

# Introduction

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This volume is an outcome of the symposium held in Kathmandu in January 2018, which was co-organized by the INDAS (Integrated Area Studies on South Asia) project of Japan and Martin Chautari of Nepal under the title of “Peaceful Development of South Asia”. Peaceful social development is defined here in a broad sense as the conditions under which the maintenance of social order and social development is achieved not by violent compulsion but through the negotiation of intentions or interests among members of society. Maintaining such conditions for long periods of time is a necessary requirement for the political, economic, and cultural development of a society and state. Through the post-colonial historical trajectory of South Asia, it has become commonly understood that democracy is the better, if not the best, political system and value for that purpose. Indeed, every South Asian state, including monarchical Bhutan, is now espousing democracy as its principal political value.

While democratization and the deepening of democracy have been broadly discussed in this region, the peace that democracy is supposed to promote has been in serious danger, especially in the 21st century. For example, situations in which a social group has gained hegemonic state power through a democratic procedure and came to suppress minority groups have been widely observed in South Asian countries. Minority people, whether religious, ethnic, gender, socially discriminated, or another kind of minority, as a group or an individual, are often exposed to physical violence. Interference with free speech and the suppression of minority groups’ rights to live or rights to speak by state power have also frequently occurred in this region. Consequently, institutions or values related to peaceful social development have been hindered to a great degree. In addition, discourses and movements of resistance willing to use violent means such as Maoism and Islamic fundamentalism have spread, transcending the framework of states.

This region has been traditionally characterized by diversity and plurality of different social groups in terms of religion, caste, language, ethnic group, race, and so forth. However, the coexistence of diverse communities had been realized mostly within a traditional structure of hierarchy or imperial polity. Only if a community conceded hierarchical authority or imperial power could it be allowed to survive in a social niche. Insofar as the hierarchy or imperial polity was unwavering, pluralism could be comparatively easily realized.

Within a liberal democracy, however, various communities act as interest groups and/or are recognized as having certain political and social rights; as is the case in South Asia, where all communities and social groups compete with each other as equals for legal and constitutional recognition in all spheres of social, political, and public life. Without any clear hierarchy of power or arbitrators, negotiations and interactions among such groups are relatively more troublesome and can create potentially volatile situations (Mahajan 2005: 110). Recurrent violence between social groups and individuals can indeed co-occur with deepening democracy through this mechanism.

To promote peaceful development in contemporary South Asia, democracy itself should be reconsidered in terms of its concept, true value, and function against the background of real social conditions in this region. Deep-rooted thoughts and practical wisdom of coexistence of diverse social groups and communities should also be revisited and reforged to fit contemporary social situations along with the reconsideration of democracy.

While majoritarian tendencies are indeed currently overwhelming democracies in South Asia, strong popular challenges have nonetheless also emerged. For example, following the enactment of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019 (CAA) by the Indian government in 2019, opposition movements were, in fact, mushrooming throughout India before the all-India lockdown due to the COVID-19 crushed it. The anti-CAA protests are arguably the first major opposition movement and campaign since the inauguration of the Modi government in 2014 at the time of writing. Their main claim is that the CAA initiative by the Indian government comprises a comprehensive attack on Indian democracy, which has for long cherished the values of cultural diversity and religious plurality. An inclusive notion of democracy, in other words, is exactly the opposite of the concept of the 'tyranny of majority'. There are other threats as well, such as the killing of journalists who are critical of the Hindutva (Hinduness) social and political agenda.<sup>1</sup> The anti-CAA protests are thus based on the need for pursuing an inclusive and constitutional understanding of democracy rather than accepting a majoritarian version of democracy. In effect, what is happening in front of our eyes is precisely this fierce battle over how the notion of democracy is to be conceptualized after 70 years of democratic practice in India.

