

# book department

## *Short Reviews*

Mechi dekhi Mahakali, I-IV volumes, Published by the Department of Information, Ministry of Communications, H.M.G; pp. 4380, 4 maps, price, Rs. 400/-

The publication of four volumes of this book marks the biggest triumph yet for publishing in Nepal. The design of a single book, in four volumes with a total of 4380 pages setting-out to describe the entire country, is quite unprecedented. The book is mainly a description of the most basic and primary data on Nepal as well as a listing of current developmental activities going on in its seventy-five districts. The gist of the book has been remarkably captured in its most attractively coined title. The origin of the idea for writing this book has been explained clearly in an introduction prefixed to all four volumes. It says: "The scarcity of information on the districts was felt as early as V.S. 2027 (1970 A.D.) when His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev, who was then Crown Prince, undertook informal visits to the different parts of the kingdom. In response to this situation, therefore, the Janch Boojuh Kendra started gathering information which would be useful mainly at the time of such visits by the Crown Prince. Thus reports (of information) began gradually accumulating on each district, which seemed later to be of value. Following the pious wish of His Majesty the King that many people would benefit from knowing these facts, if they should be made public in an easily accessible form for everyone alike, a project was launched under the auspices of the Janch Boojuh Kendra for standardizing these reports and for preparing them for publication. The book acquired its present shape in approximately one and a half years time, with the hard work of many special officers. It is a privilege for the Kendra to be able to publish the four volumes of Mechi dekhi Mahakali in the historic year of the celebration of the auspicious coronation of His Majesty King Birendra Bir Bikram Shah Dev as a token of his empathy for the sorrow and happiness of each and every Nepali living in the remote corners of the country" (all translations from the reviewed book are the reviewer's). Indeed there could be no other sentiments more worthy of cherishing on the finishing of the project in the auspicious coronation year. As His Majesty has been a committed ruler and has been directly instrumental in unleashing the forces of development in this country, the conception of the book establishes his vision once again. The book is expected to be of great value to Nepal's development administrators by providing them with accurate and up-to-date information on all districts from one source. All those who were actively associated with the project and who developed the idea of this book from the beginning deserve, therefore, our unstinted praise.

It is quite true that accurate information of districts are vital for administrators more than for anybody else. One cannot but recall here the case of British Colonial administrators in India, who in order to surmount numerous difficulties imposed by their ignorance of the terrain, people and culture of an alien country, set out to overcome these difficulties by writing up district gazeteers. They did a remarkable job of mapping out their regions and describing them closely from their own study, research and observations. They were quite meticulous and thorough in their work. Although the old gazeteers are now useless for gaining current information, their value as reference works is still undiminished. The volumes of Mechi dekhi Mahakali are also essentially district manuals, but district administrators themselves have not been involved in their production and hence their accounts do not derive from a long, intimate and first-hand knowledge of districts by their authors. They are, in fact, compiled accounts of information gathered in the various district offices in the course of routine performance of administration by these offices. This in turn had been obtained on request by the authors at the Janch Boojh Kendra. This data alone would have been far too inadequate and insufficient. The ingenuity of the authors lay in expanding, elucidating and supporting this data further from the material which lay scattered in diverse publications such as books, articles, handouts and various ministerial and departmental reports of the government. In its final form the district studies are the sum and substance of these diverse sources digested together in a narrative averaging fifty-two pages for each district. Thus, there is a distinction between these volumes and the Indian gazeteers of the British Indian period. Writing about the objective of producing such a work, the authors say in the introduction: "The objective of compilation of Mechi dekhi Mahakali is narrow in one sense and broad in another. It is narrow because it has attempted only to describe each district separately. It is not a work seeking to describe a unified account of Nepal, because the fullness of Nepal as a country is more than just an aggregate of its seventy-five districts. Further it does not attempt to study a specific social or economic problem in its full detail. As far as possible, it has pointed out such problems wherever they are known to occur. On the other hand, its broad objectives become clear as soon as it is known that it has attempted to provide information on the geographical, historical, social, economic and all other aspects of the district and that these volumes are not written to serve the needs and interests of a particular section of society alone, but are aimed at being useful for researchers, planners, administrators, students, tourists as well as general readers alike". Thus in their broad address, the present manuals do resemble the Indian gazeteers, although the two works vary considerably in the mode of their preparation.

