect, plays an important role.

The analysis of the Manjushree Thapa's novel and of four stories written by three authors (Rabi Thapa, Samrat Upadhyay and Manjushree Thapa) directs us to some conclusions. The point that emerges most emphatically from the discussion is that Nepalese young men and women located in Nepal tend to escape from their country and relocate to some Western diasporic locations such as the United States and the United Kingdom. The reasons for this migration have been discussed earlier – they include the socio-economic condition of the characters, corrupt administration, meanness of people and political violence such as the Maoist insurgency. In most of the narratives, there is hardly any evidence of the characters' willingness to connect to the nation of origin. In one or two narratives, the major characters come back to Nepal. In Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flights*, the 'return' motif is rather weak – Prema, as we have noted earlier, returns only to ensure a break up with Nepal. In the story

"Friends" written by the same author, Hrishikesh, the returnee, comes back to Nepal with an honest motive to serve his country with origin. However, the ground reality forces him to reconsider his choice and towards the end of the narrative there is a strong indication that he will go back to the diaspora again. The corpus of the Nepalese stories does not offer much scope for a dialogue between the diaspora and the nation, between the diasporic subjects and the people located in Nepal. On the contrary, other characters are strongly motivated to move away from the land where they were born. This aspect in the Nepalese narratives is in sharp contrast with that the Tibetan diasporic narratives. The latter dwell on the unmitigated desire of exilic Tibetan characters to connect with the homeland. Some indeed brave political obstacles and oppositions to visit their homeland and encounter immense difficulties. This important difference between the two groups of authors will be discussed more elaborately in the next chapter. Nepalese stories, on the other hand, are more focussed on the issue of acculturation and possibility of settlement in the diasporic space. The stories describe how the characters migrate to diaspora, settle down in the ghettos and how they are involved in the acculturation process. None of the narratives however seriously engage with the psychological process involved in the change of socio-political and natural landscape. Only Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* responds to this aspect of literary representation to a certain extent.

Chapter 5

Nepalese and Tibetan Diasporic Representations: A Comparative Analysis

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Nepalese and Tibetan Diasporic Representations: A Comparative Analysis

As mentioned in the Introduction of this thesis, both Tibet and Nepal belong to the same geo-cultural zone of the Himalayan belt. Although these two countries have many differences and divergences, they are interconnected with each other in several ways. The cultures and civilizations around the Himalaya have been influenced by the presence of the majestic mountain ranges, traces of which can be found consistently in the lived experience of the people. Cultures of the region are historically, socially and religiously interconnected. This has been discussed in detail in the introduction. The people of Nepal and Tibet, despite having many differences, share many common cultural and historical features. The writers from both these countries are consistently influenced by historical events, political movements and cultural practices. In their creative works, they have addressed several issues such as political uprisings and resistance, migration and relocation to diasporic spaces, 'home,' 'homeliness' and 'homelessness,' nostalgia, the process of acculturation and settlement and the like. They raised questions of the Western perception of, and their attitude to, these Himalayan nations. In non-fictional works also, they have analysed these issues critically. As mentioned earlier, both Tibet and Nepal faced the violence of terrible civil wars. The Civil war and Maoist insurgency in Nepal on the one hand, Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet on the other, have greatly affected the writers and their way of representation. Both intersections and divergences, so far as the representation of nation and diaspora is concerned, are evident in their creative response. Tibet and Nepal are also connected to each other in various ways. Culinary items like momo, thukpa, laphing, shapta, tongba, and the like connect not only these two countries but also other countries of the Himalayan regions. Traditional dress like purang can be seen and sherpa music is appreciated in both the countries. Although Nepal is a Hindu majority country, Nepalese people admire Buddhism. Tibetan monasteries such as Kopan Gumba, Lumbini, Shechen monastery, Drepung monastery are some of the well-

known monasteries in Nepal. After the Chinese occupation of Tibet, a substantial number of Tibetans who fled their country have found refuge in Nepal. Nepalese people also support the Tibetan cause. All these have contributed to the better cultural understanding between the people of these two countries.

Through a comparative/contrastive lens, this chapter will discuss the issues dealt with by Nepalese and Tibetan diasporic writers. This will bring out attitudinal similarities and differences evident in the texts written by the authors from the two nations. As we know, contemporary Tibetan diaspora is mainly the product of Chinese invasion in the late 1950s which rendered thousands of Tibetans homeless. Naturally, we come across strong nostalgic elements in the works of Tibetan authors located in the diaspora. The Nepalese diasporic writings, on the contrary, are less nostalgic in comparison, one reason probably being that they, unlike the Tibetan refugees, are free to go back to their country whenever they want to. Nepalese authors in general represent characters with a mindset more focused on the 'promises' that the diasporic space can offer. Our discussion of texts written by diasporic Nepalese authors in chapter 4 has already established this point. This chapter would also highlight the attitudinal differences between Tibetan and Nepalese authors, as manifested in their representations, to their nation and the diasporic world in general.

Stereotyping is a major point in any discussion where racial and ethnic issues are involved. In *Representation: Cultural Representation and Signifying Practices*, Stuart Hall has analysed this issue in detail which has already been discussed in Chapter 2. Diaspora, particularly migrations from the East, necessarily involves issues of race and ethnicity which are markers of *difference*. In the 'Introduction' of the thesis, we have seen that both Tibet and Nepal are consistently homogenized and stereotyped. Western gazes generally tend to essentialize these nations and their people. In the Introduction, it has already been highlighted how these two nations have been looked at in the Western discourses. In the fictional and non-fictional works, discussed in the earlier chapters, Nepalese and Tibetan writers themselves point out to this problematic issue. The statements made in this regard in the Introduction are validated by

the authors whose works have been discussed in Chapters 3 and 4. In Khortsa's novel, *The Tibetan Suitcase*, for example, we see how Dawa Tashi's identity is misrepresented by a bartender and the latter refuses to accept Tibet as an independent country. Dawa is mistaken as a Chinese. Similarly, in the novel, *Seasons of Flight*, Prema's national identity is incomprehensible to a white American. Her country, Nepal is distorted as 'naples,' 'nipple,' 'napoli' and the like. Nepal, as a country, does not find its place in the vocabulary of the character who represents the average citizen of America. According to that vocabulary, it appears to be a part of India. Prema is mistaken as an Indian, an Italian, a Mexican and the like. Hence, to the American people in general, while both Tibetans and Nepalese are Otherised, yet they appear undifferentiated to them. This results from the negligible knowledge of the American people about the geo-cultural map of the Eastern countries and cultures of the regions, and more from their inbuilt prejudiced perception of the people who look and speak different.

There are differences in the nature and circumstances of migration from Nepal and Tibet. Tibetan diasporic movements are involuntary in nature. Tibetan immigrants are generally refugees, catapulted from Tibet to the diasporic spaces as a result of the violent Chinese takeover of their country. In contrast, Nepalese diasporic movements are usually more voluntary in nature. Although the Maoist insurgency forced some Nepalese individuals to migrate to Western countries, still, voluntary movements out of the country had been going on for many centuries. As explained in earlier chapters, poverty and job opportunities outside the country drove many to India and to many Western countries. This is a major difference between the migration patterns of the Nepalese and the Tibetans.

The literary representations of the Tibetan and the Nepalese diasporic writers differ mainly in the following fields:

1. In the representation of the nation
2. In the representation of the diasporic space
3. In the formation of identities
4. In the role of the writers

We shall now explore the kinds of differences we have found in the representation of the authors hailing from the two countries under the four headings mentioned above.

Representation of the Nation: Comparison between Nepalese and Tibetan Diasporic Writers

It has already been stated that Tibetan and Nepalese ways of looking at their home / ancestral nation are quite different in nature. 'Home' is normally conceived as a geographical space. As a dwelling place, home provides a comfort zone where one feels safe and secure. In the context of Tibetan diaspora, home no longer exists in the same form as it did in the earlier time. It has become more abstract and more imaginary. Prior to the Chinese occupation of Tibet, the Tibetans had a very distinct sense of homeland as a geographical entity. They had clearcut concepts of bounded geographical space which they knew as their nation. They controlled their own administration, took care of their cultures and managed their own intercommunity relationships. After the Chinese invasion and colonization of Tibet in the 1950s, everything changed drastically. The concept of homeland for the Tibetans underwent a radical transformation. The Chinese-determined, reconfigured identity as well as the geo-cultural map that made Tibet an integral part of the People's Republic of China is not acceptable to the Tibetan population. The sense of old Tibetan 'nationhood,' as the Tibetans themselves understood, is thus a lost one, and they have been trying their best to restore the old nationhood with all its lost glory. The idea of homeland is thus really a problematic one. It is a challenge particularly for those who had to relocate to India and elsewhere. Home is also a metaphor of one's own cultural roots. One's identity and sense of belonging are determined by the extent of one's own association with the nation. Initially, they lived in the condition of exile. Exile is a difficult and painful state of mind. Dickie sums up the condition of Tibetans at this stage in the following words,

> until I was fourteen, I was stateless. I lived in a refugee community. . . . And we live in exile, on the margins, at the edges. At the most basic level what exile means is that we don't have the territory, we don't have space. The space for us [is] simply to be. (Goswami 2023, 196)

To the exilic Tibetans, Tibet became an "imaginary nation" (Dickie's words) since it no longer exists physically, it only exists in the imagination. Tibetans still imagine Tibet as their home and dream of returning to Tibet. Tsering Namgyal Khortsa rightly feels that, "Tibet has become *a virtual nation* and that is where the diasporic imagination comes in – something that helps us create, imaginatively, an idea of Tibet in our minds" (Goswami 2023, 188; emphasis added). This 'virtuality' that Khortsa refers to suggests that Tibetans do not have their feet firmly rooted in Tibet, the geocultural space now, and they have to access this space only through imagination and through other virtual means (technology).

The exilic population idealized the old Tibetan geo-cultural map, launched political movements from their varied diasporic spaces to win back Tibet as they knew it and for this purpose disseminated their concept of the homeland in different parts of the world. As a result of this uncertainty that gathered around the concept of Tibetan homeland, a new concept was born. This is the concept of the 'borrowed homeland' which we have discussed in some detail in chapter 3. This is an unusual concept as the idea that homeland can be borrowed is unthinkable not only for the Tibetans but also for any other community. The Tibetan context of coerced migration made them embrace India which provided them political support and offered them food and shelter just like a surrogate mother. This 'borrowing' is interesting in the sense that it may continue for an uncertain period of time in future. There is every possibility that this borrowing may turn into a recognition of India as a permanent homeland. For the future generation, India may indeed be their homeland, a home away from home.