One of the characteristics of current majoritarian democracy is the faith-based majoritarianism. As the Indian cases (discussed in Chapters 1 and 2) indicate, Modi's new strategy (two-sword strategy) is the attempt to combine Hindutva majoritarianism with economic development (Nakamizo 2020: 81–82). Although his main aim is to socially and politically rewire India as a Hindu Rashtra (nation), the aspiration for economic development ('Gujarat model') was one of the important resources that helped gather support from the younger generation and the lower social strata in the 2014 and 2019 general elections. In this sense, economic development served as the glue to draw in elements that were not entirely convinced by or aware of the implications for a 'Hindu Rashtra'. Considering that the global tendency in recent years has involved the combining of neo-liberal economic policies with authoritarian politics, the Indian case should not be treated as an exception nor a surprise. We, nonetheless, need to look into the function of

this new trend and how it is shaping political tendencies towards majoritarianism ever more closely. This book, in fact, aims to examine and explore how several kinds of political fault lines and vulnerabilities within this fast-evolving paradigm are now witnessing a surge in popular resistance movements alongside calls for peaceful development.

With this in mind, we organize 11 papers into three parts to reconsider peaceful development in this region. The first part directly examines the functioning of democracy, especially in India. We also look at problems of inter-communal, as well as state–community, relations in this region with special reference to Muslim communities in a broad sense. The second part focuses on various social movements and the deepening of democracy based on examples from broad social strata and sites of South Asia. The final part specially considers the methods of peace reconstruction after violent conflicts. Through concrete cases of the peace recuperation process, we can witness creative imaginations for future democracy in the region. Key issues and summaries of all parts and chapters are as follows.

## **Part I Democracy, state, and religion**

As a political institution that realizes the values of liberty and equality, democracy has been regarded as a goal to be achieved by many countries. However, severe criticisms have been levelled at the malfunctions of democracy, for example, as James C. Scott strongly states in his work, ‘[p]erhaps the greatest failure of liberal democracies is their historical failure to successfully protect the vital economic and security interests of their less advantaged citizens through their institutions’ (Scott 2012: 19).

In South Asia, democracy is not necessarily highly valued. For example, India, which has maintained a democratic system since its independence in 1947, except for the less-than-two-year emergency period, faces the problem of the tyranny of the majority Hindu community. Nepal, which overthrew royal rule, is struggling to establish stable democratic institutions. Pakistan, which removed a president with a military background from power, is tackling terrorism by dissidents. In Sri Lanka, which ended its prolonged civil war, Tamil and Muslim minorities continue to be repressed. In Bangladesh, Rohingya refugees are living under very tough circumstances, which are caused by the brutal repression of them by the Myanmar government, especially the military and private armies. How can democratic institutions solve these serious problems?

One can first examine the tyranny of the majority, which has persisted along with democracy as a political issue since ancient Greek times. The idea of fundamental human rights and the mechanisms of separation of state powers has been devised over time to protect individuals and minority groups from the tyranny of the majority. However, the concept of rights and the mechanisms to protect them can be trampled on easily by pervasive state power. For example, in India, Muslim minorities are suppressed by vigilante groups such as Gau Rakshaks, who have tacit governmental support and allege that Muslims slaughter cows and eat beef, sometimes only based on rumours. Muslims are lynched in the worst cases. Indian democracy is in crisis.

This crisis is not peculiar to India. The crisis of democracy, especially constitutional liberalism, is taking place in countries that were thought to have established democracies, as evidenced by the election of Donald Trump in the US and the anti-immigrant demonstrations in European countries, which represent a bursting of the dike. This phenomenon, however, can be traced back to the post-Cold War era, though the context is different from the current situation.

Concretely, since the end of the Cold War, new forms of political regimes have emerged mainly from the former socialist bloc, which many scholars have strived to grasp. For example, Zakaria (1997) proposed the framework of illiberal democracy that has open, fair, competitive, and multiparty elections but with no constitutional liberalism, citing cases of countries in Latin America, Africa, and parts of Asia. According to him, '[d]emocracy is flourishing; constitutional liberalism is not' (Zakaria 1997: 23). In the field of authoritarianism studies, Levitsky and Way (2002) proposed a framework of competitive authoritarianism that is situated between full-scale authoritarianism and democracy, citing cases such as Croatia under Tudjman, Serbia under Milosevic, and Russia under Putin (in 2002). According to them, competitive authoritarianism has four arenas of democratic contestation that present the possibility of overturning sitting authoritarian regimes: the electoral arena, the legislative arena, the judicial arena, and the media (Levitsky and Way 2002: 54–58).