The four volumes are divided according to the four Development regions and from Vol. I to IV the narrative proceeds from east to west as the title makes quite obvious. Each volume first gives a summary of the region studied, followed by a description of individual districts. The material in the regional summary is divided up in much the same way as the descriptions of each district which follow. All districts are analysed under identical subject-headings, namely; (i) introduction, giving mainly the location, origin of the name of district and the principal factors, if any, for which that district is known (ii) physical features and natural resources (iii) historical background (iv) important places in the district (v) population and people's life style (vi) economic conditions (vii) transport and communication (viii) education, health and drinking water (ix) administration and panchayat (x) conclusion, which tries to sum up the development activities or the development potentials of the district in future. It is evident that in the above scheme of things, practically everything about a district can be said. The value of the volumes will, therefore, lie in a comprehensive treatment of districts under such varied topics and in serving them up-ready and bound-all in one place for everybody's benefit. The true worth of the book will only be tested by time. Despite it, its popularity can safely be predicted since it is the first work of its kind produced under the official seal of the Department of Information of the Ministry of Communication of His Majesty's Government. It has been reported that since its entry into the book-market, the book has been very well received, and despite its high price, it has been selling quickly, approaching the proverbial hot cakes. More than anything else, this is the greatest vindication of a book.

Accuracy of facts will not be the sole criterion for evaluating this book. Certain observations, however can be made with a belief that they will be deemed useful at the time of the next edition of the work. The reviewer, for one, would consider this laudable project to be far from finished. We hope that future editions of this book will be brought out by revising and updating them at regularly set time intervals.

It is impossible for any one reviewer to examine the accuracy of all accounts on such widely ranged topics of all seventy-five districts of Nepal. Therefore, it shall be our attempt here to make only a few observations regarding the general approach and presentation style of the work. One broad comment about the book, perhaps, might be the absence of uniformity of the compiled material. Seemingly, all districts are uniformly studied under identical sub-headings. These headings are comprehensive enough for providing a fair summary of the developmental activities of the district. But the presentation of details in the described material tends to vary from one district to another. If accounts in some places are succinctly made and bolstered by figures and tables presenting knowledge derived from the author's own study

and observation; elsewhere such accounts are given merely a facile treatment or even omitted. This impression is given by the fact that the regional summary of Vol. IV presents sixteen tables whereas the same summary in Vol. I gives only ten. In order to maintain a respectable length, narratives at times are tenuously stretched, or generalized, where generalisation holds no great risk of committing errors (physical features). Elsewhere the same account is repeated over and over again in many places (history). I give two examples of a general nature of description. "In its (Manang's) surroundings at higher altitudes when snow starts melting in summer and the grasses blossom forth into flowers of multiple colours, the atmosphere of this place becomes highly pleasant with the shepherd boys and girls moving about freely singing" (Vol. III, p. 120). The other instance is: "The majority of people of this district are Hindus. The followers of Islam are the second largest in number. Thus the people of this district, despite their diverse religious calling, celebrate national festivals like Dasain and Tihar in their own ways and as best as they can afford them". (Vol. II, p. 326). These paragraphs are inserted under subheadings of physical features and population and people's life respectively. Temples and their architecture are described, however generally, in the three towns of the Kathmandu Valley, but are sadly omitted in the far-western development region, which is the other most temple-bearing tract of Nepal. The task of presenting a uniformly consistent account of all districts is no small task. Statistics, facts and figures would be interesting in all cases, but desired statistics may not have even been collected in many districts and if other sources exist, the authors may not have been aware of their presence. There was, after all, so much ground to cover on so many subjects. There was a time limitation, so not all information could have been pursued, but it would have been considered wise not to omit any available information for the sake of uniformity but rather put everything that one had been able to gather on a district into the description. It would be rewarding to develop a detailed framework for future editions of the book within which all information could be better standardized and no significant omission of facts about a district made. This would even permit time to go and make observations and gather statistics where these do not already exist.

