

BOOK REVIEW

Monk, Householder, and Tantric Priest: Newar Buddhism and its Rituals. 1992. David N. Gellner. Cambridge University Press. Pages 428, Price £50.

Gellner's book concerns one of the latest studies on the Newars of the Kathmandu valley dealing with Newar Buddhism. Newar Buddhism, like the Newars themselves, has intrigued scholars from the days of Hodgson in the last century. In the whole of the Indian subcontinent, traditional Buddhism (to distinguish it from neo-Buddhism) has survived only in Nepal, where it has evolved certain intriguing features unusual to Buddhism elsewhere. Gellner's book presents this Buddhism from an anthropologist's perspective as it survives and is being practised by the Buddhist Newars today. The inquiry on the Newars is uniquely comprehensive and thorough.

Newar Buddhism managed to survive and preserve its distinct sectarian identity amidst an overwhelming Hindu milieu, prevailing not only in Nepal but also in India. It has to sustain itself entirely on its own, shorn of all intellectual and ideological contacts with the centres of mediaeval Buddhism in Nalanda, Vikramasila and Odantapuri in North India, after their destruction by the invasion of the Muslims there in the 13th century. In Nepal, even under the rule of the Newar kings, Newar Buddhism was obliged to exist within the framework of a caste society of a Hindu state. After the onset of the Shah rule in the middle of the 18th century, the odds faced by it increased even further. Today, Newar Buddhism has shed the monastic character of classical Buddhism, with its clergy living the life of married householders like everyone else. However, this has not led them to forsake their pretensions of being Buddhist 'monks' although they now serve their creed primarily by dispensing household rituals to their laity and acting as priests at Buddhist temples and shrines, which in practice resembles the role of the Brahmans in Hinduism. The title of Gellner's book tries to sum up precisely this underlying fact of Newar Buddhism.

The methods of study in Gellner's book, which is an ethnographic study of religion, consist of gathering data from direct observation and through

information and interpretation of religious acts supplied by the participants themselves. Such religious acts relate to the Newar Buddhists' outlook, world view, ritual practices, acts of piety, and religious behaviour in their daily life. To this Gellner adds material from his readings of the secondary sources on Buddhism and Nepal. Gellner's study of religion makes a different and revealing account of Newar Buddhism at variance with the purely theoretical, doctrinal studies derived from Buddhist scriptures and texts. He does not wholly eschew the use of religious texts in his work. But these are limited to ritual and liturgical manuals compiled by local Buddhist pandits, which he claims, bolster emic methods in anthropology.

In a sociological study of religion, the inner meanings and significance are best understood through a presentation of the practitioner's own viewpoint. Religious acts and vocations assume many forms and levels of performance. Such rituals have a multitude of names and social purposes. They have their annual and cyclic calendars, preparatory pre-ritual acts, venues of performance, and ritual items and accountments, with their standard and local terms of reference. These must be duly recorded and presented in their appropriate social context. In this aim, the study differs vastly from the mere doctrinal and philosophical enunciation of religion and description of its various rituals.

The current setting of Newar Buddhism leads Gellner to compare it with Newar Hinduism, Tibetan Buddhism and Theravada Buddhism. His concern for a synchronic study has not led him to ignore the doctrinal development of Buddhism in its principal historical stages, as despite some unusual features, Newar Buddhism remains, in essence, true to the teachings and ideals of Mahayana Buddhism. In its present form it has combined and carried forth the ideals of the Disciple's Way (*Sravakayana*), the Diamond Way (*Vajrayana*) and Tantric Buddhism (*Tantrayana*).

Gellner's emphasis on interpretative religion generally follows a Weberian approach. In one respect, however, Gellner differs from Weber. He faults Weber for seeking to minimise and disregard the role of the Newar Buddhist laity (Ures). In Gellner's opinion, the consideration of laity is also crucial.

The Vajracarya and Sakya Priests as well as their laity, represented by the Ures chiefly, have enacted their mutual roles and functions and expressed their affirmation of rituals in a well-ordered, hierarchised scheme. Gellner builds up and introduces a hierarchical notion in Newar Buddhist ritual performances which he intends to parallel with the social hierarchy and the caste-like gradation among Newar Buddhists. This has understandably permitted him to rationalize the Vajracaryas and Sakyas as closing in their ranks from other groups and adopting a hereditary principle of descent in social membership for themselves.