This means that the boundary between democracy and authoritarianism is becoming blurred. In this situation, how can we cope with the tyranny of the majority in a democratic setting? In the South Asian and South-East Asian contexts, religious minorities are the focus. Importantly, the states play a crucial role in oppressing religious minorities. In Part I, we deal with the relationship between democracy, state, and religion by analysing the case of the Muslim minority in India, the electoral victory of the Hindu majority in the largest Indian state of Uttar Pradesh, the phenomena of Islamophobia, and the situation of the Rohingya in Myanmar and Bangladesh.

Chapter 1, Nakamizo's 'Democracy and Vigilantism: Spread of Gau Rakshaks in India', debates the recent spate of 'vigilante justice' in India, which is the new form of oppression against religious minorities. For example, vigilante groups such as 'Gau Rakshaks' are enforcing their norms against minorities with violence, although the extent of the violence is less than religious riots. The important thing is that their activities have tacit but strong governmental support, which is quite different from the activities of past vigilante groups such as Ranvir Sena in Bihar. Ranvir Sena, for example, was formed because upper-caste landlords felt insecure as they could not secure governmental support, which was caused by 'state deficit' in 1990s' Bihar.

At the same time, recent vigilantism also has a distinct character in the area of its activities compared to the 20th century. The Salwa Judam in Chhattisgarh, for example, had strong support from the state government, which justified governmental support through several discourses about the need to contain terrorism or to neutralize 'anti-state groups' such as the Maoists. At best, however, the Salwa Judum could be conceptualized as being a type of a local experiment of sorts that was only relevant to the Chhattisgarh state. With the Gau Rakhsha, however, the

violence has been structured around pushing for an all-India type of an identity, which has, in turn, fed new attempts to institute the new type of ‘majority tyranny’ as normal.

In this context, Nakamizo first classifies the type of vigilante groups and then specifies the character of recent vigilante groups such as the Gau Rakshaks. By focusing on Gau Rakshaks, he analyses the recent crisis of Indian democracy, that is, the politics of obedience under the new Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) system.

Chapter 2, Kondo’s ‘Creating Majoritarian Democracy: Bharatiya Janata Party in the 2017 Legislative Assembly Election in Uttar Pradesh’, also analyses the rise of Hindu majoritarianism from different perspectives and methodologies, that is, by an election analysis. His work is based on solid statistical data analysis and explains the popularity of Narendra Modi, which is quite important for understanding the tyranny of the majority. Kondo specifies two factors that explain the victory of the BJP as follows.

The first factor is the anti-incumbency feeling. This cannot be ignored for the various communities that the previous governments did not attach a greater importance to. The core support communities have been, and are, the Jatav and Chamar in the case of Mayawati’s Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), whereas in the case of the Samajwadi Party (SP), the Yadav and Muslim. Non-Jatav Dalits, namely, Scheduled Castes/Scheduled Tribes, and non-Yadav Other Backward Classes (OBCs) are said to have not benefitted enough under the BSP and SP governments, respectively. According to the preliminary report of a post-poll survey conducted by Lokniti, the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies, non-Yadav OBCs supported the BJP more than the SP, and a fairly large number of non-Jatav Dalit voters went to the BJP. The feelings of relative deprivation among the weaker sections within the broad categories of Dalits or OBCs can be a reason for their changing their support for political parties in the economically backward Uttar Pradesh.

The second factor is the popularity of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. His popularity among the Hindu cannot be unimportant, since the 2017 legislative election could be understood as a continuation of the 2014 Lok Sabha election. In addition, the propagation of the party’s ideology “Hindutva” cannot be ignored. Several news outlets reported that workers of the BJP and its associate organizations, such as Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, propagated communal discourses among the Hindu. The combination of these factors and other pre-election contingencies, such as a family feud in the SP, seem to have brought about the massive victory of BJP.