The crux of the problem is that, unlike Nepalese diasporic people, the Tibetans in exile, cannot go back home if they choose to do so. There are two problems: first, the Chinese government is highly suspicious of 'outsiders' and hence it is difficult to get permission of visiting Tibet; secondly, a visit there and contact with friends and relatives may prove to be dangerous for those who will have to go on living there. Even trying to connect with them from outside Tibet/China over telephone or through the internet may endanger their lives. Tenzin Dalha observes:

> China is widely expanding its surveillance network to strengthen and maintain vigilance over its entire population by tracking peoples' movements through cellphones and monitoring content of telephonic conversations and emails. Attempts by the government to transform the internet into a system of surveillance and censorship represent a threat to all fundamental rights and democracy at large. (2020, 1)

The urge to return to Tibet is strong but they are not allowed to do so. Although it is their country, yet they are not welcome. If they get permission to visit Tibet for a short period, they are looked upon with suspicion. For all these reasons, loss of home is the overriding concern for the Tibetan authors. It remains a constant reference point in their works. They set their stories and create their characters against this political background.

Tibetan writers' patterns of looking at home through memories and nostalgia are unique in nature. The characters, created by Tsering Namgyal Khortsa in the novel *The Tibetan Suitcase,* look at their lost home longingly. Although there is difference in the attitudes of the first generation and that of the second-generation Tibetans, the ancestral homeland exerts an overwhelming influence on their lives. Tenzin Tsundue, a Tibetan writer and an activist, rightly says,

> As refugees, we have been physically uprooted from our homeland . . . As born refugees we have nowhere to call home. My parent's generation look to the past with nostalgia for the memories of the homeland they left behind, but as exile-borns, for us more than the borrowed memory, our history, the dream of liberating our country fires our imagination. (Tsundue 2023, 8)

Thus, nostalgia and memories both play the crucial roles at the time of imagining/reimagining the nation. In the novel *The Tibetan Suitcase,* Dawa Tashi and Iris Pennington, the second-generation Tibetans, and Khenchen Sangpo, the first-generation Tibetan, feel a strong emotional attachment to Tibet. Through writings, research, publications, scholarly works and teaching of the Tibetan culture and Buddhism, they try to keep the commitment to Tibet alive. They want to sensitise people to the Tibet issue. Some of the characters in the novel visit Tibet and the reality of Tibet as an 'imprisoned home' is reflected in their discourses. Khenchen Sangpo's physical visit to Tibet along with some scholars, in the novel, is significant as through this journey, Khortsa highlights the disastrous and frustrating condition of the Tibetans in Tibet. Khortsa

represents how they are tortured, humiliated, imprisoned and exploited by Chinese authorities. To ascertain their identity and to inform the world about China's diplomacy and corrupt politics in Tibet, throughout the novel, the characters take initiatives.

In Thubten Samphel's *Falling through the Roof*, the characters remember their homeland nostalgically and utilise the diasporic space to generate a resistance movement against China. As mentioned in the Chapter 3 of this dissertation, Samphel introduces some characters who are mainly students of Delhi University whose attitude to their homeland is oriented towards activism although they may have different ideologies. These characters form two groups – Tibetan Youth Congress (TYC) and Tibetan Communist Party (TCP). Dhondup Kunga, Phunstok and Gyalsten belong to TYC and Tashi, Samdup and Tsering Migmar belong to TCP. They have different ideologies. TYC has faith in Buddhist philosophy and non-violence while TCP believes in violent movements and communism. However, they have the same goal – to free Tibet from China. The character of the lama, Drubchen Rinpoche, plays a significant role here. He narrates the history, story and memory of Tibet among the second-generation Tibetans and by doing so he takes the responsibility of keeping the Tibetan memory alive and spreading it throughout the generation. He also inspires other Tibetan characters to pursue research on Tibet and to gather more information from the archives about the Tibetan culture heritage. The lama's desire to see his 'lost' homeland before his death is representative of similar dreams of most Tibetans in exile. Through their journey, Samphel shows the brutal treatment of the Tibetans in Tibet.

On the other hand, Nepalese writers' ways of looking at their home country is quite different. Unlike Tibetans, home (in the sense of the country of origin), for the Nepalese, is a fixed geographical place. Unlike Tibetan people, 'home' for the Nepalese is not a colonized space. It is a free zone where diasporic Nepalese can easily return. They may have to undergo immigration formalities but then these are no great obstacles. Nepalese diasporic writing in English is not characterized by any sense of loss of the home/land in the way Tibetan writing is. Nepalese citizens leave their country individually on their own choice and the sense of large-scale dislocation of the community is not visible.

In the works of diasporic Nepalese authors, although the concept of 'home' recurs, there is no overwhelming presence of nostalgia. The causes for the lack of nostalgic elements are multiple. As mentioned in the Introduction and in the Chapter 4 of this dissertation, the Maoist insurgency and the war-torn society in Nepal mainly compelled many people to leave their homeland. On the one hand, poverty and the lack of opportunities in Nepal and on the other hand, the American dream and the lure of the diasporic world influence them to leave their homeland. Most of the Nepalese are able to overcome their nostalgia for their homeland. Globalization and transnationalism have also influenced them a lot. Although some of the Nepalese immigrants are rooted in their traditional values, most of them are eager to migrate to the Western countries for better prospects. The characters Manjushree Thapa, Rabi Thapa and Samrat Upadhyay have created in their fictional works, do not long for their homeland. Prema in Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight*, Kamal Malla in Thapa's story "Friends," Keshab in Thapa's "Sound that the Tongue Learns to Make," Bikram in Rabi Thapa's story "Nothing to Declare" – all these characters are not as nostalgic as the Tibetan characters are. Prema's dream is to reinvent herself in America. Her personal escape from Nepal plagued by the effects of the Maoist insurgency reinforces her desire to escape from the roots to different routes. Although Bijaya has a deep concern for her nation and joins the Maoist group to free the nation from the clutches of corrupt political leaders, Prema rejects the traditional ways of life in Nepal. She leaves her memories behind and looks forward to the opportunities in America. Unlike the Tibetan characters, she enjoys her diasporic world and also leaves Little Nepal, a Nepalese ghetto in America to merge herself in the mainstream American life. Keshab and Hrishikesh in the story "Friends" too are completely frustrated with the situations in Nepal. They hate the political corruption in Nepal. Although Keshab apparently shows his responsibility towards his family, he simultaneously searches for the opportunities available in the foreign shore. Bikram also enjoys his life with his friends in London. He compares his confined life in Nepal with the free life in London. They embrace the modern Western culture in the transnational world.

The new generation in Nepal seems more concerned with searching ways and means to get out of Nepal. One may think of Prema's contemporaries in college

researching opportunities abroad to escape Nepal. They float on in Nepal, without much roots in the country, and have one goal in front, that is, to emigrate. Access to technology, global information flow, lack of patriotism has created a middle-class generation that does not have a strong ideological pull for their country. For most of them the only ideology is the ideology of self-interest and they float on the surface of life. The characters in the stories of Rabi Thapa, Manjushree Thapa and Samrat Upadhyay, discussed above testify to the statement. Immediately after the arrival in London, even without having any idea about the place and its culture, they get into the stream of new life in the diaspora and float mindlessly, immersing themselves in the pleasures of life. Nepalese representations thus show Nepalese immigrant's limited respect for their homeland, and in this they represent a trend just opposite to that of the Tibetan, their passionate desire for the homeland.

Representation of Diaspora: Tibetan and Nepalese Diasporic Writers

Tibetan and Nepalese authors' ways of looking at the diasporic space is also different. As mentioned earlier, Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet in the 1950s compelled many Tibetans to leave their homeland. After dislocation, they are now relocated to India, Bhutan, Nepal, U.S., U.K., and different other parts of the world. Most of the exilic Tibetans are located in Dharamsala, India. The life in the diasporic space is not an easy one. However, Tibetan people residing in the diasporic world can enjoy their free life as they do not have to face physical and mental torture which was an essential part of the lived experience in this Chinese occupied Tibet. They can, for example, practice their religion and culture without any hindrance in the multicultural India.

Tibetans have a deep bonding with India. Bhuchung D Sonam points out to the historic, religious and spiritual connection between Tibet and India. In the present-day India, Tibetans have carved out a life of their own. They have an elected Tibetan government-in-exile, a parliament of their own, and they have established the Central Tibetan Administration. However, they have not totally sacrificed their desire for returning home. They utilise the diasporic space to

build up political movements against China. Unlike the Nepalese, they are not overtly eager to acculturate and assimilate with the foreign cultures, although these integrating processes are bound to take place to some extent. They have mostly their own cultural life-styles, habits, practices, creeds, religious doctrines, food habits and dress codes which they do not want to forsake.

Interestingly, India which has provided Tibetans with shelter and supported their cause, do not provide them citizenship. Tibetan government or Central Tibetan Administration also do not encourage the Tibetans to accept the citizenship of any foreign country as they believe that it will extinguish the fire of rebellion in them. However, Norbu, as mentioned above, does not believe that 'Tibetan Cause' would be weakened if they get Indian citizenship. Thubten Samphel also gives some instances where Tibetan exilic people are accepting citizenship of other countries like U.S. and Canada. However, Central Tibetan Administration (CTA) and Tibetan Buddhist monasteries try to keep the Tibetan issue alive by discouraging Tibetans to accept citizenship of another country.

However, since the Nepalese in the diaspora is not an exilic community, no such occasion arises. Many Nepalese are living in India and, unlike Tibetans, they do not have the refugee status. Nepalese immigrants are eager to accept the citizenship of the Western countries and acculturate. They are very much eager to assert their individualism in the foreign space. For the lack of opportunities in Nepal, they usually look forward to alternative spaces in the diasporic world for economic sustenance and upward mobility. Although they face racism and other difficulties in the foreign land, they are positive about adapting to the foreign culture.

Interestingly, the Tibetan characters in the fictional works of Tibetan writers are very much nostalgic and are not very much eager to acculturate and assimilate with the host culture. Dawa Tashi, in the novel *The Tibetan Suitcase*, was very much influenced by the lure of the diasporic world. He applied to and was admitted to the Appleton University in the U.S. But the racial discrimination in America shook him and he became nostalgic for India. Interestingly, both India and America are diasporic spaces for him but the author twists the concept of 'diasporic land' by making the character assert that India is his 'borrowed

homeland' and Tibet his 'homeland.' The author thus problematizes the concept of both homeland and hostland, and draws a finer line between even two hostlands on the criteria of a long history of cultural exchange between India and Tibet, and the history of Indian hospitality extended to the Tibetan refugees. Naturally, many of the Tibetan characters in the fictional narratives look at India not exactly as an unfamiliar diasporic space but as a more intimate space of care and nurture. Thus when Dawa goes to America, he starts missing his 'borrowed homeland,' and when he returns to India, he remembers his 'homeland.' As mentioned earlier, Tibetans have cultural affinity to India that has helped Dawa 'borrowing' India as his homeland. Iris Pennington also returns to her roots. Khenchen Sangpo's dream to see Tibet and return to his roots indicate that almost all the characters are looking forward to their homeland. In the novel *Falling Through the Roof,* Tibetan characters are utilizing the Indian diasporic space to raise their voice against China and create group to initiate resistance movement. They use India as a third space to do some scholarly works on Tibet and to search the lost Tibetan cultural heritage in India.