Information on population statistics are up to date and extensively given. Next to it, educational, meteorological and land and agricultural accounts are supported by summarising tables for the preceding few years. They all are quite useful for being authoritative references to district data.

The historical summaries have failed to present uniform treatments of the subject. Since many hands were responsible for writing it, there is a lack of relationship and balance between the accounts of various districts. No rule has been followed regarding elaboration or abridgement of historical events described.

History is a sensitive field of study and can be full of dispute and controversies. In many places, unsifted historical accounts making little discrimination between myths, legends and stories have been blended together with history. These accounts may not confound the specialist, but the layman could easily get a distorted and erroneous picture of the subject. References are made to all kinds of history books, both accredited as well as those of dubious value. Incidentally, this portion of the book has the most copious foot-notes. A few words might be said here about the system adopted for foot-noting in general. References are cited in English or Nepali showing no consistency. They are also incompletely cited. Further, where accounts are summarised almost entirely from a particular source, it is quite unnecessary to quote the same source in one page several times (Vol. I, p. 16). It would have been sufficient to mention the source once in the outset saying that the summary is made from it. Next, such well-publicized things as the height of Mt. Everest have been conscientiously foot-noted, but less known but interesting facts have been passed without quoting the source. In one place Kirkpatrick's book has been quoted secondhand from Regmi's book (Vol. I, p. 17), while the authors were quite familiar with this work and have cited it in many places elsewhere in the work. A complete bibliography of the works cited would have been most useful at the end of each volume.

Dates in the book have been given mainly in Vikram Era, but this is not consistently followed everywhere. In several places, use of the Saka, the Vikram and the Christian era is freely interpersed.

Anthropological notes on the various socio-ethnic groups of Nepal have been made in their supposed 'core' regions. It is good to have made and followed a scheme throughout the book consistently. Twenty-four such groups have been studied in the following districts: Limbu in Panchthar, Lepcha in Illam, Rajbansi in Jhapa, Meche in Jhapa, Satar in Jhapa, Dhimal in Morang, Sherpa in Solukhumbu, Rai in Khotang, Thami in Dolakha, Hayu in Ramechhap, Sunuwar in Ramechhap, Danuwar in Sindhuli, Tamang in Kabharepalanchok, Newar in Kathmandu, Chepang in Makwanpur, Majhi in Chitawan, Gurung in Lamjung, Thakali in Mustang, Chhantel in Myagdi, Magar in Palpa, Raute in Salyan, Raji in Dang, Tharu in Kailali and Byansi in Darchula. Thus the anthropology of Nepal is better organized in the book. Refreshing accounts of many of the lesser-known social groups of Nepal have been compiled in this book for Nepali readers, which is commendable. In writing these accounts, because of diverse hands having written them, there is also a great deal of variation in the selection, emphasis and elaboration of the material. Their success lies in avoiding the placement of any undue stress on the differences in ethnicity of the various social groups which is commonly seen in the writings of foreign scholars. It is sad however that accounts of the Pahadi caste-

groups, especially the Chhetri-Bahunns are missing from a concentrated study in one place. These are among the most active and leading social groups of Nepal having played a crucial role in Nepal's birth as a nation and are also one of the ubiquitous groups settled everywhere from east to west. They have their own social organization, family-structure, rites, rituals, superstitions, economic preferences and to this extent they vary not only with other social groups within Nepal, but also vary with their high-caste counterparts in the plains. To ignore them because of a belief that they are only a part of India's Aryan cultural group is to miss many finer points of change that have resulted from having to adapt into a new environment.

It is not unnatural to have printing errors in a book of this size, whatever precautions may have been taken to avoid it. There is a list of errata at the end of each volume. Despite this, one fact still makes one uneasy, that is that a large share of these errors are in the numerical data. For example, the errata list in Vol. II runs to 487 entries, out of which as many as 316 are numerical errors. In Vol. II this number is 272 against a total of 453 errors. This has rendered almost all figures in the text unsafe for use without having checked them once in the errata. Some mistakes have escaped detection, although they are few. One such uncorrected mistake appears in page 310 of Vol. IV which has been printed as 210.

