

Northeast India

Can we keep thinking of Northeast India as a site of violence or of the exotic Other?

Northeast India: A Place of Relations turns this narrative on its head, focusing on encounters and experiences between people and cultures, the human and the non-human world, allowing for building of new relationships of friendship and amity. The twelve essays in this volume explore the possibility of a new search enabling a 'discovery' of the lived and the loved world of Northeast India from within.

The essays in the volume employ a variety of perspectives and methodological approaches – literary, historical, anthropological, interpretative politics, and an analytical study of contemporary issues, engaging the people, cultures, and histories in the Northeast with a new outlook. In the study, the region emerges as a place of new happenings in which there is the possibility of continuous expansion of the horizon of history and issues of current relevance facilitating new voices and narratives that circulate and create bonding in the borderland of South, East and Southeast Asia.

The book will be influential in building scholarship on the lived experiences of the people of the Northeast, which, in turn, promises potentialities of connections, community, and peace in the region.

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Northeast India

A Place of Relations

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Acknowledgments

Since 2010, both the editors spoke of collaborating to produce a book on Northeast India. We have been particularly concerned that Northeast India has a peripheral position within the study of India, which has become a major field of research in the humanities and social sciences. We discussed and deliberated on the growing divisions between the people, communities and cultures of Northeast India, as each state has developed a kind of isolated view and the negotiations between the seven states (Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Manipur, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Nagaland, Sikkim and Tripura) are being mediated via New Delhi. We were increasingly becoming uneasy with the partitioning of the Northeast into ethnic, linguistic, religious and political enclaves; our memories did not connect to the newly constructed narratives. While we are also aware that it was never ‘one place’, we were deeply concerned that the points of contact and connections were fast disappearing and the tendency of growing difference is generating a discourse of Otherness within the Northeast. In an effort to overcome the gaps created by the presentist and political approaches, we decided to generate multiple scholarly conversations on the Northeast. The Annual South Asia Conference at Madison, Wisconsin, became our initial venue. We are grateful to the organizers of the conference, our discussants, and, more importantly, our audiences at the annual conference that have engaged and encouraged us to take our project forward and conceive this book.

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