On the other hand, Nepalese's ways of looking at the hostland is almost opposite. They look at the hostland as a place of fulfilment of their dreams. Nepalese immigrants move to different diasporic destinations because of reasons that have their origin in Nepal itself. Chandra Gurung, a Nepali writer, whom we referred to in the introductory chapter highlights the causes that led to Nepalese migration. He says,

> The 1990 People's movement brought an end to absolute monarchy and the beginning of constitutional monarchy. The Maoist Insurgency was a civil war in Nepal [was] fought from 1996 to 2006. The rebellion was launched with the stated purpose of overthrowing the monarchy. These political uprisings have had a profound impact on Nepalese life. Civil War forced many people to flee their homes. The young preferred to go to the Gulf countries and Malaysia to seek job opportunities and a brighter future. Thus, the agricultural country changed to a remittance-oriented country, remittances earned by its people living abroad. Literary works produced during this period depict the transitional phase of Nepalese society and politics. These changes and the dilemmas that the country has faced in recent years have found expression in succeeding literary genres. (Goswami 2022, 203)

His above remark clearly points out three important aspects: variety of destinations, importance of remittance – economic effect of the home country. However, the opportunities of the diasporic world encourage to them leave their homeland. In this respect, Samrat Upadhyay remarks,

> Nepalis migrate for a variety of reasons. Many migrate to work (especially to the Gulf countries), and many migrate to Western countries for studies. Since the 1990s Nepalis have migrated to the US through the DV1 lottery. (Goswami 2022, n.pag)

Besides the impact of Maoist insurgency, many Nepalese migrated to the US through DV1 lottery or for higher studies. They utilise this opportunity.

Unlike Tibetan characters, Nepalese characters are very much eager to acculturate in the new land. Prema in Manjushree Thapa's *Seasons of Flight* forsakes his traditional roots and tries to reinvent herself in America. She enjoys her sexual liberation and unlike the Tibetan characters she is using the diasporic space for her own enjoyment and experience. She assumes a hybrid, cosmopolitan identity which is a more appropriate one in a multicultural country like America. She gradually rejects Nepal as a dwelling place and even leaves Little Nepal in America to shake off the last vestiges of provincial Nepaliness. She wants to be Americanised. Bikram and other characters in "Nothing to Declare" enjoy their youth in the diasporic world by visiting bar, drinking beer and enjoying with girls. They accept the diasporic culture and try to acculturate with the cosmopolitan space. So, the Nepalese characters are bent on finding roots in the diasporic space. However, in Tibetan case, an individual is a part of the community and the community is tied to the homeland. But in the texts not much evidence of this is found. Upadhyay opines,

> I think in the last couple of decades the lines have blurred between the concepts of homeland and hostland. Technology has also brought these two supposedly diametric spaces much closer. (Goswami 2022, n.pag)

Unlike members of Tibetan communities, Nepalese people do not use virtual networking as an instrument / weapon to reinforce resistance movements or to connect to the homeland. They, however, utilise networking to keep in touch

with the friends and relatives in Nepal or to connect with the Nepalese subjects dispersed in different parts of the world.

Networking is an important tool for the exilic Tibetans to connect with the Tibetans in Tibet and in different parts of the world. Regarding networking, Khortsa observes that it plays, "an important role in the formation of a virtual nation state" (Goswami). In both the novels we have discussed the characters are connected with each other through some medium of networking such as email, Facebook, WhatsApp, Instagram, and the like. Norbu rightly opines, "Networking is a boon for the Tibetan exilic world. Because it is a medium through which we can keep at least some kind of connection with the people inside Tibet. So, the digital world is a real blessing" (Goswami 2023, 125). Barua talks about various "organizations and networks that keep the cause and the idea of the Tibetan nation alive" (Goswami 2021, n.pag). In this regard, Dickie opines,

> The Tibetan nation has been a virtual nation for the last sixty years. The Himalayan mountains and the Great Firewall of China both impede the flow of movement and the flow of exchange but there's still movement and exchange, and a constant feeding back and forth, between inside Tibet and outside. (Goswami 2023, 201)

The advancement of technology and the emergence of networking sites and apps have helped Tibetans to connect globally. Networking helps cultural exchange. Dickie describes Dalai Lama's Kalachakra teachings in Washington DC as a "foundational moment of nation building captured in real time" (Goswami 2023, 201). Radio free Asia and Voice of America "were sending their broadcasts inside Tibet" (Goswami 2023, 201).

The power of networking lies in the fact that it can indeed cross China's border. Tibetans have created WhatsApp groups, Facebook groups and different websites to connect both Tibetan and non-Tibetan communities and to sensitise them to the Tibetan issue.

Identity

Identity defines one's status and position in a society. It is rooted in one's own nation. There are differences between Tibetan and Nepalese identity. Since the Tibetans constitute an exilic community, they have a strong passion for Tibet, now lost, and tend to preserve their 'national' and cultural identity. This does not mean that they are not changing culturally but the process of cultural hybridization is slow[19]. Bhuchung D Sonam brings out the dilemma of preserving Tibetan identity from the perspective of a second-generation subject living in India:

> Well, identity is such a complex issue. So, you can understand it from many different dimensions. But I think as an individual living at this point of time, fortunately, I don't suffer so much identity crisis as a Tibetan born and raised in India. Because for somebody who is a new generation Tibetan, born and raised in India, who has never seen Tibet and who has never been to Tibet, it would be very difficult for him to associate himself with Tibet and also with the culture and the people of Tibet in the same way as I do. (Goswami 2023, 171)

Sonam thus thinks of the identity issue in terms of generation and the country of birth and growing up. Regular interaction with the ancestral home is an important determinant in the matter of sticking to the old identity and for Sonam's generation this interaction is absent. Those born and brought up in exile find it difficult to associate themselves with the original Tibetan home out there in the distance. As a refugee and also as a writer, Sonam himself faces challenges in the diasporic world. He had to learn the language of other communities like Hindi and English. His identity as an exilic writer emerges not through the linguistic medium of Tibetan but through English. He says,

> . . . if Tibet were a free country maybe I wouldn't be speaking this language [English], maybe I wouldn't have to learn this language. Maybe I wouldn't have to write at all. But the fact that I am a refugee, the fact that I have to learn this language, the fact that I intentionally decided to write in this language and the fact that my

[19] Tibetans in Tibet too have been facing challenges in respect of sticking to their identity in the face of Sinicising programmes. Tenzin Dickie asserts, "It's the identity that's under assault" (Goswami 2023, 196). She elaborates the problem thus: "The Chinese state tells the Tibetans in Tibet that they are Chinese, that there are Han Chinese and there are Tibetan Chinese. The Chinese state also says that Tibetans in exile are not real Tibetans, that we are just the Dalai clique" (Goswami 2023, 196).

> identity as a writer and poet comes primarily from not writing in Tibetan which is my mother tongue but writing in the English language which I was forced to learn in exile. (Goswami 2023, 171)

The above statement underscores how the process of an individual immigrant's identity is shaped by the place s/he is born and brought up in and its cultural environment. Regarding the cultural condition of the diasporic Tibetans and their resistance to the process of acculturation, Tenzin Tsundue, a Tibetan writer and an activist, states,

> Exile can be very demanding, as the refugees often live, adjusting to new conditions. In extreme situations, they have to create new words and phrases. Hindi and English words have today become part of colloquial Tibetan today: *teesing* for station, *sitop* for stove, *chapali* for chappal in Hindi for slippers, *tarik* for date in Hindi.
>
> One particular example is clothing in India. The hot climate in India stripped the Tibetans of their sheep skin nomadic clothes and even the ones woven of wool.
>
> The men easily changed into the anonymous pants and shirts most middle-class Indians wear, while women couldn't change into sarees which was distinctly Indian. So Tibetan women got stuck in traditional costume – Chuba. After 64 years today we see the women's dress Chuba has seen some experiments in terms of cuts, style, design and choice of fabric, while men's chuba is still the cloaky and clumsy wrap. (Goswami 2023, 168)

The ground reality in the exile is thus different and an exilic subject is bound to adapt himself or herself to the demands of that particular situation. Language is an important component for the realization and interpretation of cultural expression. A visit to a place like Dharamsala, for instance, makes it clear how the Tibetans there have equipped themselves well with the local and national linguistic environment. They speak Hindi and English well. Although many of them stick to Tibetan cultural insignias like dress, they converse with the Indians in Hindi, English and in the local dialects. They also write and publish in English. 'TibetWrites,' for example, is a publishing house founded and managed by Tibetan writers and activists which mostly publish books in English. They have published their memories, histories and stories through fictional and non-fictional representation and they also translate many writings from Tibetan language into English.

Nepalese writers in the diaspora, on the other hand, are not much obsessed with their ancestral identity and they do not hesitate to embrace new cultures. They accept new cultures which lead to the formation of a more hybrid identity. However, as Upadhyay remarks, "[s]ome Nepalis struggle with identities because they don't know how to find a comfortable balance between the cultural differences" (Goswami 2022, n.pag).

> Diasporic Nepalis is a large umbrella, and you get diverse types of people within this umbrella, so it's hard to make generalizations. Many of the cultural identities have become fluid recently, especially with technology and access to materialistic comfort. Still, I find that food is a great unifier among Nepalis in diaspora. Food and certain cultural events unite many Nepalis in ways that are delightful and comforting and identity-affirming. . . . (Goswami 2022, n.pag)

Despite their propensity to accept changes, they stick to some old cultural habits, food, religion, dress, cultural events, cultural symbols being some such items. They play a significant role in the identity formation. Identity is thus found to be not quite stable. It is very much flexible for the diasporic communities. They keep to some aspects of old culture but simultaneously accept aspects of new cultures with which they come in contact. It is such fluctuations that lend the Nepalese characters in the works written by diasporic Nepalese authors a somewhat dynamic feature.