Based on these analyses, Kondo concludes that the ‘BJP is depending on “heterogeneous majority”, not “monolithic majority”’. To satisfy these heterogeneous social strata, the BJP government has to assign greater emphasis to its good governance and development agendas, which would make it easy for BJP to pursue its Hindutva agenda.

Then why is this kind of anti-Muslim feeling strong in India? How can we overcome it? Chapter 3, Gottschalk’s ‘Practicing the Right to Indifference: Secularism, Toleration, and Islamophobia’, analyses the emergence of Islamophobia by comparing the case of India with the US and suggests embracing ‘the right to

indifference'. According to him, both India and the US have colonial experience under the British rule and share the specific form of secularism that operates within the rubric of 'toleration'. This toleration, he sharply analyses, allows both for the embrace of certain religious identities as part of a national subjectivity and for the exclusion of others as incompatible.

For example, in the case of India, the British introduced their understanding of the Indian society that views 'Hindu' and 'Muslim' as mutually exclusive species of Indians who are also inherently antagonistic to each other. Importantly, the Indian leaders of the independence movement accepted this stereotyped view. Gandhi's emphasis on 'tolerance' was based on Hinduism, which shows that even the Congress formulated a normative nationalist subjectivity using the 'Indian qualities' most associated with Hindus. In this context, Muslims were supposedly regarded as 'non-Indians who represented a threat', though Gandhi vigorously opposed such views. As in Britain and the US, Muslims and the Islamic traditions were negatively used to define the nation of 'India' by Hindus.

How can we tackle such anti-Muslim sentiment? Gottschalk proposes introducing 'the right to indifference', which is beyond 'a right to difference'. He concludes that '[o]nly when their neighbour and governments practice not "toleration" but this indifference will pluralism be self-determined instead of majoritarian- and state-established'.

Last, Chapter 4, Farzana's 'State and Violence in Burma/Myanmar: The Rohingya Crisis and Its Implication for South and Southeast Asia', extends the analysis of Islamophobia to Southeast Asia. Undergoing the process of democratization, Myanmar still has a strong military presence, which has caused attacks on the Rohingya Muslim ethnic minority by the Buddhist majority in the Rakhine state of Myanmar. Their citizenship has been taken away through constitutional changes and has made the Rohingya stateless within their own country.

This particular structural inequality resulted in much brutal structural violence by the state to suppress the group's right to speak and even the right to live. As reported by the United Nations team, approximately 420,000 Rohingya have been forced to enter into Bangladesh from the Rakhine state of Myanmar since August 25, 2017. As in past forced migration, people are again fleeing to save their lives from arson, torture, arbitrary killing, gang rape, and other grave human rights violations by the military and other security and non-security forces in Myanmar. This situation will soon have regional implications with more refugees coming to India, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, and other parts of the world, many by taking illegal routes, thus leading to human trafficking and social insecurity.

Farzana's article investigates the current situation of the Rohingya crisis and its implications for South and South-East Asian regions. By using the theory of statelessness, it criticizes the state institution that creates a stateless community within its boundary. It argues that as a state, Myanmar again failed to realize that 'state unity' cannot be achieved by violent compulsion; rather, it should be by respecting diversity and coexistence among diverse groups. Apparently, regional organizations such as South Asia Association for Regional Cooperation and Association of South-East Asian Nations have also failed to take actions against Myanmar to stop violence in the Rakhine state. Considering such harsh reality,

she concludes that the consequences of the Rohingya crisis will hinder peaceful development of South and Southeast Asia; therefore, it is imperative to revisit the root causes and find sustainable peaceful solutions to this issue.

As mentioned, these four chapters in Part I make contributions to understanding the current oppression of religious minorities in terms of the relationships among democracy, state, and religion from various approaches.