A hierarchy is indicated in the manner in which progression and advancement in spiritual attainment is gradually attained by the seeker. These ritual gradations have made a hierarchical rise in rank for a Vajracarya priest over all the others possible. The highest enlightened state of Buddhahood- the ultimate aim of a Buddhist practitioner- now stands to be epitomized by a Vajracarya who has scrupulously led himself through all these ritual steps. By the powers of these rituals, his monkhood remains unimpaired, even though he may actually be a married person and a householder.

Anthropologists are rarely willing to draw general conclusions from their study outside the narrow confines of their social groups in a limited geographical space. Gellner too sets out to define his limitations. His study is primarily based among the Sakya and Vajracarya members of Kwa-baha of Ward no. 15 of Patan city. It is partly extended to include the members of nearby Cika-bahi. But since Gellner's subject is one of the religions of Greater Tradition, and not just that of a village religion, his study required that he look beyond this group. This has meant including the entire city of Patan, city with its 80,000 population, and even discussing all the Newar Buddhists of the Kathmandu Valley as a whole. This is a strength rather than the weakness of the book, because it imparts greater validity to the book's conclusions.

Today Newar Buddhism is a bound and isolated entity: ethnically, culturally, historically and geographically. The very name Newar Buddhism testifies to this fact. This name does not impart a sense of national Buddhism in the manner of Sri Lankan, Burmese, Thai or Tibetan Buddhism. Nor is Newar Buddhism understood in the sense of a specific sect within Buddhism, such as the Theravada, or Gelug-pa, or Sakya-pa sects within Tibetan Buddhism. It is a religion practised by a small group of Newars in Nepal. It survives as a threatened minority religion in a Hindu kingdom. Lately, Newar Buddhism has voiced its assertion and greater urge for recognition in the name of a separate Newar ethnic and cultural identity.

It is uncertain whether the present unique features of Newar Buddhism evolved locally or were part of common legacy with mediaeval Buddhism in Bihar. A comparison cannot be made now, since Buddhism long ago ceased to exist in India. The erosion in monastic values might have already begun to creep into the lives of the great Buddhist Tantric Pandits in North India from where the Newar Buddhists could have received their cue. While all this is speculative, in other terms of Newar social and religious life, Gellner places the features of Newar religion firmly in a South Asian setting.

Although Gellner's work is a comprehensive study of Newar religion, any discussion of Newar Buddhism cannot avoid confronting the issue of whether it has totally veered from its celibate monastic path, whether today 'it is

Hinduism in all but name', or whether the Vajracharyas are modelled on the Brahman priests. Anthropologists normally refrain from making value judgements on the culture of the group they are studying. But for Gellner these are questions he must confront centrally. He has reasoned, sifted through evidence in the Buddhist texts, cited opinions of Buddhist Newars, and defended their Buddhism for having remained true to the teachings of the religion by refuting criticisms such as those of Buddhist protestant purists, Theravadins and religious modernists. To Gellner, Sakyas and Vajracharyas are nothing but Buddhist monks in essence. They undergo the vow of celibacy and monkhood for four days during the ritual of initiation (*bare chuyegu*) for their young boys. Ritual thus plays a powerful role of mediation, and it is a sure means to attaining Buddhahood (enlightenment) for an individual. Among all the Newar Buddhists, the life of pious Vajracharya is the most ritual-ridden one. Similarly, Buddhist egalitarian ideals are not forsaken, and Gellner compiles emic views on this question as well. One should probably mention here that, in history, Newar Buddhism has never been challenged or looked down upon by the Hindu Newars. Malla kings were as generous in their patronage towards it as they were towards Hinduism. It is nothing surprising in view of the fact that traditional Saiva and Buddhist Newars grew up and shared single space, time, political, social, cultural and economic systems in the Kathmandu Valley together. Today the most vociferous critics of Newar Buddhism come from followers of newcomer Buddhist faiths and outsider.