Role of the Authors: Tibetan and Nepalese Writers

Tibetan authors write about their nation for different reasons. Besides representing the lived experience of the Tibetan exilic characters, they use their works as a weapon for their political struggle. To regain their homeland back, Tibetans take different initiatives. They march in protest, seek global attention for the Tibetan cause, and start writing fictional and non-fictional works about Tibet and the 'Tibetan question' in order to bring into limelight the Tibetan exilic life and hard reality in Tibet. Thubten Samphel, a Tibetan writer, opines in this respect,

> Activism and Tibetans writing in both Tibetan and English keep the Tibetan struggle alive and relevant. I feel that in our non-violent struggle it is important for young Tibetan writers to write

> in English. This is because there is an urgent need for talented young Tibetan writers to tell the Tibet story to the outside world. (Goswami 2023, 113)

Besides acquiring the knowledge of the language/s of the adopted country, Tibetan writers have good command over the English language as they have the opportunity to learn it in the educational institutes in the countries of their settlement. Hence Tibetan fictional and non-fictional works are being published now in good numbers. English, as a global language, helps them in circulating their message throughout the world. It creates a strong connection between the author/s and the global readers. Writing in English also helps them in countering China's imperialist ideology and policies and informing the world about the ground reality in Tibet. Writings and activism become the instrument to unlock their unheard voices. The muffled and marginalised voices of the Tibetans in Tibet get a space in the diasporic world to articulate their historical and political narratives.

Tibetan writers are also mnemonic in their approach. Collecting and preserving memories of the Tibetan past, Tibetan culture and life, become the core aim of some of the writers. As they do not have the option to visit their homeland, they preserve the memory of their cultural story, folk narrative, tragic history and exilic life through writings. Jamyang Norbu, a Tibetan exilic writer, in this regard, observes,

> I always talk about the role of memory of the Tibetans. To be able to remember Tibet as a great civilized nation in terms of literature, lifestyle, and politics – this is what I teach the younger Tibetans to value. I make audio blogs of YouTube for the Tibetan audience. So, in this sense I am a keeper of Tibetan memories because I have so many memories of Tibet. (Goswami 2023, 158)

He further refers to Tibetan 'ghost stories,' 'nursery rhymes,' 'scatological jokes,' 'Tibetan folk paintings,' 'thangka paintings,' and 'Buddhist texts.' All these collectively become the metaphors of home. Sustaining the memories are necessary to keep the culture alive. Home is remembered here through memories. He further states,

> I take people's memories and revive them into stories. So, the kind of writings I do is basically the records of memories. This is the

> only important thing that we can do at this moment. I don't believe that activism can be done through demonstration. Because there is no space in the Tibetan world to do that. The security inside Tibet is so tight that two or three people can't even talk properly with each other. . .. I think by recalling the memory of Tibet, we can keep Tibet alive. (Goswami 2023, 107)

The above remark made by Norbu clearly hints that he has an ethical responsibility towards his nation. His concern for his nation compels him to collect Tibetan memories and convert all these memories into stories.

Memories of Chinese invasion, brutalities and the traumatic experience of escape from their homeland cannot be easily from the Tibetan psyche. Language, religion, food habits, dress codes and the life style of the Tibetan folk create a sense of oneness even after the Tibetans' desertion of their homeland. Norbu, in the remark quoted above, also refers to the 'Tibetan flag' and 'Tibetan national anthem' which are the symbols of Tibet as a nation. The sense of nationalism is very much rooted in the Tibetan mind.

Both the personal and the collective Tibetan loss have been represented by the Tibetan diasporic writers. Sonam through writings tries to provide a proper picture of Tibet,

> But the history and reality is very different from how we present ourselves to the world and also how the outsiders perceive us. So, there has always been a gap between the reality and the representation. I think for writers like me and the contemporary writers of my generation and even of the younger generation, it is really important to keep the gap between the perception and the reality as narrow as possible. (Goswami 2023, 173)

Sonam talks about the power of art. Art like literature, music, film, dancing, and painting can demystify the false myths centered around the Tibetan world.

Regarding the need of preserving memories Bhuchung D Sonam remarks,

> And more importantly we want to *preserve a memory* of who we are. You know occupation in many ways is a systematic goal to erase who we are as a people. This is not only with the Chinese occupation of Tibet, but it is with the occupation of any other country or anybody else. The very idea behind occupation is to make sure that the occupier erases the idea, language, culture, and the way of life of the occupied. And once you do that then the whole resistance is nullified, neutralized. So, for those of us who

> work in the field of arts, both film and writing, we preserve memories. (Goswami 2023, 178)

In the diasporic mind, memory plays a significant role as it helps them remember their ancestral past. By recalling the past, they keep the identity of the lost nation alive. "Memory, remembering and recording are the very key to existence, becoming and belonging" (Garde-Hansen, 2011). According to Halbwachs, "memory is not simply an individual phenomenon, but is relational in terms of family and friends, and also societal and collective in terms of the social frameworks of social groups" (Bosch 2016). Memories, thus, can be both personal and collective. Memories of family as well as society come spontaneously in the diasporic mind.

However, as Stock says, "memories of home are no factual reproduction of a fixed past" (Stock 24). These memories are "fluid reconstructions" (Stock 24). In that sense Tibetan writings in general are not the exact replica of the past. The gap between reality and imagination is there. Tibet is imagined and reimagined, and the mediation of imagination lends an ideological orientation to the representation. Hence the reality we come across in the fictional works approximate the reality but never offers a photocopy of the land one had lived in at certain points of one's life. However, preservation of memory of the homeland is very much necessary as the occupiers always try to erase the identity of the colonised people. Colonised people are made to internalise the coloniser's ideology of their own 'superiority' and the subject people's 'inferiority.' Colonisers may also subject the colonised people to direct control and oppressive measures. Hegemonic power wants to control both the body and the mind of the subjugated people. In Tibet, this power is exercised through militarisation of the country. The erasure of the Tibetan language and cultural heritage is part of the Chinese scheme of establishing control over the subjugated land and people.

Sonam rightly highlights in the above remark how the whole system of the occupied country – the language, culture, patterns of life – have been reorganised by the coloniser to suit their purpose. He further says,

> We make sure that we are not forgotten, we want to leave something for the future generation who can come and say, "okay,

> this is what happened at this point of time in history." . . . I will disappear, all the people whom I know will disappear, but the history will remain, and our story will remain. The very idea of Tibet as a country and Tibetans as people must remain. This is how we will survive through history, through memory and stories. (Goswami 2023, 178)

The above remark made by Sonam is significant as it brings out his sense of ethical responsibility towards his nation and also for the next generation living in exile. He speaks of the contrast between impermanence of life and permanence of story. Through writings, the history and the story of the nation would be immortalized.

Nepalese writers use their writings to talk about their community and to explore their life and culture, but they do not use it as a weapon like the Tibetan writers. However, they also try to demystify the false notions about Nepal. Samrat Upadhyay rightly remarks,

> Well, I am a Nepali who spent much of my early life in Nepal, so it's natural for me to write about Nepal. I think part of the reason that Nepal is "neglected" is that the history of English-language literature in my country is fairly recent. Unlike India, for example, where the novel in English can be traced back to the mid-nineteenth century, Nepali English literature has proliferated only in the last few decades. As for my choice of English, I gravitated toward English during my teenage years and found that I had a certain facility with it. So, it made more sense for me to write in English than in any other language. (Goswami 2022, n.pag)

Upadhyay's main reason for writing on Nepal is to explore the "neglected" areas. Nepali diasporic literary works in English are also very few in number. Chandra Gurung, a Nepali poet, points out the need of writing about one's culture in the following way:

> I firmly consider that writers should nurture the lifeblood of their societies and convey that lifeblood to others. They must capture its essence in their own unique way, and reflect on it, so that others may understand. Accordingly, I am obliged to hold up a mirror to my society, and reveal its true face. I look upon this as being my responsibility as a writer. There shouldn't be any reason to prevent me from writing about Nepalese life and culture. Everyday life in all its manifestations is present in my poems. The natural beauty of Nepal, its people who are from different ethnic groups living in

> peace and harmony, and the social and political tribulations that they face, constitute the main themes that I address in my work. Wherever I go, my poems must carry the essence of my homeland and its culture. (Goswami 2022, 201)

Unlike Tibetan writings, Nepali diasporic works on the one hand, focuses on poverty, politics and the Maoist insurgency in Nepal, on the other hand, they portray the picture of Nepali migration and highlights the prospects and the opportunities in the diasporic land that induce the Nepali communities to leave their homeland. Gurung remarks,

> The diasporic space endows a huge platform of opportunities for writers. It exposes them to new experiences that lead to an imaginative access to the lives of people from different backgrounds and cultures. Being a part of a diasporic community enables me to explore issues such as migration, belonging and self-identity. Uncertainty in the process of settlement in the new location and the pain of leaving behind one's homeland offer opportunities for the writer to engage in frequent dialogue between the homeland and the hostland. Attachments to the country of one's birth and attraction toward the host country are simultaneous but contradictory journeys moving along together. (Goswami 2022, 202)

Khortsa rightly makes a comparison between the Nepalese and the Tibetan diaspora in the following ways,

> The Nepalese diaspora I believe is generally an economic diaspora whereas ours is more political (we are political refugees). Thus, we as a group are more politicized. However, in some ways, it can be said, it is a false dichotomy. Sherpas, for instance, are both Tibetans and Nepalese at the same time. Many Nepalese practice Buddhism and some follow Bon (the ancient, pre-Buddhist Tibetan belief system). I saw many Tibetans would like to go to Nepalese restaurants in cities like Hong Kong and New York. In Oxford, for instance, I saw Tibetan Buddhist centers attracting members of the Nepalese diaspora (many of them part of, or descendants of the Gurkha regiment of the British army). (Koushik Goswami personal conversation to Tsering Namgyal Khortsa, 5 April, 2023)

Khortsa's use of the two terms – 'economic diaspora' and 'political diaspora' – are very useful to understand the nature of migrations from Nepal and Tibet. In the case of Nepali diaspora, economic factors play an important role in two-fold ways. On the one hand, poverty, politics and lack of opportunities in Nepal

compelled Nepalese to leave their roots. These are some of the push factors that lead to Nepalese diaspora. Materialist prospects of a better life in the diaspora have also encouraged them to migrate to various nations. Tibetan diaspora, on the contrary, is a victim diaspora and naturally coercive in nature. As refugees, Tibetans are mostly stateless people looking forward to their lost homeland. Nepalese transnational migrants do not have any such issue. Two diasporas therefore have this fundamental difference that have influenced the creative oeuvre of Nepalese and Tibetan writers.

