

The Constitution of Nepal 2015 and the Hindu Identity Politics: Coming Full Circle of the *asli*  
Hindusthan Project Founded by the King P N Shah

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Abstract

The constitution of Nepal 2015 declares the country as a 'secular' state. Secularity, however, is defined as "preservation of *sanatan* religion (aka Hinduism) and culture, and cultural/religious freedom". The constitution also enshrines cow—sacred animal for the Hindus—as the national animal and protects Aryans (Bahuns) as the constitutional race/caste. In essence, the constitution upholds the values of Hindu King Prithvi Narayan Shah, who conquered other states and consolidated Nepal in the eighteenth century. Shah envisioned Nepal as the *asali Hindusthan* (the pure Hindu-land), vis-à-vis India, which was then seen as being 'polluted' by the Muslims and the European *mlechchhas*. The fallout of defending the Hindu religion and culture is that *adivasi-janajati* peoples are, once again, denied their collective identities.

In this paper, I will compare cows and pigs as the animals sacred to Hindu Aryan-Bahuns and to non-Aryan *adivasi* Limbus, respectively, and demonstrate how the constitution of Nepal has failed to duly recognize the cultural diversity of Nepal. Drawing on ethnographic examples on cows and pigs in relations to Bahuns and Limbus respectively, I will conclude that the Constitution of Nepal 2015 is exclusionary, as well as discriminatory from the vantage point of non-Hindu *adivasi* peoples. If Nepal's constitution is to be respected as a common "sacred document" for all citizens of a democratic country, it should embody the collective identities of all different cultures and communities of Nepal.