

view - of Bhutan as a despotic feudal state that has expelled one-sixth of its population to forestall demands for democracy - was less thoroughly propounded in the papers presented, but the various debates that took place over the two days, as well as a vigorous protest from the UNHCR representative against allegations of careless registration of Bhutanese refugees, meant that both sides of the argument were presented less dogmatically by the end of the conference. By popular demand, a woman who had worked in the refugee camps in Nepal gave a brief impromptu presentation and answered questions.

The Kathmandu-based Human Rights Organisation of Bhutan, in an editorial in the December 1992 issue of its monthly *Bhutan Focus* stated: "That the conference is to take place in faraway England gives us some cause for rejoicing. There is hope that unaffected members on the panel will bring pressure to bear so that objectivity does not become a casualty." The conference, inevitably, failed to clarify the political issues: instead, it impressed upon the minds of all those present the complexity of the real situation. It also demonstrated the extent to which research is required into the historical process of eastward migration from Nepal.

The principal issue that loomed over this conference was the presence in Nepal

and India of about 100,000 displaced people, the majority of whom have probably come from Bhutan, representing a significant proportion of its total population. Because the issue is highly emotive in Bhutan - where it is tied up with a perceived threat to the nation's sovereignty - and in Nepal - where it is considered to be a part of a repression of democracy and human rights - frank and open discussions are only possible far away. Up until this conference, the Bhutanese government had never exposed itself to uncensored and unpredictable questioning in an open public forum. SOAS had an important role to play in bringing together proponents of differing views: the academic environment was felt by the Bhutanese government to be relatively safe. Perhaps the most satisfying memory of the conference is of the second evening, when members of the Nepalese Embassy, the UNHCR and the Bhutanese government, having consistently disagreed with one another for a total of 16 hours, relaxed together over drinks in the Senior Common Room.

The conference is receiving coverage in the Bhutanese and Nepali media, and has been reported on the BBC World Service and Deutsche Welle. It is intended to produce a volume of selected papers.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Conference

14th Annual Conference of the Linguistic Society of Nepal

The Linguistic Society of Nepal (LSN) will hold its 14th Annual Conference at Kirtipur Campus, Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, on November 26-27, 1993.

The Society invites for papers in the

following areas:

Tibeto-Burman and Indo-Aryan languages; phonetics and phonology; syntax and semantics; sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics; orthography and lexicography; historical and comparative linguistics; applied linguistics; linguistics and literature.

A copy of your paper or an abstract of about 200 words should reach the Society by October 31, 1993. The Society regrets for not being in a position to provide any funds

for travel, board, or lodging. It will, however, be helpful in arranging lodging. LSN welcomes your participation.

On the occasion of its 13th Annual Conference the Society published its journal *Nepalese Linguistics*, vol. 9, November 1992.

Exhibition

Building the Bridges to the Third World - Toni Hagen's memories of Nepal

An exhibition on the occasion of his 75th birthday

A special exhibition of photographs and objects from Toni Hagen's Nepalese collection will be held at the Wissenschaftszentrum Bonn-Bad Godesberg from 1st of July to 22nd of August 1993.

The geologist Toni Hagen was the first person to undertake geological explorations 1950-1958 (largely commissioned by the UNO) in the hitherto forbidden land Nepal. During his work he gained an intimate

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knowledge of the people and their problems; from 1960 to 1961 he conceived and led the successful programme for integrating Tibetan refugees and helped set up their carpet industry. After 1962, Toni Hagen worked in many countries as a specialist in development for the UNO. Since then he has visited Nepal regularly and witnessed all the stages of its rapid development. Today he is still renowned as one of the best experts on Nepal.

A book comprising Toni Hagen's memories of Nepal is also available. The exhibition is open to the public Sundays till Friday 10-17, Thursdays 10-18 and closed on Saturdays. For further information phone 0228-3029.

Susanne von der Heide