

The Nepal Earthquake:

Drawing attention to remote areas of Dolakha through ethnographic film, “A Life with Slate” and a report from the Director, Dipesh Kharel

18:30-20:00, July 7, 2015

Room 301, Building 10, Sophia University Yotsuya Campus



The Nepal earthquakes have killed over 8,000, wounded 17,000 and affected up to 8 million Nepalis, causing immense damage to home, healthcare facilities, schools, social services and other key infrastructure as well as to the country's rich culture heritage. In this context, ethnographic filmmaker Dipesh Kharel highlights the life of people in earthquake affected areas, particularly in Dolakha district, which is one of the areas most affected by the earthquake.

Dipesh Kharel, originally from Dolakha, has conducted extensive fieldwork in Nepal and Japan, and has produced two films about the connections between remote areas in Dolakha and markets further afield. Dipesh's first fieldsite, Alampu, a Thami village of some 3000 people, is within a few miles of the earthquakes epicentre. All houses, school buildings and health facilities have collapsed, and the death toll is significant. What is more due to its remote location, Alampu is yet to receive any aid. Beyond the immediate devastation of the earthquake, Alampu's prime source of income has disappeared - as slate miners, they relied on the local slate industry, which has been wiped out by the quake. Having just returned from the area, Dipesh would like to provide a report on the situation in Alampu as well as screen his ethnographic film on the region, before the quake.

Short synopsis of the film

The film 'A Life with Slate' by Dipesh Kharel is shot in Alampu. This film shows the slate production in the mountainside quarry of Alampu, and also how the slate is worked prior to distribution. Over ninety percent of the villagers have been involved in the slate production in Alampu. In the film we see the social relationships, co-operation between the miners, and the intimacy of the mining families. The film also describes the socio-cultural life of the village and its interaction with the environment and wider markets.

Dipesh's Biography:

Dipesh Kharel is an independent documentary filmmaker from Nepal. He received a Master of Philosophy in documentary film studies from the University of Tromsø in Norway and currently is doing his PhD research on Nepal-Japan migratory flows at the University of Tokyo. 'A life with Slate' was his first feature length documentary film, which screened at more than 50 international film festivals and was awarded several prizes, including Grand Prize at the Moscow International Film Festival, Best Debut Film Prize at Film South Asia and Best Material Cultural Film Prize at the RAI International Festival of Ethnographic Film in the UK, 2007. His second film 'Playing with Nan' has already screened at several international film festivals and won the prize for Best Film at RAI 2013, UK.



Lecture in English / No prior registration necessary

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