The fictional works we have analysed in this thesis bear testimony to the facts mentioned above. While the forces of Globalization and transnationalism have encouraged Nepalese characters to acculturate and even assimilate to the mainstream cultures in the West, Tibetan characters in the fictional works written by Tibetan writers we have discussed largely shy away from this trend. The latter have exilic mindset which do not allow them to assimilate. As a community, they are mostly oriented towards their roots and culture and look upon the Dalai Lama as their supreme leader. This does not, however, mean that they do not acculturate at all. They learn the local languages and adopt cultures of the diasporic space as much as possible but simultaneously strongly hold on to their own cultures. Even though seven decades have passed after their forced departure from Tibet, they still nourish the desire to return to their homeland and value the memory of their ancestral homeland. Many of them still support the "Free Tibet" movement. The literary works we have discussed and the interviews of the authors we have come across (some interviews the writer of this thesis conducted have been appended at the end of this thesis) establish this fact.

Conclusion

Conclusion

This thesis would end with a discussion on how Tibetan and Nepalese networking and cyberspace activities have connected both the nation and the diaspora. It will be examined whether this is in sync with the findings of the earlier chapters. Subsequently, it will discuss how the findings of the present thesis offer new insights and perspectives.

This thesis is an attempt to discuss critically the tension between the nation and the diaspora as reflected in the literary works written by Tibetan and Nepalese diasporic writers. It also has addressed the relevant components of the history of Tibetan and Nepalese Anglophone literature. While addressing the commonalities and divergences between these two categories of writings, this thesis subsequently highlights the historical, political, religious, and cultural life of these two regions.

The Introduction of this thesis has addressed the issue of 'Himalayan identity,' the concept of 'Himalayan Citizenship,' and the 'Pan-Himalayan identity.' It has also related these issues to the migration from two countries– Nepal and Tibet. Both these regions have become the object of misrepresentation and stereotyping. The chapter also concentrates on the history and politics of cultural dislocation and migration from these regions. It also has highlighted the common threads that led to the formation of diverse nation-diaspora conflicts.

One of the objectives of this research is to understand the diasporic consciousness of writers who hail from the Himalayan region and have written from the transnational space. I have made a comparative study of Tibetan and Nepalese diaspora in particular and the process of their identity formation in the diasporic space. My objective is to analyse the ideology that motivates them to represent their homelands and hostlands in different manners.

Throughout my research, as mentioned in the introductory chapter, the main research questions are the following:

1. What are the patterns of migration from this region?

2. What are the nature of responses of the emerging Tibetan and Nepalese authors to their homeland?

3. What are the nature of responses of the emerging Tibetan and Nepalese authors to their hostland?

4. How can we compare and contrast Nepalese and Tibetan diaspora?

'Literature review' has helped me to bring out the research gap and to focus on my research objectives. Books and articles written on Tibet and Nepal have been critically analysed. By doing so, it was possible to identify the research gap in this area that needed to be addressed. Most of the books are written from historical, religious and political perspectives. Hardly any book has been written exclusively on Tibetan and Nepalese diasporic writers. Tibetan Anglophone Literature and Nepalese Anglophone Literature has not been discussed much in the disciplines called 'Diaspora Studies,' 'Post Colonial Studies,' 'South Asian Studies' and in 'Himalayan Studies.' I have emphasized this research gap and pointed out the need of pursuing research in this area.

All the available literary works by the Tibetan and Nepalese diasporic authors have been primarily approached from theoretical perspectives of nation and diaspora.

The nation-diaspora tension and interface have been probed into. This thesis has highlighted how the idea of singularity of nation steadily subsides and the transnational subjects are getting progressively used to the notion of plurality of nations. It has subsequently addressed how in the era of globalization and cosmopolitanism and also in the world of transnationalism, the border between nation and diaspora gets blurred. It also has tried to theorise the concepts of both nation and diaspora by using several critical writings and by interpreting various theoretical concepts like nostalgia, amnesia, anamnesic, diaspora, transnationalism, exile, homeland, hostland and so on. While discussing the idea of nation and nationalism, my research has theoretically pointed out the opinions of Primordialist, Modernist, Ethnosymbolist and Perennialist group of critics and has tried to problematise all these ideas in the context of Tibetan and Nepalese diaspora. While highlighting the different kinds of diaspora like victim

diaspora, labour diaspora, imperial diaspora, trade diaspora and deterritorrialised diaspora, this chapter has tried to focus on victim diaspora (for the Tibetan community) and labour and trade diaspora (for the Nepalese community).

I have tried to focus on Tibetan Anglophone Literature where I mainly concentrated on two fictional works written by Tibetan writers in English. I critically discussed the issue of nation-diaspora interface from literary perspectives. Thubten Samphel's *Falling through the Roof* and Tsering Namgyal Khortsa's *The Tibetan Suitcase* have been discussed critically. The idea of home, homeland, borrowed homeland and hostland have been analysed theoretically and all these issues have been contextualised and foregrounded while analysing the texts. Both these writers have expressed the pangs of exilic experiences of the Tibetan communities in their writings. One of the common themes in their works is the representation of nation-diaspora tension. Through an analysis of the texts, I have tried to highlight the inner conflict of the characters and analyse the exilic consciousness of the Tibetan community after the Chinese invasion and occupation of Tibet. Nostalgia plays a prominent role in both the novels. Memory of home and the picture of both the Tibetans in Tibet and the Tibetans in the exilic world have been discussed in the chapter while interpretating the novel *The Tibetan Suitcase*. My research has also highlighted how Tibetan writers have been using writings as a weapon to counter attack the false ideologies and myths. Through the discussion of these two novels, I also have represented diasporic Tibetans' life-style, religion, culture, dress codes, heritage and the like. My thesis has also discussed how Tibetan characters are involved in research, activism and scholarly works in the diasporic space. It also brings out the commonalities and divergences between these two writers.

My research has also dealt with the Anglophone literary works written by Nepalese diasporic writers. A brief history of Nepalese Diasporic Literature has been discussed here. It particularly has focused on fictional and non-fictional works written by Manjushree Thapa, Rabi Thapa and Samrat Upadhyay. Through a critical discussion of Manjushree Thapa's novel *Seasons of Flight*, this chapter has showed how a character like Prema looks forward to the hostland and the character like Bijaya is very much rooted to the homeland.

Although the nation-diaspora tension is found in the mind of the characters, most of the characters of the other stories (Rabi Thapa's "Nothing to Declare," Samrat Upadhyay's "An Affair Before the Earthquake" and Manjushree Thapa's "Friends," and "Sounds That the Tongue Learns to Make"), taken in this thesis for discussion, are not oriented towards their homeland. It highlighted how the Nepalese characters are influenced by globalization and transnationalism and looking forward to the diasporic opportunities.

This is followed by the comparative study between Tibetan and Nepalese diasporic writers. Tibetan diaspora discussed in the thesis is the result of coerced displacement and is exilic in nature. Nepalese diaspora, on the other hand, is based on voluntary migration. This comparative study is mainly undertaken from four perspectives: How do Tibetan and Nepalese writers look at their nation? How do Tibetan and Nepalese writers represent the diasporic space? What are the patterns / ways of representing their identities? What are the roles / functions of Tibetan and Nepalese diasporic authors? This chapter has tried to concentrate on these questions and brought out the answers of the same with the help of some Tibetan and Nepalese writers' interviews conducted by me. Both activism and networking play a significant role in Tibetan case. In the 21st century, technology has helped to connect all the Tibetans dispersed in the different parts of the world. It creates a Pan-Tibetan identity. Through websites, various groups, and different kinds of online activities, they keep the Tibetan cause alive. On the other hand, Nepalese writings are not oriented towards activism and they do not use networking as a tool of protest against political forces. By making a comparative study between these two regions, I tried to provide new insights in understanding this area of study.

However, there are some other issues that have not been much discussed in this thesis. These are mainly related to culture, religion, rituals, dress, food, habit, medicine, painting, film, music and heritage. Both Tibet and Nepal have rich cultural heritage and a unique pattern of life. Tibetan and Nepalese food like momos and Thukpa, Tibetan *thanka* painting and Nepalese *pauba* painting, Tibetan traditional dress like *chupa* or *bakhu* and Nepalese dress like *daura*

suruwal or *dhama topi* all these are significant cultural metaphors on which a detailed research and investigation may be done. My visit to Norbulingka Institute in Dharamsala, Himachal Pradesh and my interaction with the Tibetan community have helped me to understand how Tibetans have been trying their best to sustain their culture. There are several collections of Tibetan statues, Buddhist icons, thanka paintings, embroiders, tapestries, Free Tibet shirts, Tibetan diaries, masks and so many different cultural items. Many Tibetan scholars engage themselves in *thangka* painting or creating metal sculpture, tailoring, weaving, wood carving and the like. Interestingly, Tibetan medicine also plays a significant role as it influences many nations and culture. Many people from various countries like Tibet, Nepal, India, Bhutan, Siberia, China, Mongolia and some parts of Europe and North America have faith in Tibetan medical system which is mainly based on Ayurveda and Buddhist ideology and four noble truths (dukkha, samudaya, nirodha and marga). Tibetan medical practice is mainly based on four tantras such as root tantra, exegetical tantra, instructional tantra and subsequent tantra. Both in Tibet Autonomous Region and in Tibetan government-in-exile, Tibetans tend to promote Tibetan medicine and spread it among the different communities. Tibetan medicine is generally known as 'Sowa Rigpa' and it "holds that the entire universe is made up of five elements: earth, water, fire, air, and space. Within the human body, Tibetan doctors (*amchi*) recognize three *nyepas* – the 'forces' of wind, bile and phlegm – that are specific combinations of the five elements" (Hofer n.pag,). The impact of Tibetan medicine can be traced not only in the daily lives of the Tibetan community but also in the lives of the other communities of the world. Besides Tibet, it is practiced in India, Bhutan, Nepal, China, Siberia and in many parts of Europe and America. Indian Buddhist literature has greatly influenced the Tibetan medical system. In India, the Tibetan government-in-exile started practicing the Tibetan medicine from 1961. The name of the Tibetan Medical and Astro Institute is Men-Tsee-Khang which is situated at Dharamsala in India. Besides medicine, the Tibetan music plays a significant role as it represents Tibetan cultural heritage. Tibetan street songs, playing of *dungchen, dramyin* and singing bowl, Tibetan Buddhist chant and religious music, dance music such as *nangma* and *toeshey* all represent different forms of Tibetan music. *Cham* and

Guozhuo, are two of the most popular folk-dance forms. On the other hand, Nepalese folk dances like Maruni dance, Gathu Oyakhan, Mayur Naach and the like are well-known. Among the folk music of Nepal, dohori, tamang music, newa music, sherpa music are popular. Further research on Tibetan and Nepalese cultures and also on Tibetan medicine may be done from the theoretical perspective of culture studies.