The book will be difficult for constant reference without an exhaustive index. Because, by its very nature and scope, it is not meant to be finished in one reading and thus forgotten. It is still possible to add an index in a separate volume as a compendium. A separate map for each volume will enable to locate all the names mentioned in the book. The volumes are wrapped in glossy jackets each with an illustration (three colours and one half-tone) of four major landmarks of this country, each located in the four development regions, namely Mount Sagarmatha (Everest), Pashupatinath temple, Lumbini and Lake Rara. Since they are symbolic of Nepal in many sense and have been foremost in introducing Nepal to the outside world, there selection is most apt.

The above appraisal of the book cannot diminish its value to a wide range of its readers. This constitutes the first complete work about all the districts of Nepal. A most useful and necessary first step has been made in these volumes towards systematizing our knowledge of the entire country. It was planned with a rare foresight and virorously pursued by all concerned with this project which has done a great service to the country.

P.R.S.

Bibliography of Nepal, Kathmandu, The Royal Nepal Academy, 1975, pp. 525, Price Rs. 74/-

The Royal Nepal Academy has put out yet another large bibliography on Nepal. This work definitely constitutes the third major landmark in the publication of bibliographic literature on this country; the previous two being Hugh Wood's compilation (Nepal Bibliography, 1959, Kathmandu, Bureau of Publication, College of Education), the first of its kind on Nepal and the second being the French bibliography of the C.N.R.S. (Bibliographie du Nepal, Vol I, Sciences Humaines, References in langues europeennes, L. Boulnois - H. Millot, 1969, CNRS, Paris). Scores of other smaller and more specialized compilations of limited utility have appeared in the intervening period. The French bibliography, however, stands out among them as the most thoroughly done work so far, approaching a high standard of academic accomplishment. In preparing their bibliography, the French compilers had not only tapped the diverse and highly scattered sources of collections on Nepal, but also read each entry as far as possible, summarised the works and presented them in an easily referred to way, giving subject classifications, alphabetic indexes of authors names, the works of anonymous writers etc. Its arrangement proved impeccable and served as a handy model for the compilers of the present bibliography to copy.

Barely six years have passed since the publication of the French bibliography, but the wealth of publications on Nepal has continued unabated. The new bibliography by the Academy is amply justified in trying to cover this new ground. The total number of entries in it (8327) is almost double that of the French bibliography (4515) and eight times the number in Hugh Wood's work (1244). In this regard the Academy deserves our felicitations. They have indeed included a great many new titles, especially the writings of Nepalese scholars published in the myriad of journals, magazines, newspapers and bulletins of Nepal. This alone must have enormously taxed the ingenuity of the compilers forcing them to use a meticulous methodology. There is no explanation in the introduction to the work, however, as to exactly what methods were actually adopted in the preparation of the project, or which repositories were used and what sources were exploited to tap the materials published outside Nepal. Also it is unclear whether or not the compilers actually found time to read and check all the entries. It is safe to presume, in view of the magnitude of the work, that they probably did not. The lack of a more intimate knowledge of the contents of the titles has led to a profusion of mistakes especially in placing titles under the wrong subject headings throughout the volume. I will give just one example of this. H.B. Gurung's article on the

intellectual myth (entry number 3006), a writing with current social relevance, was placed under Legends, Folklores, Mythologies etc. by the compilers.

Compiling a bibliography - especially a good bibliography - requires skilled personnel and a basic research infrastructure which is not developed, as yet, in Nepal. It would have been good to have weighed all the possible hazards in undertaking such work. In stating the objectives of the work, the introduction of the bibliography merely states,

under the programme of producing source materials on Nepal, the Royal Nepal Academy included in the Five Year Plan (1969-1973 A.D.) the compilation of a Bibliography of Nepal as a supplement. It is divided into two parts: (1) the list of books and articles written in foreign languages and (2) that of similar things written exclusively in Nepali language. The Royal Nepal Academy gave priority to the compilation of the list of the first category of books.\*

Although the Academy made its plan and its priorities quite clear and proceeded accordingly, the spontaneous reaction to this publication by most Nepalese has been the feeling that the Academy's efforts would have been better directed toward first compiling works published in the languages of Nepal. This would have made their work original and would have made it a valuable complement to the bibliographies already published. This would have been a most apt work worthy of the Academy's banner. Although so much was missed, the work has not been deprived of the Nepali touch, since a brief Nepali translation of the title has been added at the end of each entry along with the authors name translated into Devanagari. The only flaw in this scheme is that the unadapted Devanagari alphabet does not do phonetic justice to European names, so quite often, the names look odd.