## **Part II Democratization and social movements**

For the last 20 years, democratization and the deepening of democracy in South Asia have been widely discussed. Various activities by social movements facilitate or hinder democratization in South Asian countries. Anti-discrimination movements by Dalits, women's movements, and various ethnic movements have promoted the political participation of those who had been excluded from the public sphere. In India, Nepal, and other countries, movements demanding anti-corruption and "good governance" have attracted attention in recent years. However, exclusive social movements are also deeply involved in state power and have spread through grassroots support, such as Hindu nationalism in India and Buddhist nationalism in Sri Lanka. At a theoretical level, some take a positive stance in relation to the tradition of civil society and citizens' movements in South Asia and its modern developments, making full use of transnational networks (e.g., Appadurai 2013). Conversely, others argue that in places such as South Asia, only a few elites can participate in 'civil society', while a vast majority of people who are not 'citizens' but 'the population' are targets of the government by the state. Therefore, it is necessary to formulate the concept of democracy afresh from various sites of practices in mass politics, including illegal acts, which are conducted from the position of "the governed" (e.g., Chatterjee 2004). Such problems are also related to the issue of what patterns of sociality and interaction democracy was supposed to entail in post-colonial South Asia (e.g., Hull 2010). In this section, we examine specific cases of social movements from India, Nepal and Pakistan. They involve Dalit and ethnic movements, large-scale philanthropy, and urban cleanliness campaigns. From their different perspectives, they all engage with the issues of civil society and political society, as well as the changing patterns of sociality and interaction in contemporary South Asia.

The first two chapters in this part directly engage with the issue of the interface between the state and social movements. They are interactions between representative and procedural democracies as an institution, on one hand, and social movements that seek to put forth demands that tend to fall outside of the normal procedures of representation, on the other hand. The classical forms of these movements are 'direct action', involving demonstrations, strikes, road blockages, and so forth. However, the two chapters identify new developments in these social movements.

Chapter 5 by Maya Suzuki discusses recent developments in the Dalit movement in India. In particular, she focuses on 'judicial activism' within Dalit movements. With the increase in educational, economic, and political empowerment, there is an increasing number of Dalit activists in the legal profession. This is



true even for the Balmikis, the focus of the ethnography, who have been socially and economically disadvantaged even among the Dalit communities. The new generation of Dalit lawyer-activists say that they are inspired by the great Dalit leader of the 20th century B. R. Ambedkar, who was a lawyer himself. They seek to improve the conditions of Dalits, not necessarily through mass movements, but through filing Public Interest Litigations in the court. Suzuki relates this to a more general tendency of ‘judicialization of politics’ in contemporary India. This tendency has attracted some criticisms, suspecting it of having elite biases. Suzuki’s description of the self-understandings of the lawyer-activists reveals that they feel that they should be ‘role models’ for others in the same community and thus behave as exemplary citizens, forsaking ‘vices’ such as drinking and meat-eating, which are prevalent in the community. This chapter thus engages with the issue of civility and democratic politics mentioned earlier. Moreover, through her ethnography, Suzuki shows that a more classical issue of modernization and sanskritization, raised decades ago by M. N. Srinivas (1969), is still alive within contemporary social movements.

Chapter 6 by Lokranjan Parajuli surveys the trajectories of major social movements in Nepal between 2007 and 2012. With the success of the massive democracy movement and the conclusion of a decade-long civil war in 2006, there was a large upsurge in the number of social movements making demands on the Nepali state. These movements were spearheaded by ethnic and indigenous groups demanding recognition and their share of resources from the state. There were also movements by Dalits and other ‘backward’ classes. There was a Muslim movement. Last, there were movements led by Brahmins and Chettris (Kshatriyas), widely considered to be the dominant members of society, defensively demanding that they too should be recognized as ‘indigenous’ peoples of Nepal. All these movements employed classical protest genres, such as protest rallies, sit-ins, *bandh* (strikes), and *chakka jam* (road blockades). Moreover, all 18 movements that Parajuli surveys were deemed ‘successful’ by the activists themselves. The reason is that all made the government sign ‘agreements’ acknowledging their demands. One might be tempted to explain this using the notion of a ‘weak state’—that is, the Nepali state was weak because it was in a transitional period and had no choice but to yield. However, Parajuli argues otherwise. The agreements that the Nepali state signed were vaguely worded with regard to the core demands of the movements and did not lead to substantial action on the part of the state, while the activists claimed their victory and withdrew the protest activities. The state was not ‘weak’ but ‘clever’. The chapter thus presents a new mode of interaction within the political society in Nepal that does not appear to lead to substantial changes. This should also make the readers wonder how much of the judicial activism in India described in the preceding chapter leads to substantial change or the gaining of only a ‘formal’ victory.