The book is conceived in 12 chapters. Introductory matters in chapter 1 explain the aims and methods of study, treat historical background and questions, such as Newar ethnic and numerical politics, Newar cultural nationalists and Newar cultural identity, position and social status of Buddhist Newars vis-a-vis Hindu Newars and other caste Hindus, Newar urban and village milieu, and matters of general Newar ethnography. Chapter 2 focuses on Newar caste organization. A comparative perspective on the Buddhist and Hindu Newar castes is drawn. Gellner deals with the ritual organization of space in Newar settlements, more specifically into its three cities, likening them to the concepts of a *Mandala*, division of space into sacred and secular domains and layout of space in each domain in relation to caste.

Gellner's attempt at explaining away the castes of the Sakyas and Vajracharyas may be referred to here. Gellner argues that the reverential higher status of the Vajracharyas and Sakyas could be a 'given' thing to them by the state. They are not listed among the 64 caste divisions of the social organization of 'Jayasthitimalla'. Their higher status may only be representative of a 'spiritual hierarchy', implying no vertical stratification,

according to him. He cites Cantlie on Assam, where castes are looked upon not in terms of 'high' or 'low', but in terms of 'big' or 'small' (p. 45). Gellner takes this idea of 'two centres' to draw parallels for the Vajracharyas and Sakyas, who also may be said to represent a 'moral universe with a sacred and protected centre'. He suggests a fresh classification according a Hindu or Buddhist denominational division or identity to the Newars. Accordingly, only the upper castes may qualify as unambiguous Buddhist (Vajracharyas and Sakyas) or Hindu (Brahman Rajopadhyayas and Chathari Shresthas) sectarians. The rest of the Newars below them, for whom he coins the word 'ordinary Newars', seem to have no clear-cut religious affiliation. This, seems to contradict his own idea elsewhere in the book of the importance of the role played by the Buddhist laity (the Ure caste) in the sustenance of Buddhism.

Chapter 3 examines the historical relationship between Hinduism and Buddhism and its continuing form in Nepal. Commonalities and antagonisms are clearly shown. The much vaunted idea of Nepal's religious syncretism in popular and touristic writings has been treated with an academic resonance. The next two chapters discuss what probably constitute the basic elements of Newar Buddhist religion. Newar Buddhism is a theistic religion, centering on the key concept of worshipping the images of Buddha. Newar Buddhism (i.e. Mahayana Buddhism) diverges on a separate course of development by adding new transcendent concepts and ritual practices.

Gellner characterizes Newar Buddhism as a 'Three Way Religion': the disciples' Way, the Great Way and the Diamond Way. It is also a three-tiered religious system through which an individual Vajracharya has to pass in his life-time. At the actual level of doing, the 'Three Ways' religion translates itself variously. It requires adopting a psycho-moral world view laid down in it, and the scrupulous adherence to some key rituals it prescribes. The totality of religious activity is neatly summed up in a table (Fig. 15).

The sociology of religious typology is said to fall in two parts: obligatory practices and optional practices. Obligatory rites further divide into those inherited from one's family and caste (*kuladharmā*) and the regular obligatory rites prescribed for an individual and built in his daily, monthly and annual religious duties. Similarly, optional rites split into what he terms 'supererogatory rites' done for extra merit, and 'instrumental religion', both being performed on an individual basis. His instrumental religion also includes having faith that illness is caused by malevolent spirits, and angry deities, and seeking cure through the services of a Vajracharya proficient in this medium. This last form is most probably a residual element taken from folk religious beliefs appended to Buddhism, which should have been ignored under the treatment of a soteriological religion, but could obviously not be

resisted from integrating into the scheme by an anthropologist.

The matters discussed up to chapter 5 provide a preliminary to the main treatment of religion arranged in the next five chapters (6-10). Chapter 6 describes the main elements of monastic Buddhism (*Sravakayana*) still embedded in the many ritual practices of the Sakyas and Vajracharyas. Chapter 7 outlines the Newar Buddhist's graduation to the Diamond Way (*Vajrayana*). It means embracing and enactment of the ideologies of pilgrimage, performance of life-cycle rituals, including that of the annual death-rites performed in the name of ancestors (*sraddha*), observance of religious fasts, and celebration of multiple other calendrical festivals. All these different forms of piety and religious acts are common to the Sakyas and Vajracharyas, the veritable monks of Newar Buddhism for Gellner, as well as for the Buddhist laity alike. The emphasis put in the Vajrayana religion on the diverse religious performances by its believers was the 'most important in the mobilization of the Buddhist laity' (p. 227). Gellner regards this single point to have saved Buddhism in Nepal, while overlooking it in India caused its disappearance.