The bibliography also seems to be finished some what unsatisfactorily in one other way; that is in the preparation of the subject heading classification. Different subjects have been grouped in an illogical manner. History, for example, is placed with biography, politics and government, whereas archeology is included with arts such as painting, music and dance. Further, numismatics is treated as distinct from archeology and has its own heading. Inscriptions have been placed alongside language and literature. Numismatics and inscriptions would have best been

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\* By the titles written in foreign languages, the publishers must have meant foreign publications in European languages only, because publication in foreign Oriental languages have been completely excluded from listing.



served by putting both of them under archeology. The anthropological-sociological heading has been divided most subtly into three separate subject headings. If such distinctions had been based on a real critical examination of the contents of the works the case. Such subtle headings might have been quite helpful, but such is not. The works are placed quite haphazardly into these three categories and only add confusion.

The above criticism cannot diminish the work's usefulness to scholars engaged in Nepalese studies and many will find they owe a debt to the Academy. There are far fewer mistakes in this work than might be expected in view of the large number of unfamiliar European languages with which the editors had to work. This shows that the compilers worked hard at proof-reading. A hard cover would have been more welcome in a large volume such as this, but prospective buyers were probably spared the further burden of a higher price.

P.R.S.

Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Siva, by Wendy Doniger O' Flaherty, London, Oxford University Press, 1973, pp. 386.

Wendy O' Flaherty has been writing on the various forms of Siva since 1969. This book gives us her most recent views on the Siva mythology and the interpretation of the Siva myths.

Until the recent emergence of empirical science, questions about the world were often answered through myths and to some extent it is so even today. These myths were replaced gradually by the concepts, and theories of science, and as science developed, it was turned towards the analysis of the myths themselves, leading to interpretations by various scholars each orientated by his own discipline. Among these students of mythology, Levi Strauss is one whose analyses have given a new magnitude to the subject. His four volumes of Mythologies deal with the meaning, structure and interrelations of 813 North and South American Indian Myths. Levi Strauss uses what he calls structural analysis and points to a universality in the structure of all myths despite variations in their content. We find that in his structural study of myths, the unconscious and binary oppositions are the two guiding principles of mythological structure. His technique for analysing myths recommends breaking a myth down into smaller units which he calls "mythemes", analogous to the linguistics' breaking down of complex language phenomena into smaller units such as morphemes or phonemes.

In this book, Mrs. Flaherty has examined a wide range of Sanskrit texts such as the Vedas, Puranas, and Mahabharata. She has examined above all those texts dealing specifically with Siva.

The basic approach for her analysis of the Siva myths is a structural one similar to that of Levi-Strauss. She aims at finding the dialectic pattern which interlocks the various motifs. She does not rely fully on the text-historical method for analysing Indian myths, but uses rather a modified text historical method. In other words, she relies heavily on secondary sources to justify her work.

The book has ten chapters excluding appendices. The first and the last chapters deal with the theory and interconnection of the various motifs in the structural design. Chapters two through eight are devoted to the Siva myths themselves. While describing Siva, other great ascetics like Rsyanga, Cyavana, Agastya, are discussed. The activities of the celestial nymphs, like Mohini, and Tillotama are vividly illustrated. The ascetics' wives like Lopamudra, Krttikas, Arundhati, and Anasuya are discussed in the context of their 'tapas'. Their seduction by gods like Indra, Agni, Vishnu and others are presented in terms of their relation to the myth of Siva. The dual aspects of Siva, i.e. the opposition and identity with Brahma Agni, Indra and Kama are covered as well.

