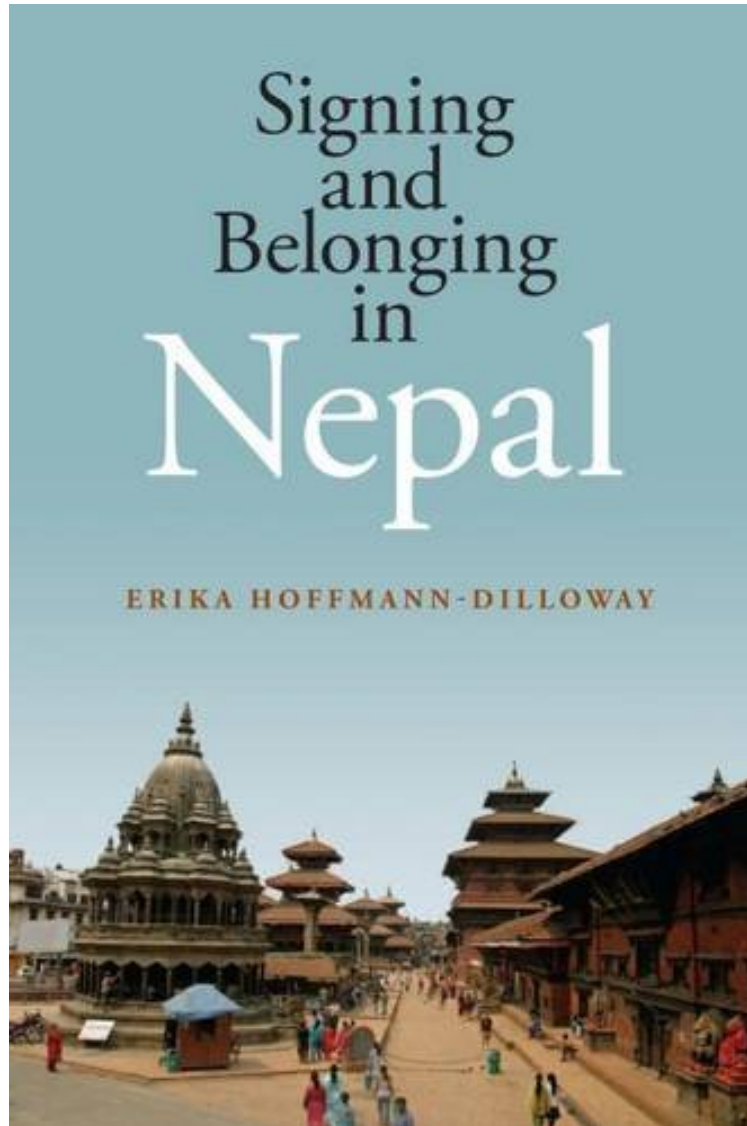


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## Signing and Belonging in Nepal

*Erika Hoffmann-Dilloway*

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**Erika Hoffmann-Dilloway : Signing and Belonging in Nepal** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Signing and Belonging in Nepal:

While many deaf organizations around the world have adopted an ethno-linguistic framing of deafness, the meanings and consequences of this perspective vary across cultural contexts, and relatively little scholarship exists that explores this framework from an anthropological perspective. In this book, Erika Hoffmann-Dilloway presents an accessible

examination of deafness in Nepal. As a linguistic anthropologist, she describes the emergence of Nepali Sign Language and deaf sociality in the social and historical context of Nepal during the last decades before the Hindu Kingdom became a secular republic. She then shows how the adoption of an ethno-linguistic model interacted with the ritual pollution model, or the prior notion that deafness results from bad karma. Her focus is on the impact of these competing and co-existing understandings of deafness on three groups: signers who adopted deafness as an ethnic identity, homesigners whose ability to adopt that identity is hindered by their difficulties in acquiring Nepali Sign Language, and hearing Nepalis who interact with Deaf signers. Comparing these contexts demonstrates that both the ethno-linguistic model and the ritual pollution model, its seeming foil, draw on the same basic premise: that both persons and larger social formations are mutually constituted through interaction. *Signing and Belonging in Nepal* is an ethnography that studies a rich and unique Deaf culture while also contributing to larger discussions about social reproduction and social change.

The great strength of the book lies in the authors lucid interweaving of linguistic analysis of the indexical connotations of Deaf Nepalis communicative practices with the daily manifestations of language ideologies...this book succeeds well in addressing its main audiences of students and scholars of linguistic anthropology, Nepal anthropology, and international sign language and Deaf Studies.