Chapter 8 is wholly given to describing Newar *guthi*. Gellner's aim in treating the Newar *guthi* system so late in the book, and intergrating it within the body of the main religious discussion, is to point out two things in it, the principles of equality and territory in the working of the *guthi* and then to link these to the ideology of equality in classical Buddhism. However, *guthi* in Nepal need not be understood necessarily as a uniquely Buddhist contribution. More likely, its origin owes to the land system prevailing in Licchavi and pre-Licchavi times. The oldest *guthi* to be invented right from the earliest time seems to have been the lineage (*degu puja*) and death (*si*) *guthis*. Reference to *gosthis* (Sanskrit term for *guthi*) occurs in the Licchavi inscriptions (A.D. 5th-8th centuries). These *guthis* had existed parallel to the Buddhist monastic organizations of the time, the *Aryabhiksusamghas*. There were other forms of kindred group organizations in the Licchavi period, such as *devapancalis* whose structure and organization probably paralleled that of the *guthi*. Due to this popular *guthi* system in group organization and economic co-operation, wherein a commonly assigned piece of land formed the key financial basis to sustain it, *guthi* today has become a pan-Newar cultural heritage. The system of seniority according to age for determining head and members of the *guthi* committee should derive from the nature of the ancient agrarian extended household. So far as the system of rotation is concerned, the organization of the committee itself does not change, only the obligatory duties of members within it.

The Diamond Way culminates into a series of new cults which now rise up. For instance, the cult of the five Buddhas or the Cult of Cakrasamvara, the Tantric esoteric deity worshipped by all the Vajracharyas. The young Buddhist monk who had earlier entered the life of a married householder and took up to perform all the rituals prescribed for Buddhist laity, now ascends higher to become a full-fledged Vajracharya through mystic Tantric initiation rituals. The Vajracharya stands for a 'realized soul', who by achieving non-attachment and liberation, has attained his soteriological goals. Outwardly he may appear to have reversed the vow of monkhood, but in essence he continues to remain a monk. The use of Tantra and its various esoteric principles, symbols and ritual items in the life of a Vajracharya dominated by rituals, forms the subject of chapters 9, 10 and 11. Chapter 12 is a summing up and conclusion.

Throughout the book, the discussion on Newar Buddhism turns on the central issue of soteriology. Gellner has no doubts and asserts that Newar Buddhism is a soteriological religion. He sets out to say this from the beginning of the book. The characteristic features of Newar Buddhism, of which the Vajracharyas are the principal legatees today, are said to mark a decline from the pristine monastic form of this religion. The Vajracharyas have been made the targets of attack not only by the Theravadins and religious modernists, but also by their own Tuladhar clients. The Vajracharyas look particularly vulnerable in the face of such criticisms. They could suffer more setbacks and face the prospect of further erosion of the respect of their clients in the future.

Although an alien and relatively newcomer religion, the Theravada Buddhism is propogating itself aggressively and seems to be growing increasingly popular among the same Newar Buddhist clientele. Why should this be so? Why do the Vajracharyas seem to lose out to the Theravadins? It could be, despite Gellner's reasonings, that the soteriological claims of Newar Buddhism and the Vajracharyas' claim as the highest guardians and monks of traditional Buddhism are not convincing. Buddhist soteriology does not look credible without the exoteric practices of the vow of monkhood, celibacy and the life of worldly renunciation within it.

