

# Indigenous History and the Tamba Tradition in Darjeeling and Sikkim Himalayas

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Darjeeling, popularly known to us and to the world as a beautiful hill station, famous for its tea, shares international borders with Nepal, Bhutan and Bangladesh. Recognizing the fact that these international borders are modern constructs and that history, language, trade and culture, have always been shared across these regions, a unique identity for the region emerges. Darjeeling was a territory of dispute between the kingdoms of Nepal and Sikkim. It came under British India in 1835. Much like South Asia, even with the demarcation of these modern political borders, a dynamic, active cultural exchange continues across these borders which is reflected in the language and culture of the region. Despite the historically strategic importance of Darjeeling, there is almost no record of indigenous voices from the region. Various folk forms, distinct indigenous oral historical traditions and personal narratives can be studied as resources for understanding indigenous history, demography and migration. Yet often, they are not considered historical or literary enough for academic recognition.

The Nepali population in India is spread across the Himalayan region; they are a majority in Darjeeling and Sikkim. The military recruitment to secure the North East of India for the expansion of the British Empire has resulted in the settlement of the Nepali community in the North East of India. The Nepali community is