This thesis has been written mainly from literary perspectives and has not explored other cultural issues. The focus is mainly on the literary genres of novels and stories produced from the diasporic space. This research has dealt with some select fictional and non-fictional works. Due to time constraint, it is a small intervention in this area. As we have discussed in the introduction, not much secondary materials are available on the literary text produced on/from Tibet and Nepal. From this point of view, this research will have wider significance and will be helpful for future researchers.

Appendices

Appendix 1

Koushik Goswami in Conversation with Tsering Namgyal Khortsa

Koushik Goswami (KG): Where would you place yourself in the short history of Tibetan writing in English? What do you think about the prospect of Anglophone Tibetan literature?

Tsering Namgyal Khortsa (TNK): I would like to think of myself as amongst the first generation of Tibetan diasporic writers. I think the prospect of Anglophone Tibetan literature is very bright, especially with the emergence of new generation of Tibetan novelists, poets and essayists not only in English but also in Tibetan and Chinese. Many of them are translated into English and there is an emerging literary ecosystem that is fueling the growth of Tibetan literature as a whole. I believe the fact that Bloomsbury has published Tsering Yangzom Lama's novel *We Measure the Earth with Our Bodies* in 2022 is a landmark moment in modern Tibetan literature. This is the first time in recent memory that a major international publishing house has published a novel about the Tibetan diaspora and it ought to be celebrated.

KG: Have you been influenced by any Anglophone Tibetan writer in particular?

TNK: I would not say I am directly influenced by any particular Anglophone Tibetan writer but I do remember reading them in the *Tibetan Review* and other publications, particularly essays and books by writers like Dawa Norbu, Jamyang Norbu, Tsering Wangyal and Thubten Samphel when I was growing up. I used to be quite taken up by these articles in English because my Tibetan wasn't very good, even though my parents always thought that we must strive to be very good in Tibetan, especially because we have lost our homeland.

KG: How much are you influenced by indigenous Tibetan literature?

TNK: Since I grew up in India and had mostly studied in schools in India, I am quite embarrassed to admit that my access to indigenous Tibetan literature is rather limited. But I have grown up hearing stories about Tibet, for example, the Tibetan Gesar epic and the life stories of Milarepa from my parents. For instance, I would see my father reading from the Gesar epic during Tibetan New

Year and I used to be quite intrigued by that. I had made attempts at reading these texts in the original Tibetan and continue to work hard on improving my Tibetan.

KG: Do you consider Tibetan Anglophone literature as 'postcolonial' literature that is different from other postcolonial literatures of the Global South?

TNK: Since I grew up in India and studied here, I am not immune to the influence of the post-colonial literature of the Global South. I grew up reading writers like Salman Rushdie, VS Naipaul, Vikram Seth and JM Coetzee, and I think I am partly a product of post-colonialism in general and post-colonial literature in particular. When I was in the university in the US, I also ended up taking classes that touched upon post-colonial theory so I am also aware about post-colonial studies, especially as it related to South Asia.

KG: Given the history of Tibetan exile, have you ever felt split between Western and Tibetan cultures?

TNK: Broadly speaking, cultures are fluid. I think this fluidity is often underemphasized. Of course, Western and Tibetan cultures are different, particularly in terms of philosophy. We are very much a Buddhist culture and deeply influenced by its philosophy and its way of life. I think this unique tradition is often reflected in our writings even though we have adopted English language and different genres of Western literary technique and its crafts. It would be impossible to find a book about Tibetans without Buddhism in it.

KG: In view of the very complex historical context, how do you view your own identity? Do you have, as a writer, an ethical responsibility to Tibet you are detached from?

TNK: As human beings, we assume different identities in order to survive in your environment. I consider myself as a Tibetan. Of course, the very fact that I am also a writer brings along with it a certain ethical responsibility towards my subject which is Tibet or Tibetan lives and realities.

KG: How will you describe the exilic consciousness of the Tibetans?

TNK: It is marked by a sense of un-belonging, or not belonging anywhere. There is a homeland but you cannot return to it. It is a long-distance relationship. It always eludes you. As a result, one is constantly feeling profoundly unmoored. Therein develops a strong consciousness of and longing for your homeland. It happens within you. You carry it with you wherever you go. Salman Rushdie has called it "imaginary homeland."

KG: Interestingly, you have used the terms 'home,' 'homeland,' and 'borrowed homeland,' in the novel *The Tibetan Suitcase*. How would you explain these terms? Is there any overlapping between the three terms?

TNK: I guess "home" and "homeland" is our native land – for most of us, now imaginary – where you came from and you dream of eventually returning to. "Borrowed homeland" is a phrase that I coined to refer to India. It fits the Tibetan situation perfectly. It occurred to me when I was writing my novel. It is a place not your own in exile where you create a replica or an idea of your lost homeland as we have done on Indian soil leased, as it were, very kindly by the Indian government. We are perpetual guests of the Indian government. In retrospect, I think I should have titled my novel "Borrowed Homeland." But it is too late.

KG: How do Tibetan Buddhism, writing, art and culture influence the world? How do they impact upon *The Tibetan Suitcase*?

TNK: That is what my lived experience and my extensive travels have informed me. Tibetan Buddhism and its traditions have spread around the world – they have permeated every sphere of life whether you like it or not. This phenomenon is particularly pronounced in the Chinese diaspora. There is also a lot of academic interest in the field. *The Tibetan Suitcase*, as a novel about Tibetan exile life, cannot afford not to take account of this fact. I have tried to portray that reality in my novel just as I have done in showcasing the trials and tribulations of the quotidian experience of life as a Tibetan refugee in this big and complex world.

KG: Why have you decided to write *The Tibetan Suitcase* in an epistolary form?

TNK: When I was at the University of Iowa, I took my first creative writing class, and I submitted my story as a letter. At the time, I was writing my novel but I did not realize that the whole novel would be in letters – many of them love letters! After I graduated from Iowa, I did some travel around the US. And one day, I decided to sit down in Minneapolis and finalize my novel. Since it wasn't going as smooth I had expected hence it occurred to me that perhaps I should try out the epistolary format. It might seem like an easy way out but it was a big technical breakthrough and I realized this form actually suited my material quite well. The amazing thing was that it came so naturally to me. The arch of the novel – which was written over several years – was finished within days, and I felt a deep sense of relief. Only later did I know that it is not a new form, and in fact the first "true" novel in the English language was in letters (*Pamela* by Samuel Richardson published in 1740). I realized that it was considered a very radical novel at the time.

KG: As a writer and also as a Tibetan-in-exile, do you face any conflict between nation and diaspora / homeland and hostland?

TNK: In a globalized world that we live in, we are all constantly negotiating multiple spaces at the same time. Tibetans are no exception. Because of my somewhat itinerant upbringing, I don't face a major conflict per se but there are, in my day to day life, practical problems that my mongrelized identity presents to me as I juggle these overlapping spaces (for example, when I had to take up employment in places like Hong Kong, which while being a global financial center is also a part of China!) And I speak fluent Mandarin! How do I negotiate my identity as a Tibetan (part of the Tibetan nation) with that of the member of the global diaspora (and a resident of India)? This is something that I, as a writer, has to constantly think about.

KG: If you get the opportunity to visit and settle in Tibet, what will you do? Will you stay in India or return to Tibet?

TNK: I would definitely would like to visit Tibet. I would like to write a travelogue about Tibet about my return there. Whether I would permanently return and settle in Tibet would depend on many factors but I would definitely

would love to visit and live there for extended periods of time. In other words, I would love to at least have the choice of living there.

KG: How will you compare and contrast Nepalese diaspora and Tibetan diaspora?

TNK: The Nepalese diaspora I believe is generally an economic diaspora whereas ours is more political (we are political refugees). Thus, we as a group are more politicized. However, in some ways, it can be said, it is a false dichotomy. Sherpas, for instance, are both Tibetans and Nepalese at the same time. Many Nepalese practice Buddhism and some follow Bon (the ancient, pre-Buddhist Tibetan belief system). I saw many Tibetans would like to go to Nepalese restaurants in cities like Hong Kong and New York. In Oxford, for instance, I saw Tibetan Buddhist centers attracting members of the Nepalese diaspora (many of them part of, or descendants of the Gurkha regiment of the British army).

KG: What role do the memories and nostalgia play in the Tibetan case?

TNK: The memories are important and our Tibetan memories are special, not least because it is such a small diasporic community of barely 100,000 people around the world. Yet, we have a shared identity and we speak the same language, laugh at the same jokes, follow the same customs, listen to the same songs, and eat the same food. For example, when I meet with my old friends in Dharamshala of 1990s or 2000s, it evokes old memories and a very warm feeling of togetherness and camaraderie. It is the same when I meet with my childhood friends from a place I was born in Himachal Pradesh. It is a very unique and a different feeling. In my own case, these experiences, like enjoying a bowl of noodles around a warm fire with our parents as they share with you stories of Tibet, have shaped me into a person or a writer that I am, and these are memories – some of them quite melancholic – that I really cherish. It is very difficult to leave these memories behind, let alone forget.

KG: Do Tibetans prefer to acculturate and assimilate in the diasporic world? Or do they look forward to their homeland?

TNK: Like when you are living in Dharamshala you have to speak Hindi and eat Indian food to survive. But at the same time, you look forward to your homeland with the daily protests, activism and activities that help us remember and long for our homeland. It works both ways, and this I believe is true in all diasporic communities, particularly in cases where you have been deterritorialized like us.

Appendix 2

Koushik Goswami in Conversation with Rabi Thapa

Koushik Goswami (KG): Where would you place yourself in the short history of Nepalese writing in English? What do you think about the prospect of Anglophone Nepalese literature?

Rabi Thapa (RT): As a writer, a blip on the slow progression of Nepali writing in English. And I hope I'm not part of history yet! As an editor, I'd like to imagine that *La.Lit*, which I ran with some friends from Kathmandu for a decade, provided a high quality (if somewhat erratic in terms of output) platform for a lot of brilliant young Nepali writers, both established and fledgling, writing mostly in English but also appearing in translation.

KG: What prompts you to write in English about Nepali life and culture which is a neglected area in South Asian Anglophone literature?

RT: I wouldn't say it's neglected per se. It has as much to do with the set-up of the Anglophone publishing industry in the region (exceedingly India-centric) as the inclination of Nepalis to write in English. Speaking for myself, it's definitely a conscious choice to write, but not a choice to write in English as opposed to Nepali. Let's just say I was born this way.

KG: Have you been influenced by any Anglophone Nepalese writer in particular?

