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# "The Land in Gorkhaland: On the Edges of Belonging in Darjeeling, India"

Besky, Sarah

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Darjeeling, a district in the Himalayan foothills of the Indian state of West Bengal, is a former colonial "hill station." It is world famous both as a destination for mountain tourists and as the source of some of the world's most expensive and sought-after tea. For decades, Darjeeling's majority population of Indian-Nepalis, or Gorkhas, have struggled for subnational autonomy over the district and for the establishment of a separate Indian state of "Gorkhaland" there. In this article, I draw on ethnographic fieldwork conducted amid the Gorkhaland agitation in Darjeeling's tea plantations and bustling tourist town. In many ways, Darjeeling is what Val Plumwood calls a "shadow place." Shadow places are sites of extraction, invisible to centers of political and economic power yet essential to the global circulation of capital. The existence of shadow places troubles the notion that belonging can be "singularized" to a particular location or landscape. Building on this idea, I examine the encounters of Gorkha tea plantation workers, students, and city dwellers with landslides, a crumbling colonial infrastructure, and urban wildlife. While many analyses of subnational movements in India characterize them as struggles for land, I argue that in sites of colonial and capitalist extraction like hill stations, these struggles with land are equally important. In Darjeeling, senses of place and belonging are "edge effects": the unstable, emergent results of encounters between materials, species, and economies. (Text from author's abstract)

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