



Honoring Old Age Ritual in the Native Land of Nepal: An Understanding of Indigenous Cross-Cultural Aging Wellness in Northern Ontario

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ABSTRACT:

By drawing on personal narratives and experiences with the ancient Newar tradition of honouring ageing and wellness in the native land of Nepal, this presentation will highlight a pedagogy of ageing wellbeing in Newar and Anishinaabe cultures in terms of holistic aspects of physical, mental, spiritual and emotional wellness. In Bura Janko (honouring old age ritual ceremony) traditions, intergenerational relationships are built on respect for elderly person's spirituality and wisdom. Through an examination of 5,000-year-old Bura Janko traditions in Nepal, and ancient tradition of Medicine Wheel/Seven Grandfather Teachings/Ceremonies in Anishinaabe culture in Canada, this presentation will explore cross-cultural connections between the two ancient Indigenous cultural groups to highlight the importance of meaningful ageing life through a series of spiritual and culturally-based ceremonies as a means of reducing the stigma of cognitive decline and memory loss; and loneliness and social isolation in ageing populations. The aim of this presentation is to draw attention to Bura Janko ceremonies' strength in creating strong intergenerational connections that promote well-being and wellness in ageing communities, thus demonstrating how Newar cultural practices can influence Western pedagogies of ageing wellness and ageing wisdom. Moreover, both ancient traditions contribute to promoting sustain physical, mental, spiritual and emotional aspects of wellbeing and wellness that replicates in both Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities in any corner of the world. Further cross-cultural research on diversified ageing ceremonies and teachings in families and communities need to be explored in the lens of ageing policy and advocacy.