

reinforces the father figure on which the Nepalese show themselves to be dependent, and to which they abandon all their responsibilities in the event of failure.

Bista very clearly sets out his position on this matter:
 "Nepal cannot look to the cornucopia of foreign aid for solutions to all its problems and it is no use blaming it for the negative fallout of fatalistic belief.... It would be short-sighted to wish it away (150-151)."

The author briefly mentions a few studies criticising foreign aid without endorsing their position. Here the reader may be surprised to note that the acute incisiveness - tinged with humour - that Bista applies to his own society, disappears as soon as he mentions the

matter of foreign aid. Is this because he considers that a criticism of this nature would be ungracious in view of Nepal's effective economic dependence on foreign finance? Has he perhaps taken his cue from the development literature that systematically adopts a tone of dutiful self-criticism? The impression with which one is left is that in this severe but optimistic message, encouraging his compatriots to get a grip on themselves and to change their own society, the author himself adopts the role of the father-figure, admonishing his children without wasting his time on explaining to them what only grown-ups can understand, the serious business of politics.

Anne de Sales

NEWS

Himalayan Studies at Oxford Today

Over the last twenty years, as an increasing number of scholars of Nepal and the Himalayan region have progressed through Oxford University, many of these have been working in 'Social Anthropology and Ethnology', while others have come from Forestry and Oriental Studies. In the last decade these have been joined by Nepalese students, studying for degrees at Oxford across a full range of academic subjects from maritime law to medicine.

In the past there have been occasional seminars on Nepal at Oxford. In 1989 these included two presentations by the Swiss geologist and development specialist, Toni Hagen. At the Asian Studies Centre of St. Antony's College he talked from his unparalleled forty year's experience of Nepal; his talk for

the Refugee Studies Programme at Queen Elizabeth House covered the history of the Tibetan Refugee relief programme for which he was largely responsible in the 1960s. In 1990 Graham Clarke gave a seminar on Politics and Development in Nepal for the Contemporary South Asia Seminar Series, again at Queen Elizabeth House. This year at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology, David Gellner gave a Seminar on the types of approaches utilised in the study of Newar religion, a complex topic with its own long literary history. More recently, in the wake of Nepal's election a panel discussion was convened to debate the future of Nepal in the Contemporary South Asia Series (by Neville Maxwell and Graham Clarke). This seminar was exceptionally well-attended, and chaired by Tapan

Raychauduri of St. Antony's College. Andrew Hall (Foreign & Commonwealth Office) introduced the election and the Results; Graham Clarke (Queen Elizabeth House) discussed the wider social and economic context; Michael Hutt (SOAS) talked on politics and culture, and Tom Januzzi, a political scientist from the University of Texas at Austin, discussed Indian parallel and influence. H.E. Bharat Keshar Simha, the Royal Nepalese Ambassador in the UK, played a vigorous role in the debate and discussion that followed. A number of ideas were expressed. One was that populist forces within institutions and society over the next few years will be more important than the election itself in deciding the future of Nepal; another was that the religious world-view of Nepal was still reflected in a special kind of civil order. Few disputed the view that India, politically, economically and culturally, was becoming ever-more important in Nepal's affairs.

A significant development in Himalayan Studies at Oxford occurred earlier in 1991, in January, when the Himalayan Society and Environment Seminar was started. This Seminar was held by the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology in conjunction with Queen Elizabeth House, and organised by Nick Allen, Graham Clarke (convenor) and David Gellner. The seminar originally was conceived of as an open workshop in which those concerned with Himalayan Studies in Oxford could come together and discuss work in progress, whether the subject was ecology, ethnography, history or any other subject area. However, in practice, this first series had a more well-defined focus, concentrating on the relation of local communities to the broader civil order and environment in

which they are located. At the same time most of the presentations originated from village-level studies and were backed by a history of direct, long-term participant-observation. With the exception of Melvyn Goldstein's brilliant presentation on Tibet (alongside Catriona Bass and Tsering Shakya for the Refugee Studies Programme), the seminars all concerned Nepal. This was not just in the sense that they happened to be village studies conducted in Nepal, but in that they placed the village in a broader national, cultural and ecological context.

It may be that in Nepal, more than in most other countries, anthropologists have come to practical terms with the institutions of development. A number of serious ethnographers of Nepal from the Anglo-Saxon world now have moved to positions with one development agency or another, and this practical *rapprochement* was reflected in the intellectual convergence of the seminar. The vocabulary of culture and community was combined with accounts of the state and administrative institutions, of economic changes through markets, and of changes in culture through "modernity" and development.

Charles Ramble (Woodlands Institute) gave a paper on "Cultural Considerations for Park Management in Eastern Nepal". Here he described how the different social orders and ideologies of Rai-Limbu and Tibetan as contrasted to Hindu groups resulted in different problems for Park Management. One important conclusion was that environmental education needs both to take account of, and to build on, local conceptions of what is or is not natural.

