

## Leaving the Land

During the last decade, indigenous youth from Northeast India have migrated in large numbers to the main cities of metropolitan India to find work and to study. The migration is facilitated by new work opportunities in the hospitality sector, mainly as service personnel in luxury hotels, shopping malls, restaurants, and airlines. Prolonged armed conflicts, militarization, a stagnant economy, corrupt and ineffective governance structures, and the harsh conditions of subsistence agriculture in their home villages or small towns impel the youth to seek opportunities outside their home region. English language skills, a general cosmopolitan outlook as well as a non-Indian physical appearance have proven to be key assets in securing work within the new hospitality industry. *Leaving the Land* traces the migratory journeys of these youths and engages with their new lives in cities such as Bangalore, Mumbai, Hyderabad, and Thiruvananthapuram.

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*Indigenous Migration and Affective  
Labour in India*

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CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge University Press  
978-1-108-49442-7 — Leaving the Land  
Dolly Kikon , Bengt G. Karlsson  
Frontmatter  
[More Information](#)

## CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom  
One Liberty Plaza, 20th Floor, New York, NY 10006, USA  
477 Williamstown Road, Port Melbourne, vic 3207, Australia  
314 to 321, 3rd Floor, Plot No.3, Splendor Forum, Jasola District Centre,  
New Delhi 110025, India  
79 Anson Road, #06-04/06, Singapore 079906

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

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[www.cambridge.org](http://www.cambridge.org)

Information on this title: [www.cambridge.org/9781108494427](http://www.cambridge.org/9781108494427)

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First published 2019

Printed in India

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library*

ISBN 978-1-108-49442-7 Hardback

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*For indigenous migrants around the world*

All you who sleep tonight  
Far from the ones you love,  
No hands to left or right,  
And emptiness above –  
Know that you aren't alone.  
The whole world shares your tears,  
Some for two nights or one,  
And some for all their years.

– Vikram Seth, *All You Who Sleep Tonight*, 1990

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## Acknowledgements

Northeast India has played an integral role in shaping our lives as anthropologists. It was never a peripheral geographical location for us. On the contrary, this region has moulded us as researchers and given us the chance to present a world that generates complex debates and political concerns. Research ideas and themes always emerge in conversation with different groups of people. We have received generous feedback and critical comments from student activists, cultural associations, scholars, feminists, and above all from the mobile youths we interacted with during this project. We have dedicated this book to them, the young wayfinders, and further to the indigenous migrants of the world struggling to survive in often inhospitable circumstances.

The research collaboration for this book was funded by the Swedish Foundation for Humanities and Social Sciences, grant number P12-1342:1. We would especially like to thank Sanjay (Xonzoi) Barbor for giving a vision and working with us to shape the themes of this research project. As authors of the book, we have often shared our reflections about Northeast India and underlined the importance of locating key themes emerging from the region. In shaping the ideas and themes, we acknowledge our interlocutors, colleagues, the research communities, students, migrants and their families, and the larger audience. We benefitted immensely from their generosity and commitment in engaging with us on the topic of migration. In this regard, this book is a collaboration of many voices engaging with indigenous migration in Northeast India and beyond.

We benefitted from various seminars and roundtables where we presented our research findings. We are grateful for the comments and support we received from the following meetings: the Stockholm University migration seminar (Stockholm 2014), the Tata Institute of Social Sciences Roundtable on Migration (Guwahati, 2016), and the Morung Express Foundation Roundtable on Migration (Dimapur 2016), and the two workshops on Care and Control in Asian Migration organized by Johan Lindquist, Mark Johnson, and Paul Boyce (Stockholm 2015, London 2016). We would like to thank Mrinal Gohain, Johan Lindquist, Nicole Constable, Shahram Khosravi, Willem van Schendel, Filippo Osella, Rajdeep Singha, Debdulal Saha, DK Srivastava, Aküm Longchari, Aheli Moitra, Annika Rabo,