Social structure for Levi-Strauss has nothing to do with empirical reality, but concerns instead models which have been built of it. Similarly, for O' Flaherty, Siva is also a model for Hindu followers. One can fit Siva into one's own interests and needs: the ascetic aspect, the erotic aspect, or the ambiguous aspect. Siva as the three-eyed god (ascetic), as the poison eater (ascetic), as the clever dancer (erotic), as the rider of the bull (erotic), as the wandering beggar (ambiguous) and as the god whose Linga is worshipped by yoga (ambiguous) are models for Hindus and for the yogi himself. The god might appear in which ever aspect fits the worshipper's need.

The 'opposition' factor distinctive to Levi Strauss' structural study of myths is also used by O' Flaherty in analysing the Siva myths. While reading this book, one can clearly note that Siva in one aspect is fully ascetic, because he has excessive tejas (brighthness, resplendence). He drinks posion conquers Kama, retains seed, transcends sexual desire and wears ascetic clothes. In opposition, Siva spills seed, marries Sati and Parvati later, he embraces Parvati and plays the sexual game for a thousand years, he comes naked before the wives of the sages of the pine forest and is full of lust for them and seduces them. In one aspect, Siva is a yogi (the ascetic) and another aspect he is a bhogi (the lover of Parvati and one who enjoys everything). The oppositions are also shown in the creative and destructive aspects of Siva. In his creative aspect, Siva marries Parvati and begets sons like Ganesh and Skanda; he undergoes great tapas (austerities) for the creation of the world; he helps Brahma, Vishnu and other gods in the creation and protection of the world; he revives

Kama, etc. In his destructive aspect, Siva has excessive tejas (brilliance); he destroys Kama and his third eye emits excessive heat (fire) which destroys the world. The conflict in the character of Parvati is also made clear. The author writes, "Siva's wife is a yogini, her tapas is necessary in order for her to be able to bear his son/her tapas is so great, that it is too dangerous for her to bear his son" (p. 36).

According to Levi-Strauss, there is a unity in the structure of myths despite variations in their content. Similarly, O' Flaherty says, "Myths involving Siva's erotic /ascetic ambivalence may be viewed as one myth containing several episodes, each of which may appear as a separate myth" (p. 30). In her view, Brahma, Agni, Indra and Kama are all aspects of Siva himself performing different roles in different situations. Here the author explores the abstract philosophy of the Hindus and ultimately their universal faith in one god.

In a subject as difficult as this, when the treatment is based on so many contradicting sources, opinions must often diverge. The reviewer feels that Mrs. O' Flaherty is trying to idealize things, because she feels she must treat the whole Hindu-Siva philosophy as if it were a model. The model, in other words, is an ideal perception which is necessarily less complicated than the reality which Siva represents. By reducing her material to this model, she has made reality easier to manipulate. This however may miss the point of the reality that Siva represents to the Hindu, a reality that is not always amenable to manipulation. In every idealized model, there is an imposed structure. In this book, Siva including Parvati, Brahma, Agni, Indra and Kama are all models and in the author's words are not a concrete reality. How far Hindu followers are going to be willing to accept this interpretation of an idealized model of Siva is a moot point. The main emphasis of this structural method is on the relationships between phenomena rather than on the phenomena themselves. In this case, the search for invariants at the most abstract level allows her to put familiar facts together in such an unfamiliar way that one is forced to see things which were previously not apparent. Her analysis of myths sheds new light on the logical development and structure of myths in general and for her Siva develops an even newer aspect, that of model, a structural analysis of a corpus of written material. Here its originality lies.

This book, in other words, is a challenge to the many traditional Sankritists. The book presents a new dimension in our understanding of Siva.

D. R. Dahal.

Himalayan Traders: Life in Highland Nepal by Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf, John Murray, London, England, 1975, 316 pages with maps and photographs, Price: £ 7.50.