Nick Roche (Overseas Development

Administration), who was formerly attached to the Forestry Department at Oxford, Swiss Development Co-operation in Nepal, offered a paper on "Projects & Communities: a Forestry Case-Study in the mid-hills of Nepal". Much of his material, like that of the subsequent presentations of Jane Carter and Graham Clarke, came from the hinterlands of Sindhu-Palchok and Dolakha Districts to the north-east of Kathmandu. He discussed the history of land tenure and rights to the products of the forest in Nepal: secure communal and private rights to natural resources were placed squarely at the centre of any agenda for environmental conservation in the mid-hills of Nepal.

Melvyn Goldstein (Case-Western Reserve University) gave a paper on his long-term fieldwork in Tibet with the title "Traditional Nomadic Pastoralism and Ecological Conservation on the Tibet Plateau". He discussed the ecological pressure on the grassland in relation to live-stock numbers, and gave a detailed historical account of changes in the pastoral practices of the Tibetan nomads of Phala. Climate and social organisation were among the factors he considered in an elegant consideration of theories of progressive or cyclical ecological change. He questioned the widespread assumption of a current general degradation of the quality of grassland and wildlife in this area of the plateau, and concluded that traditional practices and peoples were on the side of environmental sustainability.

Andrew Russell's (Oxford) paper was entitled "Issues in the Ecology and Demography of Nepal", and concerned concepts of the environment, both in western ideology and in the far eastern hill-village of Dandagaon where he recently conducted fieldwork. His pres-

entation concerned to what degree environment, as much as any other concept, was culturally defined. His conclusion was that, at least in Dandagaon, environment as understood by local people themselves is as important, if not more so, than the Himalaya "environment" of crisis theory.

Jane Carter (Oxford) gave a paper on "Village Communities and the Private Ownership of Trees in Nepal: a Case-Study". She moved down a level from the long-term concerns of crisis theorists with environmental/population linkages to focus in detail on perceptions and practices in agriculture at the micro-level of the household farm in villages in eastern Nepal. The traditional local taxonomy of plants, fodder and food was seen as a major conceptual framework behind people's everyday ideas and behaviour in relation to nature, and in this context of culture and community she discussed measures for crop, land and tree protection.

Chris McDonough (Oxford) gave a paper on "Social Aspects of Small-Scale Water Mills in Nepal". He examined the varying types of small-scale hydro-electricity ("micro-hydro") projects in the Terai and pointed to the gap between the project documents, with their planned technical and financial specifications of inputs, budget size, and projections of performance output and broad-based benefits, and the more limited and partial effects of these projects in practice, as they were captured by local pre-existing elites, and/or fell into disuse through lack of maintenance.

Graham Clarke (Oxford) gave a paper on "Local Views of Development and Political Order in Highland Nepal", based on fieldwork carried out in the mid-seventies. He argued that develop-

ment or *bikas* often was seen as a kind of "mana from heaven", a gift as much sacred as secular and bestowed from above, which tended to reinforce the pre-existing social hierarchy. The traditional state, which often - backed by religious and military sanction - exacted an agrarian surplus, was contrasted with the nascent modern state. In this second and more populist order in Nepal, political legitimacy often comes from the distribution of materials downwards by the state for immediate consumption, with the benefits of development projects being handed out in exchange for votes in return. This process of distribution was illustrated by tracking one project from the political centre down to the village, and showing how the various levels of civil society benefitted. The political support in return was illustrated by an account of the *panchayat* and *jilla* elections in that same area in 1986 & 1987.

Harald Sklar (Norwegian Institute of International Affairs) gave a more wide-ranging talk on "Indigenous Peoples of Nepal". Here the issues of local rights versus those of the central state, and the question of just who is indigenous, came to the fore. The convoluted history of migrations in Nepal, historically complicated both by the topography and the relations to neighbouring polities, and now by a modern state structure, made the interpretation of modern international conventions for indigenous people an extremely demanding task.

John Horberry (Environmental Resources Ltd.) first studied anthropology at Cambridge before moving to ecology and development. His seminar had the title "Natural Resource Management for Sustainable Development: a Study of Feasible Policies, Institutions

and Investment Activities in Nepal with Special Emphasis on the Hills". It derived from his copious study carried out by Environmental Resources Ltd. for the World Bank, and funded by the UK Overseas Development Administration. The study consists of a major literature review with a consideration of the long-term relations between environment, population, energy needs, and migration in Nepal. The implication here in some ways was similar to that of the earlier Seminar on "Nepal after the Elections". One way or another, the linkages between Nepal and India were of fundamental significance to the future of both the country and its people. The ODA attended this presentation, the last of the current series, which was held at Queen Elizabeth House (International Development Centre).

The focus of this first Himalayan Society and Environment Seminar series at Oxford has been largely on Nepal, and it may be possible to publish the proceedings at some future date. Research at Oxford also is being conducted on Western China (at the Institute of Social and Cultural Anthropology) and Tibet and the north-west Himalaya (at Queen Elizabeth House and the Pitt-Rivers Museum). The hope is that such thematic seminars and workshops on the Himalaya and mountain regions of central Asia will continue in Oxford in this and other seminar series in years to come.

Graham E. Clarke

Workshop on the May 1991 General Elections in Nepal

The first general election under the new constitution of Nepal was held on May 12, 1991.