RT: Everyone you read influences you. Knowing what's out there already gives you a map to navigate where you want to go. But even more than Nepal's few celebrity writers, it's perhaps more illuminating to read the best writers that *La.Lit* published in English over the years – Muna Gurung, Smriti Ravindra, Pranaya Rana, Prawin Adhikari, Shefali Uprety, to name just a few – to learn just how beautifully the Nepali experience, at home and far abroad, can be represented.

KG: You write from both Kathmandu and London. Does a location matter for a diasporic author?

RT: Every writer is different, and the circumstances of their lives matter hugely. For me, writing has always been about having the time to write without sacrificing other important things – like earning a living and, more recently, raising a child. As part of the diaspora, I don't have the luxury of time that I had in Kathmandu. But even here – in the village in Wales that we moved to in 2021 – I'm still inhabiting a space in Kathmandu. When I do write, it's still about Kathmandu.

KG: How do you perceive the ideas of 'homeland' and 'hostland'? Do you think that a 'hostland' is really a 'borrowed' land? What kind of conflict do you find between homeland and hostland?

RT: Home's where the heart is. Never did a cliché ring truer. If you keep looking back to where you were – to the family and friends you left behind, to the remembered beauty of the mountains and rivers of your home – then your 'hostland' will remain just that, and you will live in a kind of purgatory. If you choose to immerse yourself in the host culture, then perhaps that will become home one day, though you will have to lose something of yourself in the process. Or you can settle for a homeland within your hostland, if your numbers are large enough, and confident enough to create an enclave that supplements or even

replaces home. Conflict lies in the individual and s/he decides how much to reconcile and where. It also depends on how deeply ethnic minorities are embedded into the host culture and polity. I haven't written a lot from the perspective of a diasporic author (for the reasons cited above), so I probably haven't quite worked this out yet.

KG: Have you experienced racism and racial discrimination in the diasporic space? Do you think that Nepalis are stereotyped and essentialised?

RT: I've been fortunate to have escaped with no more than handful of racist slurs or comments across three decades and several continents. But you see it in the wider discourse in every country you live in, including your own. Of course, Nepalis are stereotyped, just as Nepalis stereotype other nationalities and races. It's just the lazy and sometimes malicious shorthand that we use to make sense of the people who we think are different from us.

KG: Do you think that the political uprisings have profound impact on Nepali life as well as on the Nepali literature and culture?

RT: No doubt the first part is true, even when these repeated uprisings have only generated new sets of pigs taking their turn at the trough while the people wait patiently in the mud. But the left-leaning tendency of revolutionary politics has long been supplemented by Nepali-language writers who infused their writings with a strong seam of social realism. In more recent times, Anglophone Nepali writers from liberal, bourgeois backgrounds have been unable to escape the looming shadow of the 10-year-old Maoist conflict.

KG: Given the history of Nepalese exile, have you ever felt split between Western and Nepalese cultures?

RT: I was born in England, and returned to Nepal as a child, I was neither here nor there. The split healed slowly, but was always part of me. It was only much later that I realised there's no such thing as an 'inauthentic' Nepali; it was a

scam perpetuated by those who wanted to feel better about themselves. The same applies to writing in different languages: why is a Nepali writing in the Nepali language more authentic than a Nepali writing in English? But increasingly, we are all hybrids, and we can all be equally authentic.

KG: Thamel and Kathmandu are transformed into a touristic space. They are gazed and interpreted from the perspective of 'touristic vocabulary.' How did you respond to this at the time of writing the book *Thamel: Dark Star of Kathmandu*?

RT: I think I found Thamel interesting because it had all these layers of local history, in the interstices of which foreign histories intruded. In fact, the tourist history threatened to completely superimpose itself over the neighbourhood. Writing the book involved unearthing a whole range of perspectives, including my own personal experience of Thamel, to offer a more rounded, grounded picture. Thamel is of course overexposed, while much of Kathmandu is too Nepali to be captured by tourists. In my other writing I hope to bring the Kathmandu quotidian to life.

KG: Would you explain why you choose the title *Nothing to Declare* for your book?

RT: I'm not at all sure how interesting this is for readers – it's really just a pun on the first-time traveller's fear of being interrogated at customs, combined with the author's faux modest announcement of his arrival. It was my first book!

KG: Do Nepalese prefer to acculturate and assimilate in the diasporic world? Or do they look forward to their homeland?

RT: To generalise – I think younger Nepalis often acculturate, while older Nepalis, particularly those with limited host language skills, look back to their homeland, often creating a 'little Nepal' that provides for a more up-to-date, accessible, 'looking forward' homeland within the hostland. But this may be true of most diasporas.

KG: Are you engaged in writing any new fictional or non-fictional work now? If you want to add anything on your writing career or anything else, it would be most welcome.

RT: Every time I declare that I have something in mind, it falls apart. Fingers crossed: I'm working with the National Centre of Writing in Norwich on an oral history/translation project on the Gurkha community that has settled in the Brecon Beacons, Wales, where Nepalis are planning to build a 'Nepali village' (some sort of a future-facing homeland, perhaps). I'm also revising the draft of a dystopia set in Kathmandu. And I've been thinking a fair bit about fatherhood, so I may as well write about it. It's good to have lots of plans: something is bound to work out.

Appendix 3

Koushik Goswami in Conversation with Samrat Upadhyay

Koushik Goswami (KG): Most South Asian diasporic writers in English choose to write about their own countries of origin which they know well. Do you think that it's time to write about the diasporic space where they have been living for a long time? Not just about South Asian life in the US, for example, but about the US as YOUR nation?

Samrat Upadhyay (SU): Writers should write about what moves them. This is also something I emphasize with my students. This is very important in order to transmit a sense of urgency and significance to your work. If a writer is overly burdened by "should," "ought," or "must," then that writing will feel contrived, with a sheen of fakery, and I think the reader will know it. So, in that sense, the only real time to write about anything is when it emerges naturally from the depth of the writer's being.

Recently my characters have been moving back and forth between the US and Nepal, so there's a movement there, but it's a natural progression of my fiction and not something I felt I ought to write.

KG: Do you think that returning 'home' after a stint in the diaspora can be a good theme for a short story or even a novel? What is your position on this as a creative writer?

SU: The return home has been a literary theme for ages now. It has some built-in moments of dramatic tension: a sense of dislocation; an unknowing about one's relationships, both to people and to landscape; a movement toward reconciliation and healing, toward wholeness. I see this in the writing of my American students, too, who don't have any diasporic experience.

KG: In the late 1960s and later coming together as an Asian was important. Anthology production was an important issue at that time. Is that true even now?
SM: It can be. Just this year, my Nepali colleague Khem Aryal, who teaches in Arkansas, came out with an anthology titled *South to South: Writing South Asia in the American South*. It showcases the varied experiences South Asian writers have in the American South, demonstrating the enormous diversity of the diasporic experience even within one region of the US. When I was starting out as a writer, I was featured in an anthology titled *Writing in the Stepmother Tongue*, which featured writers from world over. At that time that anthology seemed to capture the tensions experienced by many who wrote in English even though their mother tongue was another language, but now even 'stepmother tongue' feels antiquated. The world of the anthology has become more focused and sharper.

KG: Do you offer any course on Nepalese writing in English or in Translation? Or otherwise, do you intend to offer one? In South Asian diasporic writing, would you include any Nepalese author?

SU: Given that my students come from a variety of literary background, my fiction workshops also include authors from a variety of traditions, with occasionally a Nepali writer here and there. A course on South Asian diasporic writing would be incomplete without Nepali authors.

KG: What is your opinion about the role of translation in the fostering of diasporic South Asian literature?

SU: Translation is obviously important in getting more diasporic South Asian authors recognized in the arena of world literature. There needs to be an emphasis on quality, however, as I do tend to see some not-so-good translations.

KG: Do you think that in a globalized, technologically advanced world, the border between the ancestral homeland and the adopted homeland has really disappeared? Or has it been reinforced in new, more nuanced way?

SU: In many ways the border is more fluid now. I remember when I was an undergraduate I used to feel that the two worlds were vastly different, and crossing the border required quite an effort. My first 'culture shock' was, in a way, when I returned to Nepal for a visit in 1987 after spending three years in the US: everything about Nepal felt strange then. But nowadays I find myself going back and forth without much strain. Some of it comes from privilege, of course, as I'm not sure that Nepalis of all backgrounds would have the same experience as mine. The border between haves and have-nots, between the privileged and the marginalized, might be as wide as ever.

KG: Do you perceive generational differences in the literary representations by Nepalese and South Asian authors in diaspora?

SU: It's hard to generalize, of course, but I do see the younger generation more attuned to the sensitivities of race and class, and there's an urge in them to tackle related themes head on. The older authors appear to be a little bit more circumspect, perhaps even more cynical.

Appendix 4

Koushik Goswami in Conversation with Chandra Gurung

Koushik Goswami (KG): What do you think about the emergence of Anglophone Nepalese literature?

Chandra Gurung (CG): Nepalese have witnessed many political movements in the past. We overthrew the 104-year-old autocratic Rana regime in 1951 and started the Panchayat system with support from the-then monarch of Nepal, King Tribhuvan Bikram Shah. Rana Regime is known as Dark Age as it lacked freedom, public sovereignty, and public literacy. Even Panchayat System of the Shah Kings was not different than that. In 1990 the People's Movement, a multiparty movement, brought an end to absolute monarchy. After this movement, a new constitution was adopted and the country became a constitutional monarchy. In 2006, Nepalese people agitated against the undemocratic rule of the King and established a People's Republic.

With the consequences of these successful political movements many social, political and economical reforms took place in Nepal. It opened doors to many new industries and educational institutions. Thus, Anglophone Nepalese literature was developed due to English speaking generation from the private schools and colleges. With the enhanced level of education and experience, and their growing economic prowess, grew Anglophone Nepalese literature generation in Nepal.

KG: Where would you place yourself in the short history of Nepalese literature?

CG: My first poetry anthology in Nepali was published in 2007. Then, the English translation of my Nepali poems titled *My Father's Face* came out from Rubric Publication, New Delhi in 2020. In 2022, another poetry book in Nepali language was published. All together I have three books to my credit.

I have been translating foreign language poems available in English and Hindi to Nepali. My eclectic readers savor these works of translations. In this way, I am just trying to prove myself among the Nepali poetry lovers.

KG: What aspects of Nepali life and culture in Nepal and abroad do you choose to represent and why?

CG: Nepal in the laps of Himalayas is bestowed with abundant natural resources. It is full of snow-covered mountains in the north, green hills in the centre and vast plains in the south. It is the birth place of the Asian Light Lord Buddha, the world-famous brave Gurkha soldiers and peace-loving people from different ethnic groups. The bio-culturally diverse society and the natural environment make Nepal a beautiful country.

