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Tina Shrestha is Assistant Professor in the Waseda Institute for Advanced Study (WIAS) at Waseda University. She received her Ph.D. in Anthropology from Cornell University and was a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Asia Research Institute (ARI) at the National University of Singapore (2016-2018). Her publications have appeared in *Anthropology of Work Review* (2019), *Pacific Affairs* (guest co-editor, Special Issue on Asian migration infrastructure, with Brenda S.A. Yeoh, 2018), *Studies in Nepali History and Society* (2016, 2018, 2019), *Refugee Resettlement in the United States: Language, Pedagogy and Politics* (UK: Multilingual Matters, 2015). Her monograph *Surviving the Sanctuary City: Ordinary suffering and asylum-seeking work among Nepali New Yorkers* is under contract with the University of Washington Press. She is currently researching on inter-Asian migrations facilitating Nepali student-migration to Japan (awarded JSPS Grant-in-Aid for Early-Career Scientists, 2019-2021).

Surviving the Sanctuary City: Ordinary suffering and asylum-seeking work among Nepali New Yorkers

Abstract:

This presentation is an overview of my upcoming monograph-- *Surviving the Sanctuary City*--an ethnographically derived, situated analysis of suffering and seeking asylum in the 21st century United States. The paper highlights how asylum-seeking fuses the intense and the performative with the repetitive and the mundane. Nepalis often described the experience of this merging as ‘making paper’ (*kaagaz banaune*), referring to drawn out bureaucratic processes, and ‘suffering’ (*dukkha*) as they prepared and ultimately delivered their asylum testimonies. I argue that the consequences of combining these seemingly disjointed experiences are far-reaching, including a rise in interior immigration enforcement; production of new migrant legalities, including temporalization of labor and the formation of precarious *claimant-workers*.