In Chapter 7, Tahir Kamran discusses the life and work of Abdul Sattar Edhi, one of the most prominent philanthropic figures in Pakistan. Edhi, who was born in 1928 in Gujarat, India, established the Edhi Foundation, the largest welfare network in Pakistan in the 1950s. The foundation is a home for more than 6,000 destitute, runaway, and mentally ill people, and it provides free dispensary and



hospital services to over 1,000,000 persons annually. The organization has held the Guinness record for the world's 'largest volunteer ambulance organization', operating a fleet of over 400 ambulances. Abdul Edhi was a thoroughly modern person who brought to the poor and destitute modern medical care for free. Kamran describes how Edhi was influenced by socialist ideologies from his youth. However, Kamran notes that Edhi read Marxist writings alongside the history of Islam. Thus, for Edhi, the history of Islam also showed the struggle between the haves and the have-nots. He found in its history the true reformers who renounced their own comforts and never sought to accumulate wealth on their own behalf. Kamran argues that Edhi's simple lifestyle was that of a Sufi and that the hospices that he created were a modern-day reincarnation of pre-colonial *dargahs* (shrines of saints that also served as hospices). In this way, this chapter engages the debate on civility and civil society in modern South Asia. For Chatterjee, civil society is a notion that is developed in the West and has its ultimate root in Protestant Christianity. It cannot be applied to the vast majority of the world's population, whose subjectivities were formed outside that Western tradition. However, Kamran insists that Edhi embodied the values and the lifestyle of a Sufi. It is by embodying this traditional value that Edhi could transcend parochial religious divides that characterize so much of modern South Asia and become a true humanist. Kamran's emphasis on virtues, such as 'simplicity', associated with Sufism also contributes to the discussion of modes of sociality that are respectable and effective in modern South Asia.

Chapter 8, in a way, ties all the threads of the preceding discussions together, as it engages with the problems of what it means to be a 'citizen' in contemporary India and how those modes of being a citizen entail being 'political' or 'apolitical'. In this chapter, Yoko Taguchi describes a case of citizens' participation in the improvement of the urban environment. She points out that contemporary public-private partnerships are characterized by an emphasis on 'depoliticization' and market-oriented reforms. She argues that this reflects a tension between 'political society' and 'civil society', whereby 'civil society' often decries the corruption and nepotism of 'political society' by upholding the logic of the free market and promoting its own positions as 'apolitical'. This chapter examines the practices and effects of these 'apolitical' politics of citizens in relation to urban space and personhood. She locates the conception of citizen participation within broader middle-class activism in contemporary India. Contrary to pro-poor social movements, this trend has been criticized as facilitating increased control over the city's public space. Criticism of the new middle class in India, in turn, employs the dualism of the 'global' (colonialism and predatory capitalism) and the 'local' (the resistance of the subaltern). Taguchi argues that, within this framework, middle-class urban activism appears to represent the irresistible power of world-class aesthetics and the global logic of neo-liberalism oppressing the local subalterns. However, she argues, when examined closely, practices of civic activism do not fit the dichotomous framework. Through the case study of Mumbai citizens' groups called Advanced Locality Management, she explores how concepts and practices of public and private spaces are negotiated when different realms of power and control are entangled. Taguchi shows that while the new type of urban

development was informed by the ‘global’ notion of the public and private, it was also entwined with the ‘local’ notion of inside and outside. She argues that citizen participation in urban development, despite its apolitical appearance, is a site in which notions of public/private as well as of the sense of self and proper sociality are actively negotiated in contemporary South Asia.