In our last issue of Contributions (Vol. 2, No. 2), we announced the publication of a new work edited by Fürer-Haimendorf called Contributions to the Anthropology of Nepal. This book was edited from papers given at a "symposium" held in London in 1973. Several papers in that volume referred to a forthcoming book on trade in highland Nepal, but the title and date of publication differed from reference to reference. It was apparent from the tantalizing quotes in these articles, that a major new work was about to be released, but for those of us who had no access to the obviously then circulating manuscript, the book remained ephemeral.

Himalayan Traders has been published at last and should be available in Kathmandu very soon. The book covers various aspects of social organization of trading societies across the high mountain regions of Nepal. Some accounts present more detail than others, due, for the most part, to the amount of time Fürer-Haimendorf was able to spend in that particular area. The scope of the work, however, is staggering, particularly if one considers the number of miles covered over back trails in Nepal's rural mountain areas.

For the most part (and there are some notable exceptions) Haimendorf represents a vanishing breed of explorer-anthropologist. Relying heavily on local assistants (and these assistants, now considerably older and more experienced are all remarkable men and researchers in their own right) and covering vast amounts of territory, these researchers present preliminary data on many different groups and map out problems which later researchers then spend considerable time trying to solve. This is by no means a criticism. In effect, men like Fürer-Haimendorf have given many of us our bearings. I have talked with many who have worked with Haimendorf and some who happened to have been in the field when he has come through. All credit him with an amazing amount of energy and the ability to ask the right people the right questions and quickly get answers in spite of linguistic handicaps. He has also done important long-term field work, particularly his work with the Sherpas which is still a classic in this region.

The richest section of Himalayan Traders draws heavily on this work with the Sherpas, and the organization of this section sets the pattern for the organization of the other chapters in this book. Patterns of settlement, agriculture, animal husbandry are discussed, along with the known history of the Sherpa. The older material is updated in view of a subsequent trip to the area, giving a picture of changes brought about by tourism, panchayat and changes in the political climate. The shortness of

this subsequent trip and the heavy reliance of the older data, however, may leave the reader confused as to which cultural phenomena are still prevalent and which are not.

The "Traders of the Daulagiri Zone" presents material on the Thakali, the Baragaonli and the peoples of Dolpo and Lo. Part of this account is similar to Haimendorf's essay, "Caste Concepts and Status Distinctions in Buddhist Communities of Western Nepal," to be found in the now, unfortunately, out-of-print Caste and Kin in Nepal, India and Ceylon edited by the same author. The historical data has been greatly expanded and more data on the social structure of the Baragaonli has been presented along with a shift of emphasis to trade, but the data appears to come from the same period of work. I am puzzled by some of the historical data presented, particularly the relationship between the Thakali and the Kingdom of Galkot in the pre-Prithwi Narayan period. Although I am in no position to dispute his findings, I would be more comfortable if he had quoted and cited some of his evidence. A serious flaw in this work is its shortage of documentary evidence, particularly in dealing with Nepal's history.

Haimendorf's account of Jumla, Humla, Mugu and Tibrikot presents a great deal of new data. Particularly interesting is the comparison between the Thakuri and Bhotiya traders in Humla. The area is interesting since here is one of the few places in Nepal where a Hindu group is involved in trade (a possible exception is the Byansi, but there, Tibetan origins seem likely).

In all of the accounts, the data on trade is most exhaustive. Traded commodities and their market structures are discussed particularly the trade in wool, livestock, grain, and of course, salt. There is good historical data on customs contracts and market strategies. The effects of politics, geography, climate and social structure (particularly marriage, and mit relations) are discussed relative to their effect on trade.

Several sections of this book present only sketches of ethnographies. This too is not a criticism, but should be taken (as Fürer-Haimendorf mentions) as indications of where further work needs to be done. His account of the Lhomi of the upper Arun Khola should inspire someone to do further work in the area. There are also some preliminary notes on the Byansi and the Tarali of western Nepal. Many of the peoples covered in Haimendorf's earlier works (such as the Sherpa, Thakali and people of Jumla and Humla) are now the object of intense interest to other anthropologists working in Nepal. One only hopes that Fürer-Haimendorf will continue to have his proven ability to generate interest in work on other areas in Nepal.