Hege Höyer Leivestad, Erik Olsson, Staffan Löfving, Sanjib Baruah, Alpa Shah, Melinda Hinkson, Charisma Lepcha, Tanka B. Subba, Swargajyoti Gohain, and Anna Lindberg. We really appreciate Rozelle Mero for believing in this project and helping us to think about migration and the hospitality sectors in Dimapur. Carrying out the research at The People Channel, we were humbled by the generosity and excitement they showed for our work. Thank you to the team at The People Channel (2014–2016). Thank you, Sarat Phukan, for helping us with the maps. Duncan McDuie-Ra's work inspired us to think about migration. We thank Joel Rodrigues for helping us with the references and copy editing the manuscript at various stages of our writing process. We have also benefitted from other scholars' work on migration on Northeast India, in particular, Nandita Haksar, Nandini Ramamurthy, Denjil Basumatary, Deepak K. Mishra, and Andrea Wright.

A special thanks to Andrzej Markiewicz, who has contributed the wonderful photographs to the book. Andrzej travelled with us to India, carrying heavy photo equipment, taking thousands of images and filmed and edited over 20 longer interviews. It was through Andrzej's painstaking efforts that we managed to organize the Wayfinding exhibition, touring India and Nepal in 2016, and later also displayed at the European Association for Social Anthropology (EASA) conference in Stockholm, August 2018. Through hours of hard labour Andrzej has produced an amazing visual archive. A selection of the images and films are available on [socant.su.se/wayfinding](http://socant.su.se/wayfinding). Rasmus Carnebäck, Erica van der Sijpt, Snehashish Mitra, and Avelu Chotso, masters students and younger researchers worked with their respective studies in the project. They have presented their work independently, but we are indebted to conversations and insights shared in the process.

We would like to thank the amazing team at Cambridge University Press: Qudsiya Ahmed, Sohini Ghosh, Anushruti Ganguly, and Aniruddha De. They took care of the manuscript and rendered their support in every imaginable way. Earlier versions of Chapter 1, 'Wayfinding', appeared as 'Wayfinding: Indigenous Migrants in the Service Sector of Metropolitan India' (*South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies* 40, no. 3 [2017]: 447–462). A revised version of Chapter 2, 'Light Skin and Soft Skills', is appearing in a special issue on 'Care in Asian Migration' in *Ethnos: Journal of Anthropology*, and a shorter revised version of Chapter 5 appeared as 'Dreams and Desserts: Indigenous Migration, Service and Mobility in India' (*International Journal of Communication* 12 [2018]: 4143–4157).

Dolly Kikon: I would like to thank my interlocuters in Mumbai and Dimapur. Families of migrants in Dimapur who shared their time and stories with me. I would also like to thank my colleagues at the University of Melbourne, the Australia India Institute (AII), and the North Eastern Social Research Centre (NESRC) for engaging with the ideas of indigenous migration. I am grateful to

*Acknowledgements*

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Karen Farquharson, Craig Jeffrey, Haripriya Rangan, and Andrew May for their support. On a personal note, I thank my friends and family in Kharguli for their company and indulging me with good food and company during the final stages of writing this book. Vikas Jain, Mamun and Mihir, Purnima, Joel, Mrinal, Jila, Parimita, RK Debbarma, Sarat, and Korobi. Thank you for your fellowship and affection. The famous Riviera Kallu was a source of joy. She made me laugh every day as I put together this book. Xonzoi Barbora put up with me as I carried this project from Stockholm, Melbourne, to Guwahati. His patience, love, and grace with my fieldwork schedules and work is humbling.

Bengt G. Karlsson: I would like to thank all those that took time to share their stories and introduced me to their friends in Varkala, Thiruvananthapuram, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad, especially Apan Manpongshu, Williem Gray Chongloi, Natha Wahlang, Phoban, and Santosh Lama. I would also like to thank Henrik Berglund, then Director for The Forum for Asian Studies at Stockholm University, who facilitated a small proposal-writing grant, which got the ball rolling. Colleagues at the Department of Social Anthropology in Stockholm have provided a generous and stimulating intellectual environment; thank you all. My debt also to Lina Lorentz, Peter Skoglund, and Eva Eyton for persistent logistical support. Academic life is often a lonely pursuit. I have the great luck of having the most wonderful family who keeps me going and strangely sticks around despite frequent travels and long periods of absence. Emanuel, Agnes, Love, and Ella, you spin my world. And to Louise, my wife, for letting love in.