The problem of Newar Buddhism is that it claims to combine the functions of priesthood and world renunciation into a single activity. In contrast, the soteriological pretensions of Hinduism have never been seriously jeopardised, despite its many ups and downs in history (like any other major religion). This is because it did not do away with or forsake the idealism and practice of world renunciation sustained by its wandering ascetics and *sanyasins*. The Brahman does continue to fulfill his role from his place. He carries forth the role of a priest, religious preacher, and by virtue of this, retains his high

social rank. The Hindu ascetic and the Brahman are not competitive with one another, or bent on undoing one by the other, but are in a mutually complementary role to serve Hinduism. A Hindu world renouncer does not see the need to attack and erode the authority of the Brahman in carrying out his priestly duties and in leading the life of a virtuous Brahman. Nor does the Brahman see in the world renouncer a threat to his own existence and religious authority.

The organization and presentation of the material is excellent. Useful appendixes are given immediately at the end of the relevant chapters. One admirable style which Gellner consistently follows is to present the summary of his ideas in tables. He has also adopted the method of numbering sub-headings in each chapter. It has no doubt made cross-referencing easy, but one drawback of this style is that it restricts the flow of the narrative and somewhat renders it into a disjunctive reading. Gellner has solved the problem of providing a separate list of glossary for technical and indigenous terms by the use of the English equivalent of such term in the text first and by giving their local gloss in parenthesis. Occasionally, his choice of English equivalents reads awkwardly. One instance of this is his translation of *Kalasa* as 'flask'. 'Water-pot' would have been a better translation. Two exhaustive indexes at the end of the book further facilitate the use of the book. All said and done, it is an important and authoritative work on the Newars, written with great panache, insight, and scholarship.

– Prayag Raj Sharma

BOOK REVIEW

A Descriptive Grammar of Nepali and An Analyzed Corpus. 1991. Jayaraj Acharya. Georgetown University Press, Washington D.C. Pages XIII+378. Price: Not mentioned.

Jayaraj Acharya's *A Descriptive Grammar of Nepali and an Analyzed Corpus* (JRA) is a recent contribution in the tradition of Nepali grammar which runs along Ayton (1820), Turnbull (1887), Arjyal (1905), Singh (1911), Pande (1912), Dixitacharya (1913), Dahal (1974), Bhattarai (1976), Sthapit (1978) and Matthews (1984). Among them Arjyal (1905), Clark (1963), Dahal (1974), Sthapit (1978), Matthews (1984) and JRA are descriptive grammars. Clark (1963), Dahal (1974) Sthapit (1978) and JRA are based on linguistic principles. Dahal (1974) and Sthapit (1978) are descriptions of Nepali on a structuralistic model, and JRA is based on a tagmemic model. Sthapit (1978) takes both Nepali and Newari data for his analysis, but Dahal (1974) and JRA focus wholly on Nepali. Thus, in the tradition, we can say there are only three major reference grammars on Nepali—Clark (1963), Dahal (1974) and JRA. Dahal (1974) is a bit distracted also towards eastern and Dajeeling dialects, but JRA is firm and fixed on standard Nepali.

From the title of the book it is clear that there are two parts in JRA. The first part is *Grammar*, which builds a framework to analyze Guru Prasad Mainali's story *Naso*. The second part covers the whole story in Devanagari script, a translation of the Devanagari text, clause structure and phrase structure analyses of the story and vocabulary items, both in the order of occurrence and in alphabetical order. The first part contains a general introduction to the Nepali language, followed by descriptions of the sound system, the writing system, morphology and syntax of Nepali.

Jayaraj Acharya is not a new name in Nepali grammar, since earlier in 1980 he tossed a bombshell onto the tower of Sigdel's prestige by finding a one-to-one correspondence of influence of Nesfield's English grammar on Sigdel (1919). JRA is the same author's Ph. D. dissertation submitted to

Georgetown University, USA.

One of the important contributions of JRA to Nepali grammar is that the author has given all or most of the examples from Guru Prasad Mainali's story *Naso* in Nepali. Thus JRA seems to attain observational and descriptive adequacies required by a grammar. This system is not new in the Nepali grammatical tradition, since Ayton (1820) is based on three stories of Munshi, Turnbull (1887) on *Vaitalapaccisi* and Grierson (1916) on *Bhagavadbhaktivilasini*. JRA however, is a more powerful grammar than its predecessors.