### **Part III How does a conflict end?**

How is the end of conflict attained in a society that has experienced civil war or large-scale violence among groups? In the ‘post-conflict’ society, how are violence and those lost to violence remembered and mourned? How are the illegal acts in the conflict period treated and how are the damages to the victims redressed? In addition, how is a society divided by the conflict restored and reorganized? In the standardized notion of ‘post-conflict’ used by international organizations such as the United Nations, codified according to the perspective of a peace-building intervention, the post-conflict period begins with a negotiated settlement of conflict. Its end is marked by the successful conduct of post-conflict elections and the establishment of liberal democratic state institutions. Sara Shneiderman and Amanda Snellinger (2014) have criticized this bureaucratic periodization that rarely reflects complex local realities. The chapters in this last section seek to present a complex picture of ‘post-conflict’ situations that goes beyond the simplified conflict/peace dichotomy.

In Sri Lanka, the civil war between government forces and Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) from 1983 to 2009 ended with the government military putting the LTTE to rout. The Sri Lankan government deems it a successful example of war against terrorism. The government prohibits the mourning of LTTE combatants while attempting to unify the people by mourning the (selected) war dead with memorial ceremonies and the construction of monuments led by the state. The government seems to be attempting to achieve restoration by ‘top-down’ reconciliation and development programmes. In Nepal, which experienced armed conflict between Maoists and the government from 1996 to 2006, peace was realized in the form of democratization and abolishment of the monarchy. However, similar to Sri Lanka, it is difficult to say that the procedures of transitional justice are truly reflective of the voices of diverse victims. The new constitution promulgated in 2015 has also sparked fierce protest movements. In Bangladesh, the Jumma people of the Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) have been progressively marginalized since the time of the British colonial rule when they were first defined as ‘primitive’ tribes. After the partition, between 1957 and 1963, at least 54,000 acres of CHT were flooded by a hydroelectric dam project. After the independence of Bangladesh in 1971, the denial of autonomy of the indigenous people by the government led to the formation among the Jumma people of the political party called Parbatya Chattagram Jana Sanghati Samiti (PCJSS) in 1973, with a military wing called Shanti Bahini (Peace Brigade). The government placed CHT under military occupation while encouraging the migration and settlement of Bengalis into the area. Violent conflict continued until the signing of a peace accord between PCJSS and the Bangladesh government in 1997, but there are

still many unsettled issues. In India, religious and caste conflicts have occurred frequently since the 1980s, causing heavy casualties and internally displacing people. Although the social and political rise of lower castes and its suppression by upper castes has developed into caste conflicts, Hindu ideologists insist on the unity of the nation beyond castes, partly by ‘othering’ Muslims and Christians. Under the current administration, India aims at an authoritarian rule led by the majority (caste Hindus) and top-down economic development. The three chapters in this section concern situations after violent conflicts in Bangladesh, Nepal, and Sri Lanka. Each chapter, in its own manner, goes beyond the simplified dichotomization of conflict and peace mentioned earlier.

Chapter 9 by Ranjan Saha Partha on everyday life in CHT in Bangladesh seeks to problematize a series of dichotomies, including conflict versus peace and Jumma versus Bengali. As mentioned, violent conflict in CHT formally ended in 1997, with the signing of the peace treaty between the political party PCJSS and the Bengali government. However, Partha argues, the peace accord failed to address the basic demands of the Jumma, which included regional autonomy, constitutional recognition of the indigenous Jumma people, restoration of land rights, withdrawal of the military, and withdrawal of the Bengali settlers from the CHT. Additionally, the accord contains no mention of the human rights abuses during the armed conflict. This has led, among other things, to conflict *within* the Jumma. The United People’s Democratic Front (UPDF) emerged as an alternative to the PCJSS, questioning the latter’s failure to secure the rights of the Jumma people. The PCJSS and UPDF compete with each other, and ordinary Jummas are caught in between and forced to live in fear. The Bengalis in CHT are not homogeneous either. There are Bengalis who resettled through official programmes and those who resettled voluntarily or without legal documentation. The accord does not address the latter, and there is an increasing number of Bengali organizations to express their respective demands. Ranjan argues that the continuation of conflicts in everyday life in CHT is due to the failure of the peace accord to address the root causes of the conflict, which he traces back to the colonial era.