The Institute for Integrated Development Studies (IDS), Kathmandu, in collaboration with a team of American scholars led by Prof. Leo E. Rose of the University of California at Berkeley conducted field visits to many districts of Nepal during the election campaign period to study the evolving multi-party political system of Nepal as reflected in the first general elections.

A workshop was organized by IIDS in Kathmandu on May 17 at which time most of the election results had just been announced.

The IDS study team and the American scholars presented their preliminary assessment of the election results and the implications for the evolving political development of Nepal. The workshop participants included other academicians, political observers and activists and representatives from other research organizations also involved in studying the 1991 Nepal General Elections.

A Final Report on the IDS study on the 1991 Nepal General Elections is being prepared and will be ready by October 1991.

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International Symposium on
Environmental & Hormonal
Approaches to Ornithology
(Garhwal Himalaya)

Birds not only enrich our lives with their aesthetic and food value but are important indicators of environmental degradation and have been instrumental in unfolding some of the funda-

mental principles of biology. An international meeting was organised in Garhwal Himalaya on 27 November - 1 December 1991. These mountains envelope in their fold environmental extremes of tropics to tundra affording a unique opportunity to study how birds adapt to diverse ecosystems - all within a range of 150 km!

The aims of the Symposium:

- to give an impetus to ornithological researches in the Indian subcontinent
- to highlight the contribution of ornithology to environmental conservation, socio-economic development and biological concepts
- to provide a platform for Indian ornithologists, specially younger enthusiasts, to interact with leading authorities in the field from different countries
- to bring together researchers, conservationists, managers and policy makers to evolve strategies for effective management of Himalayan avifauna

The symposium comprised invited lectures and contributed papers on applied (game birds, pest birds, habitat & species conservation, captive breeding) and basic aspects (ecology, physiology, special sessions on reproduction, migration, biological rhythms) with an emphasis on the environment and on adaptation to the environment (hormones).

Local organiser:

Dr. Asha Chandola-Saklani, P.O.B. 45, Garhwal University, Srinagar Garhwal, U.P. 246 174 India; Fax 0135 28392 (international) 0091 135 28392, Telex 585-345 EBD IN; 585-232 PAL IN. Patron: Prof. S.P. Nautiyal (Vice-Chancellor).

Hon. President: Prof. J.P. Thapliyal.

New Appointments at Tribhuvan University

After the former office bearers had tendered their resignation and these were accepted, the following new appointments were made in August of this year: Prof. Kedar Bhakta Mathema (Vice-Chancellor), Dr. Devendra Raj

Mishra (Rector), Mr. Sudarshan Risal (Registrar). The resignation of the former Chief of the Research Division, Dr. Krishna Bahadur Thapa, has been accepted in September. His functions have, for the time being, been taken over by the Chief of the Planning Division, Dr. Panna Lal Pradhan.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Symposia

The Himalayan Forum at SOAS 1991-1992

- October 10th - John Bray: "Ladakhi History and Indian Nationhood."
 October 17th - Shelby Tucker: "A Journey through the Kachin Hills of northern Burma."
 November 21st - Mark Temple: "Population Growth and the Labour Shortage in Nepali Agriculture."
 November 28th - Graham Clarke: "Local Views of Development and the Political Order in Highland Nepal."
 December 5th - Yoshiro Imaeda: "Bhutan Past and Present."
 January 16th - Andrew Russell: "Sanskritisation and Identity in the East Nepal Hills."
 January 23th: Dave Richards and Bijaya Sainju: "Nepal in the 1990s: Donor-Driven-Democracy?"
 January 30th: Tsering W Shakya: "Tibet and China in 1950: Coercion or Diplomacy?"
 February 6th: Sonam Chhokipology "Ritual in a Bhutanese Village: an Historical Perspective."
 February 13th: Surya Subedi: "Monarchy and the Constitution in Nepal and Bhutan."

February 20th: Michael Hutt: "On the Nepali Poet Mohan Koirala."

March 5th: Dipak Raj Pant: "Street-Level Political Action in Nepal."

Sixth Conference of the International Association of Tibetan Studies, Fagerness (Norway)

August 21 - 28, 1992

The conference is to be hosted by the Institute for Comparative Research in Human Culture, Drammensveien 78, N-0271 Oslo 2, Norway, (Tel. 02-554207). Workshops have been planned on the following topics (conveners mentioned in brackets): 1. "The Tibetan Canon" (Dr. Helmut Eimer, Indologisches Seminar der Universität Bonn, Regina-Pacis-Weg 7, D-5300 Bonn 1, Germany); 2. "Sacred space, geography and pilgrimage" (Prof. Lawrence Epstein, Dept. of Anthropology, DH-05, University of Washington, Seattle, WA 98195, U.S.A.); 3. Tibetology and social anthropology (Dr. Patrick Kaplanian, 4, Rue Neuve Popincourt, F-77011 Paris, France); 4. Buddhism and modernity in respect of Tibetans (Dr. M.P.S. Chandel, Central Institute of Higher Tibetan Studies, Sarnath, Varanasi 221 007 U.P., India);