The content of the book is as follows:

- Chapter 1 : A general introduction to the Nepali language;
- Chapter 2 : The nature of segmental phonemes in isolation and sequences;
- Chapter 3 : Syllable structure, phonotactics, phonetic stress, pitch, juncture, rhythm, pause, and intonation;
- Chapter 4 : The writing system, including numerals
- Chapter 5-6 : Form classes;
- Chapter 7-10 : Noun phrase;
- Chapter 11-12 : Adjectival phrase;
- Chapter 13-16 : Adverbial phrase;
- Chapter 17 : Verb phrase;
- Chapter 18-22 : Clause structures
- Chapter 23 : Description of the **internal** structure of a sentence;
- Chapter 24 : Reported speech and **elliptical** sentence.

There are three major descriptive works on Nepali grammar in general—Clark (1863), Dahal (1974) and JRA, but JRA has not utilized Dahal (1974), and he consequently missed many important generalizations already made by Dahal (1974).

In phonology, Bandhu *et al.* (1971), Dahal (1974), Sthapit (1978) and Pokharel (1989) are major research works of which JRA has only referred to Bandhu *et al.* (1971).

The major research works on syntax are Southworth (1967), Bandhu (1973, 1978), Dahal (1974), Sharma (1980), Wallace (1985) and JRA, but JRA has only read Southworth. Hence JRA has not followed the discipline of Sanskrit *guruparampara* (survey of literature).

Similarly on morphology, JRA has missed Dahal (1974), the only outstanding work.

JRA has followed Turnbull (1887), Turner (1921), Clark (1963, 1969), Pokharel and Dahal (1970), Hari (1971), Dahal (1974) in noting that the so-

called retroflex stops of Nepali are fronted (p. 16). Pokharel's (1989) palatographic and linguographic experiments find that those stops are apical alveolar, in contrast with affricates /c, c^h, j, j^h/ which are laminal alveolar. JRA is correct to note that retroflex is not a place of articulation, but manner (p. 19).

Pokharel (1989), with his palatographic, radiographic, spectrographic, kymographic and eschillographic experiments, has found loss of nasalized /O/, (JRA: 13) breathlessness of voiced aspirates in noninitial environments (JRA: 26, 73), longer nasalized vowels than their oral counterparts (JRA: 31) and intervocalic /h/ deletion (JRA, 'postvocalic': 74).

Grierson (1916) finds that there is lack of contrastive vowel length in Nepali. Turner (1931) Dahal (1974) and JRA support Grierson (1916).

Intervocalic 'h' deletion is first noted by Turner (1921) and supported by Turner (1931), Clark (1963, 1969), Hari (1971), Dahal (1974) and Sthapit (1978). We do not understand why JRA calls it 'postvocalic'.

Turner (1921) has already noted that Nepali affricates /c, c^h, j, j^h/ are alveolar rather than palatal. This observation is followed by Clark (1963), Bandhu (1971), Pokharel and Dahal (1970: 31), Hari (1971), Dahal (1974) and Sthapit (1978). Pokharel's (1989) palatographic experiments have also supported Turner (1921), while JRA (p. 19) has totally ignored his predecessors.

Srivastava (1962) has correctly located Nepali /n, l, r, s/ on the alveolar region. This observation is supported by Pokharel and Dahal (1970:31), Hari (1971), Dahal (1974), Sthapit (1978) and Pokharel (1989), but JRA (p. 19) labels them as dental.

JRA (p. 26) is correct to note that there is loss of contrast between /b, d, g/ and /m, n, ng/ after nasalized vowels.

In phonology, JRA has good observations on suprasegmentals (p. 36), rules of phonetic stress (pp 43-6), pragmatic use of glottal closure (p. 49) and grammatical role and functions of intonation (pp. 54-6). The extent of his detail in phonology extends even to the 'lengthening of high pitch vowel' (p. 57-9).

There are problems in JRA's phonemic chart (p. 63) as there is no logical sequence in the table. The Sanskrit system proceeds from larynx to lips (k, c, T, t, p); Henry Sweets and Daniel Jones adopted the reverse order but JRA has made a hodge-podge out of it. He failed to mention the allophonic bilabial and velar fricatives in the chart, although Clark (1969) and Hari (1971) have already noted their occurrence, and Pokharel's spectrographic experiments supported them.