In the next chapter, Tatsuro Fujikura also discusses a situation in which a peace settlement failed to address the grievances of a party to the conflict. The chapter discusses the fate of the Tharuhat movement that demanded an ‘identity-based’ federal state in the western plains of Nepal. According to some of the contemporary political discourses in Nepal, ‘identity politics’, which has gained strong momentum after the conclusion of the armed conflict in 2006 and which threatened national integrity, has been defeated in recent years. After the promulgation of the new constitution in 2015 and with the conduct of local and federal elections, the key words seem to have shifted from ‘identity’ and ‘class’ to ‘stability’, ‘development’, and ‘prosperity’. Given this background, Fujikura focuses on some of the recent moments in the Tharuhat movement, including the Tikapur incident in August 2015, in which eight police officers were killed during a large demonstration, and the actions of some of the Tharu activists who now live under the new constitution which they once deemed so ‘unacceptable’ that they had to burn it. The chapter tries to appreciate what is at stake in the actions that the Tharu activists take in the context of a federal setup that they did not wish for.

In trying to interpret Tharu activists' attempts to insert their traditional institution of self-governance called *barghar* into the formal local governance system, Fujikura uses an expanded conception of 'mediation' as proposed by William Mazzarella (2006). This conception of mediation includes not only attempts to harmonize diverging interests but also, more broadly, social practices that reduce particularities of diverse experience and render them provisionally commensurable and communicable and, in doing so, become the basis of self-consciousness and desire.

Finally, in the last chapter, Pradeep Jeganathan grapples with the issue of loss and reimagination. He focuses on maps as objects that intersect with the lived worlds of migrants and on the notion of region as imbricated with migration. He conceptualizes the intensity and horizon of migrants in lost and reimagined objects as melancholia, engaging with and expanding on Freud's notions of the work of mourning and melancholia. Jeganathan begins with a personal account of his first visit to a dwelling of his great-grandfather in Jaffna, on the northern tip of Sri Lanka. This is followed by a discussion of the history of the Jaffna Tamil Vellalar community from the 17th century to the 1950s. The dominant status of the Vellalar was enhanced under both the Dutch and the British colonial rule. Many of them eventually became prestigious civil servants as well as professionals in the fields of medicine, law, and engineering and migrated all over the island, including the Sinhala South. In the 1950s, the Sinhala leader Bandaranaike started the 'Sinhala only' campaign, which gave rise to two competing linguistic nationalisms in Sri Lanka, and the Vellalar were folded into the idea of 'Tamil-speaking people', occluding caste and class distinctions. The violence of this competition culminated in the massive pogrom of July 1983, and a long civil war ensued. The war ended by the Sri Lankan armed forces routing the Liberation Army of Tamil Eelam in May 2009. Jeganathan explicates the divisive maps created through the violent conflict by discussing three fictional characters from literature and film. One shows the impossibility of life for a Tamil who is neither a separatist nor a militant in the Sinhala South. Another concerns the viability of a Sinhala–Tamil marriage in the post-conflict time, made impossible by prior atrocities during the conflict. The third shows a Tamil asylum seeker in France who acts out a repressed violence in a Parisian neighbourhood. Jeganathan discusses these examples as well as different maps that were produced of Tamil Eelam. He considers them in terms of the 'work of melancholia,' which is also a form of 'inhabitation' in this world (Das 1997). These maps show the horizons of a person's psychic and social investments in what is lost after a violent conflict.

## Note

- 1 Protest demonstrations took place throughout India following the assassination of Gauri Lankesh, a journalist and social activist who had argued against Hindu supremacism. See 'Activist in Mumbai Protest Scribe Gauri Lankesh's Murder', *The Hindu*, 7 September 2017. For reference, <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/mumbai/activists-protest-scribes-murder/article19632713.ece>, last accessed on 20 January 2020). And also see Siddiqui (2017) for other cases.