The last chapter of the book entitled, "Trade and Social Relations" presents the theoretical significance of such research

on trading societies in Nepal, plus it presents an excellent synthesis of the material covered in the rest of the book. In this section, Haimendorf states that trade among these groups is due neither to historical accident nor to their own choosing. Trading is due rather to first, the necessity to make up for an inadequate food supply caused by ecological factors (often making it possible for groups to live in areas which otherwise would be good only for summer pasturage) and secondly, it is due to living in close proximity to a natural channel in the intersices of two complementary economic zones. It is both the need and the opportunity which make trading societies possible. Since economic organization is closely correlated with social relations, in the anthropologist's framework, we are faced with answering the question as to whether "the pursuance of trade as a central economic activity produces certain attitudes and arrangements, or whether people (are) motivated by a specific outlook on life are more likely to achieve success in trading than communities conditioned by a different ideology (287)". In a way, this is the essential question for anthropologists faced with the phenomenal success of certain groups over other groups living in similar areas and hardly able to meet the needs of daily subsistence. The question as to why the Rais, who supplied grain to the Sherpa merchants or the Chhetris who supplied the Thakalis produced no merchant class of their own is answered partially by the emphasis on land ownership by those groups. But Haimendorf also ties the success of these merchant princes to their freedom as Buddhists from the food taboos and family ties of the Hindus. Whether this applies to the Rais is doubtful, and in the case of the other groups, I feel that Haimendorf places undue stress on the egalitarian nature of the Buddhists over the Hindu as it effects trade, particularly in light of the Thakuri traders in Humla and the Byansi. Although the Byansi may have been Buddhists at one time, they have been Hinduized for a considerable period. Perhaps a detailed study of this group may go a long way toward settling the problem of the relation of ideology to success in trade. One agrees that the social structure of the Thakali and Sherpa permits a certain degree of mobility, but what about the Thakali or Sherpa's trading partners in the south, as yet unstudied? The question is by no means settled, but Furer-Haimendorf presents some valuable insights, if for no other reason than by framing the question itself.

The book is quite valuable for its data and for its framing of theoretical questions vital to the interests of anthropologists working in Nepal. Although Haimendorf writes-off historical causation as a possible motivating factor in the formation of trading societies, he presents much valuable historical data. Though many may disagree with an ethnographic point here and there, the overall scope of the book points out how far many of us have to go in our own research.

Objets et Mondes, L'homme et la Haute Montagne : l'Himalaya,  
Tome XIV, Fascicule 4, Hiver 1974, Museem de l'Homme, Paris. Price:  
about 18F.

Although it is not common practice for one journal to review another journal, we feel that attention should be called to the latest copy of Objets et Mondes. This is the third special issue devoted to the Himalayan region. The journal opens with a picture of Nepal's Annapurna and Daulagiri regions taken from the Earth Resources Technology Satellite from an altitude of about 500 miles, and in a way, the photo symbolizes the studies of the geology and ecology of Nepal done by French researchers.

The magazine contains articles on geology (thermal springs) demography, archeology (done just east of Kathmandu in Timal, the article proposes future research in the Kathmandu and Pokhara basins on questions of earliest settlement), ecology (a description of Himalayan ecology by J.F. Dobremez which links-up to the study by Ph. Alirol found elsewhere in this volume), physical anthropology (an excellent study of the Marpha area in the upper Kali-Gandaki) and anthropoligy (a survey of the upper Seti River by Corneille Jest, movement in the Kali-Gandaki region by Monique Fort and the study by Toffin which appears in translation elsewhere in this volume). In addition, several studies by American and English scholars appear: Philip Denwood's, "Bhutan and its architecture", Messerschmidt's excellent, "Gurung shepherds of Lamjung Himal", Sacherer's, "Sherpas of the Rowaling Valley", and last of all Goldstein's, "Tibetan speaking agropastoralists of Limi", (which represents a continuation of the work on Limi presented by Goldstein in Contributions Vol. 2 No. 2). This journal represents a major political descision on the part of the French, for this is the first volume of the Objets special numbers on Nepal, to contain articles published in English. We welcome this, since it throws the magazine open to a new audience and to an extended number of scholars from whom contributions are now possible.

A.E.M