In grammar, JRA is correct to note that the High Grade Honorific is common in actual social interaction (p. 80), that the comparative and

superlative constructions in Nepali are syntactic (periphrastic?) not morphological (p. 83); and that interjections are parenthetical minor semantically complete sentences (pp 85, 141). He has correctly associated the use of Nepali dative particle and animacy (p. 160). He gives a fine description of reported speech (p. 182-6) and explanation for the rule of gapping (p. 181).

There is no better description of Nepali clause analysis than JRA (pp 124, 171-6), although Bandhu (1973) is one of the milestones toward this direction.

JRA is equally correct to note the ambiguity between the nouns in apposition and compounds (p. 111). Pokharel's (1989 a) thesis that Nepali lacks post modifier is modified by JRA to read: "In certain instances the optional modifier slot occurs after the head slot" (p. 106) and his formula (p. 139):

1. SubCl = +Axis + Relator
2. SubCl = +Relator + Axis

However, JRA is suggested to make some minor corrections:

1. It was Grierson (1916), not Clark (1969), who used the term *Pahari* (p. 2) to denote a group of languages.
2. Nepali should be labelled 'Indo-Aryan' rather than 'Indo-European' (p. 2) is not correct in the context it is used.
3. In his map, Malayalam is missing and Urdu is located in Pakistan (p. 3)
4. His literature survey (pp. 7-10) is incomplete as the dictionaries of Balchandra Sharma, Pushkar Shamsar, Narendra Mani Adi and Paras Mani Pradhan are missing.
5. JRA claims 'to provide a detailed analysis accounting for all the items noted in previous grammatical descriptions of the language', 'an accurate description of the Nepali sound system: its segmental phonemes and their principal allophones' (p. 10). The above mentioned discussions clearly show that JRA attempts to bite off more than he can chew.
6. JRA says, "A comprehensive synchronic description of Nepali has never been attempted by any Nepali linguist" (p. 13). This statement is wrong because he has not gone through Dahal (1974) and Sthapit (1978).
7. The claims of JRA that "the use of Nepali as a literary language was first made only by Bhanubhakta Acharya" is wrong (cf Sharma 1982).
8. JRA's definition of syllables ("The environments in which the set of Nepali consonants and vowels occurred are called syllables", p. 14) needs correction.
9. Pokharel (1989)'s spectrographic formant chart of Nepali vowels shows that Nepali /a/ is the backmost vowel. The Chomsky and Halle (1968) system calls it a low back vowel, and Daniel Jones would name it a low

mid back vowel. Hence JRA's label "mid central vowel" (p. 15) needs modification.

10. In the literature of phonetics, laryngeal vibration (i.e. voicing) is not considered a manner of articulation, something JRA should modify (p. 17).
11. Allophones of /s/ which are given by JRA between slanted strokes (p. 27), should be transcribed within square brackets.
12. The velar nasal /ŋ/ occurs in word-initial position in the following words:
 ngyAknu 'to kick down'
 ngyAngro 'a mumbling person'
 JRA (p. 27) should note this.
13. JRA has missed lip-rounding in the description of vowels (p. 30).
14. According to JRA (p. 32), there is no syllable initial cluster in Nepali, but the word *prasTa* 'clear' (Sanskrit *spaSTa*) is a counterexample to JRA.
15. JRA is suggested to revise his claim that 'we can reasonably distinguish long consonants from geminates, at least in Nepali', by reading the chapter on length by Pokharel (1989). JRA has tried to be phonetic, but has missed several important generalizations already dealt with his predecessors. He writes several of his own futile impressionistic generalizations instead.
16. It is not clear whether JRA's statements on phonetics are based on experimentation or they are just hypothetical gossip. Hence, JRA's sonority scale (p. 40) is also dubious. His claim that "a light vowel becomes a heavy syllable if the syllable is nasalized" (p. 41) is wrong to cite Laxmi Prasad Devkota's last line from his poem *CAru: Aⁿsu sibAya rasilo aru Aundaina*. The underlined nasalized vowel *uⁿ* makes only a light syllable, not a heavy one.
17. JRA misinterprets PANini (1.2.29) to be talking about muscular tension or stress, (p. 43) but, it is in fact about rising pitch.
18. JRA's examples of emphatic stress' (p. 48) are, in fact, examples of intonation.
19. JRA is not consistent in the transcription of the bilabial approximant *va* of Devanagari alphabet. Sometimes (p. 62) he writes /v/ and sometimes /w/. In fact the Nepali bilabial approximant is not labio-dental (as in Sanskrit, Marathi and Kannada). It is a new phoneme developed in Nepali, and the Nepali writing system is not consistent in the transcription of Nepali /w/ and /v/ in Sanskrit borrowings (cf p. 72).
20. In Sanskrit, all sibilants are realized retroflex after /K/. Thus one conjunct for /KS/ is justified. JRA's claim that the *tra* cluster does not