I wish to carry the essence of Nepalese life and society along with me. I love these characteristics of Nepal.

KG: Have you been influenced by any Anglophone writer in particular?

CG: I haven't come in contact and became close to any such writer. Yes, I love to read poems written in English. Because reading Hindi and Nepali poems is not adequate to fulfil my appetite for the poems. I love to read foreign language poems available in English. In this process, I have come across many poets writing in English. But I have not been influenced by any Anglophone writer in particular.

KG: You lived outside your country for quite some time. How was your experience there?

CG: When I was a college going student, my country was in the grip of an insurgency initiated by CPN (Maoist) with the purpose of overthrowing the Nepalese monarchy and establish a people's republic. In this chaos, I decided to fly out of Nepal and landed in The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. The gulf has a

notoriously unpleasant climate. It took some months to adjust with the Muslim society there. Most of the migrant workers who come to the Gulf countries hail from the South Asian subcontinent and Southeast Asia. Foreigners make up the majority of the total population in the Gulf.

There were small literary groups of like-minded Nepalese writers working in various companies all over the Bahrain. I was in touch with the writers from other countries too. They organized a number of workshops and networked with one another on a regular basis. Regular annual literary symposiums took place. Local Arabic writers also participated in a range of literary activities.

KG: Do you think diasporic experience in the Middle East contributed to your creative writings? Do you feel that diasporic life in the Middle East is qualitatively different from that in the West?

CG: Yes, of course. My working life spent in the Gulf away from my home and homeland has contributed hugely to my creative writings. The diasporic space endows a huge platform of opportunities for writers. It exposes them to new experiences that lead to an imaginative access to the lives of people from different backgrounds and cultures. Being a part of a diasporic community enabled me to explore issues such as migration, belonging and self-identity.

Literary circles in Bahrain were full of writers from diverse nations. Exchange of knowledge and experience occurred on regular basis. Arabic readers are irresistibly drawn towards poetry. Accomplished poets from the Arab countries have greatly enriched the world of poetry and much of their work has been translated into other languages. Translations and interactions are much more of a feature when it comes to Arabic poetry.

KG: How do you look at the ideas of ‘homeland’ and ‘host land’?

CG: In the present context, the movement of people from one place to another is large in volume. This movement can be voluntary or involuntary and can

occur for a variety of different reasons, including economic, environmental and social issues. They leave behind their home countries and flee to new destinations to escape violence, war, hunger and extreme poverty. When one reaches new places, one begins to experience real struggle. In a society with different culture, religious environment and unfamiliar people it becomes tough to adjust.

Uncertainty in the process of settlement in the new location and the pain of leaving behind one's homeland go side by side. It generates frequent dialogues between the homeland and the host land. Attachments to the country of one's birth and attraction toward the host country take place simultaneous but the two are sometimes contradictory as well.

KG: Have you faced incidents of racial or any other kind of discrimination in the diasporic space? Do you think that Nepalis are stereotyped there?

CG: I worked in The Kingdom of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia where the majority of the population are Muslims. The Hindu workers from South Asian countries and Christians from Philippines and other countries are in small numbers. But the Muslims from outside countries have the privilege for being Muslims. Often the news of racial and other types of discriminations are heard and read in the newspapers. Racial discrimination occurs when a person is treated less favourably, or not given the same opportunities, as others in a similar situation, because of their race, the country where they were born, their ethnic origin or their skin colour.

Nepal is a small country located between two Asian giants China and India. The people in the Gulf have heard less about Nepal. Thus, they know very little about Nepal and Nepalese people. A lot of misconception about the Nepalese persists among them. They think that most of the Nepalese are Hindus and there are no Muslim and Christian populations in Nepal. Moreover, Nepalese are famous as honest and hard working people.

KG: What kind of struggle did you face in the diaspora as a poet? Do they have to negotiate any specific identity issues abroad?

CG: I was deeply in poetry writings and expressed my feelings in my poems. These can be found in my poems which are full of longings for home and homeland and feelings of dislocation due to immigration.

The working life abroad is mundane. You go to work, come back eat and sleep. In such situations reading and writing are rare. For long time no one in my company knew that I was a poet. They were all busy with their works and had no time for all these. Yes, I had a small group of friends but they were all from different companies. We used to meet once in a while. In this group we knew each other as writers, but in my company, I was a normal employee.

KG: Do you think that the Maoist insurgency and political uprisings have profound impact on Nepali life, literature and culture?

CG: The 1990 People's movement brought an end to absolute monarchy and the beginning of constitutional monarchy. The Maoist Insurgency was a civil war in Nepal fought from 1996 to 2006. The rebellion was launched with the stated purpose of overthrowing the monarchy.

These political uprisings have had a profound impact on Nepalese life. Civil War forced many people to flee their homes. The young preferred to go to the Gulf countries and Malaysia to seek job opportunities and a brighter future. Thus the agricultural country changed into a remittance-oriented country, remittances earned by its people living abroad. Literary works produced during this period depict the transitional phase of Nepalese society and politics. These changes and the dilemmas that the country has faced in recent years have found expression in succeeding literary genres.

KG: Your book *My Father's Face* has been translated into English, Nepali and Hindi languages. To what extent does this translated book do justice to your original work? How were the translated versions received?

CG: Robert Frost famously stated that poetry is what gets lost in translation. Many have stated that poetry is untranslatable. But poetry has been and continues to be translated. The flowers of poetry thrive on translation. It is impossible to imagine the completeness of poetry without it. Translation opens up a world of new language. It broadens us in the way that travel does, it gives us new experiences and takes our imagination to new places.

Unquestionably, a work of translation can't do justice to the original. Poetry has an essential inner rhythm. The translator of poetry needs to go beyond the literal meaning, below the surface of the words to find the true implied meaning. Poetry that has been translated needs to retain as many of the characteristics and qualities of the original as possible. Only the best translators can get near this. To catch the essence of a poem, close coordination between the translator and the poet is essential.

KG: Thamel and Kathmandu is transformed to a touristic space. They are gazed and interpreted in terms of 'touristic vocabulary.' How do you see this?

CG: Thamel in the heart of Kathmandu is the first and last point of junction for the tourists coming to Nepal. Thamel became the main attraction some four decades back when the hippies and tourists started to visit Nepal. The shops and vendors in Thamel provide goods of handicrafts, souvenirs, clothes, trekking gear and walking gear to the tourists. Thamel provides all the necessary services to the tourists visiting Nepal. It has luxurious hotels, currency convertors, transports, travel agents, guest houses and other services required by a tourist in the new place of visit.

The hotels, night life, tourist service centres in Thamel have created various job opportunities at central as well as grass-roots level. The promotion and

conservation of Nepali art and culture is also assisted by the tourism sector. It is assisting in the growth of economic activities and helps in the expansion of various profitable businesses.

KG: How will you describe the conflicts between traditional values and modern life in Nepal?

CG: Nepal is full of spectacular natural riches and vibrant cultures. Nepal is home to ten of the world's 14 highest mountains, the country offers a magnificent setting for hiking and mountaineering, as well as some of the world's best white water rafting. After staying close to foreign visitors till 1951, Nepal opened its doors to international tourists following the first successful ascent of Mount Everest in 1953. With the flow of foreign tourists came the modern life in Nepal. Even the Gurkha soldiers serving in India/British Army and Singapore Police were instrumental in bringing new fashions and foreign life-styles in Nepali society. Coming of the tourists and going of the Nepalese to work in other countries have opened doors for many changes in Nepali society and traditions.

KG: Do Nepalese prefer to acculturate and assimilate in the diasporic world? Or do they look forward to their homeland?

CG: The brave and hardworking Gurkhas from Nepal have been recruited in Singapore Police, Indian and British Armies for a long time. Some percentages of the soldiers after retirement stay back in the countries they served. In September 2004 the decision to grant Gurkhas indefinite leave to remain in the UK upon completion of four years of service had opened doors for the permanent settlement. America is also attracting a large number of Nepalese every year under their scheme for Diversity Visas. Even South Korea, Japan, GCC Countries, Malaysia, Israel, and many European countries have opened their doors for the Nepalese migrant workers.

In Nepal, bribery, corruption and racketeering are rampant. Due to the frequent political turmoil and financial crisis back home in Nepal, young Nepalese cannot wait to get out of the country for high-paying jobs abroad. For the future of their children and life full of luxuries Nepalese abroad prefer to acculturate and assimilate in the diasporic world of developed countries.

KG: How will you compare and contrast Nepalese diaspora and Tibetan diaspora?

CG: In the past, the British rulers were happy with the bravery and loyalty of Gurkhas witnessed during Anglo-Nepali War of 1814 to1816. Before the Anglo-Nepali war, the British rulers had seen the bravery of Gurkhas in The Nepal–Sikh War in 1809 between the forces of Nepal under Amar Singh Thapa and the Sikh Empire under general Dewan Mokham Chand.

When the Anglo-Nepali war ended with the Treaty of Segauli in 1816, it opened doors for the Gurkhas to British Army. The 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th Gurkha Rifles became part of the British Army, with the rest becoming part of the Indian Army after the independence of India. Some of these Gurkhas had settled down in India and the UK after retirement from the Army they served. Many other Nepalese have moved abroad for higher studies and business purposes. All these have contributed to the establishment of Nepalese diaspora abroad.

On the other hand, the Tibetan emigration started in 1959 following the 14th Dalai Lama's defection to Dharmshala in Himachal Pradesh, India. The difference is that Tibetan Diaspora is totally a matter of compulsion but Nepalese Diaspora is a matter of choice and liberty.

KG: Many Tibetans are settled in Nepal. How do you look upon Tibetan Freedom movements as a writer? Do you feel at one with the Tibetan writers in exile?

CG: Following the Tibetan uprising in 1959, thousands of Tibetans fled their homeland. Many fled to Nepal or via Nepal to India. Their entry into Nepal has continued since then. Currently, Nepal hosts a large number of Tibetan refugees who live in different camps in Kathmandu and Pokhara. They have suffered from a lack of access to basic rights such as education and employment. They live carrying the feeling of homelessness in the host lands.

I support Tibetan Freedom movements on humanitarian ground and I express my solidarity with them.

KG: Are you engaged in any new fictional or non-fictional work now? If you want to add anything on your writing, it would be most welcome.

CG: I love reading and writing poems. If I am not reading or writing poems, then I am translating them from English or Hindi to Nepali language. I have to do a lot of work in writing poetry and translating more and more poems. Beside poems, I wish to pen down my working experiences in the Gulf where I have worked for some years. The routine and hectic life spent there stimulates me to write.

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