occur in Nepali (p. 63) is wrong (cf *bhitra* 'inside').

21. JRA notes that about 80% of Nepali words are borrowed from Sanskrit (p. 63), but he does not mention by whom and where was this computation done.
22. The consonantal stroke (\) is called *hal* in Sanskrit not *VirAm* (cf. p.65).
23. About the correct definition of *anusvAra*, JRA is suggested to read Hoernle (1880) and not be confused with a symbol for a nasalized vowel and *anusvAra* of Sanskrit (cf. p. 70)
24. We cannot understand why JRA wants to treat *choro* 'son' and *chori* 'daughter' as separate lexical items independent of each other (p. 28). We think it is imperative for the author to read Pokharel (1991). JRA does not mention direct and oblique cases as inflections, but he considers the periphrastic plural marking particle *haru* and other case marking postpositional particles as inflections (p. 78,99) This leads him in to serious theoretical problems. On the other hand *rAmro* (masculine), *rAmri* (feminine) and *rAmrA* (Plural) JRA considers under inflections of adjective (p. 79).
25. JRA's generalizations on tense, mood and aspect are to be modified by reading Dahal (1974) and Pokharel (1992 a,b,c)
26. JRA thinks postpositions are uninflected (p. 85) and forgets about the inflections of - *ko* (masculine) - *ki* (feminine) and - *kA* (Plural).
27. JRA omits the modifier-noun agreement and only notes the Subject-verb agreement (p. 104).
28. JRA's classification of nouns is traditional.
29. JRA's list of family names, etc. (pp. 104-5) is not linguistic.
30. *u-series* is missing from the list of pronominals (p. 130).
31. The label 'postpositional noun phrase' (p. 132) is a misnomer. It should rather be called 'postpositional phrase'. The author seems to be misguided by the ergative and dative postpositions which generally do not change the grammatical category of the phrase.
32. *ko* is the postposition, which according to JRA (p. 133) occurs only with human nouns, but in his example *AsAko badala* 'instead of hope', *Asa* 'hope' is not a HUMAN noun.
33. *Aphu* 'self' is not nasalized in standard Nepali (cf. p. 137).
34. There are unnecessary repetitions in JRA.
35. About auxiliary verbs, JRA is insufficient. He is suggested to read Bandhu (1973), Dahal (1974), Sharma (1980) and Pokharel (same volume) on compound verbs to modify his generalizations.
36. The list of Dative-subject verbs (p. 150) is incomplete.
37. He has forgotten Bandhu (1973) in his clause analysis (Chapter-18)

38. JRA misuses the label 'ergative' (p. 167) (see Dixon 1979).
 39. Optative mood is missing from JRA, although it is found in the data.

In spite of the problems, JRA is a good, easy reference grammar of Nepali. Teaching of Nepali reported speech, stress, intonation, clause analysis, nominal and verb phrases together with the use of their modifiers and indeclineable particles has been definitely made easier and a bit more systematic by the use of JRA. Some of the shortcomings mentioned (and others that have not been mentioned due to short space and time) will hopefully be revised and modified in JRA's later editions.

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Bista, D.B. 1965. *People of Nepal*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar

Dhungel, Basundhara. 1980. "The Newars." In Sudha Paneru (ed.), *Traditional and Prevailing Child-Rearing Practices Among Different Communities in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan university, pp. 31-53

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