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REVIEW ARTICLE

Stepping into the Public Arena Western Social Anthropology on Development Processes in Nepal

Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka

Bourliaud, J., Dobremez, J.-F. and F. Vigny (eds.) 1990. *Sociétés rurales des Andes et de l'Himalaya*. Grenoble: Versants.

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After ten days of Nepalese and Western scholars listening to each other on the occasion of two conferences on recent processes in the Nepalese society held in Kathmandu in September 1992 (1), the periodical *Himal* pointed out in its review a "schism that grew between some foreign and Nepali research camps". While stressing the urgency perceived by Nepalese scholars to address the issues of the socioeconomic development of the country and to attack local problems through, for instance, applied research, Pratyoush Onta, the

author, quoted in a prominent place a Nepalese colleague's opinion on the Western contributions to date: "foreign scholars have done research with no relevance to Nepali society for many years". As is the case with all fundamentalism, it is impossible to argue with such a critic. However, a reply is necessary in order to continue what has been established over four decades (as apparent from Onta's article as well): a dialogue between both "camps".

Such a dialogue is all the more important, since, according to *Himal*, the Western social anthropology of Nepal faces to some extent the same problems that are encountered by our Nepalese colleagues educated within Western traditions: the enormous critical debate about epistemological and ethical issues concerning the Western representation of the "other" and the Western control of discourses on the representation of truth about the other - a debate going on in India for instance through the project of "Subaltern Studies" (2) - has finally reached the public forum in Nepal.

The critical voice in *Himal* has not (yet?) been raised by the "objects" of anthropological inquiries. These basically remain silent within the scientific realm, though not entirely: in October 1992 Alan Macfarlane presented a revealing paper in Oxford about Gurung activists' involvement in his and Sarah Harrison's project to translate Pignède's *Les Gurung* (1966) into English. While in Nepal, and later by fax, he was repeatedly asked to add comments upon specific passages of the book in which the former "objects" of inquiry felt misrepresented. Those whom we study in the course of our research show an interest in

the way they are described. We may expect that these kinds of queries will come up in public more and more.

Our Nepalese colleagues increasingly ask uncomfortable questions about their role within scientific, governmental and donor institutions, fearing that so far their work has basically benefited the funding agencies and themselves. They are in a double-role since the ongoing societal process affects their living and working circumstances. At the same time, as experts, they have something to say about the form of this change. Realizing that all over the world intelligentsia tends to associate with "power", solutions are sought to find a way out of this predicament. Many call for applied and action research, and, as mentioned, claim to abandon the traditional social anthropology as pursued mainly by Western scholars. I cannot agree with the basic imperative demanding that all scientific research be immediately useful, nor do I agree with the complaint that Western scholars have yet to contribute any knowledge about pertinent societal processes in Nepal. On the contrary, I shall try to indicate the scope of Western research on "development", understood as a comprehensive process of societal change, while our direct cooperation with donor institutions will only be a minor issue. The relationship between theory and practice (e.g., in the form of action research) will certainly be an important topic in future encounters between the Nepalese and their Western colleagues. The criticisms raised are a welcome and a much needed opportunity to assess our role in understanding the nature of Nepalese development.

It is no coincidence that the debate on the contribution of social sciences to Nepalese development was only brought to the public after the Nepalese citizens won the battle against the political establishment in Spring 1990. This debate is to be seen in the context of the democratization process, in the course of which many values and

institutions formerly taken for granted are being fundamentally questioned. In this process the Nepalese and Western experiences differ. I do not know how many of my Western colleagues have been facing the same problem I had when in Spring 1987 I was prevented from presenting some critical findings from the field in Kathmandu because I wanted to talk about things "that could not be". Still, the political system has not interfered with my research (or so I believe), and it seems that it has not affected the research of other Western scholars, even if many were careful not to raise, for instance, the issue of ethnicity in public. But why then does the Western research lack, with few exceptions, critical analyses of the political system or of the politico-economic relations? Did we follow the "rule of hospitality" that demands that we do not criticize the host? But who are our hosts?

The gap between our genuine concern from afar, and our Nepalese colleagues' daily confrontation with Nepal's societal conditions, even if they are by and large in privileged positions, is best demonstrated by the book *Nepal. Perspectives on Continuity and Change* edited by Kamal P. Malla, that was published just before Spring 1990. (3) Several Nepalese social scientists who contributed to this book were risking their privileges in the fight against the former "establishment" long before the "Movement" had broken into open. None of the critical Western publications can be so full of metaphors, allusions and texts-between-the-lines like several articles in this collection.

Though the introduction of the multi-party-system and decentralisation efforts form part of the substantial societal transformation in Nepal, tremendous problems persist, as do striking inequalities. The emergence of differentiated public fora, especially in urban areas, is in itself a sign of change and a new field of orientation for those who come here to do research on societal change. However, under the

changing circumstances new "holy cows" are coming into existence, and a substantial share of Nepalese people lack access to the public sphere, except when they are *targets* of interventions designed by experts who are putting forward their specific world views and (pre)conceptions about their objects. "Development" or "societal change" is to a large extent a process of emerging and/or changing *links* between societal subsystems. Viewed from the socio-anthropological perspective concerned in the first place with local societies, it is most pertinent to understand how these are increasingly being "embedded" in larger societal systems (such as the state). Even though some social anthropologists dread the mere idea that their research could relate to "development" at all, it is a new area for our inquiries to conceptualize links where partly incompatible world views, visions, knowledge and technologies, systems of production and circulation, and authority patterns meet and often collide. It is then our task, in my view, to bring our knowledge into the development debate in order to counterbalance the wide-spread tendency in the development discourse to reduce "traditional" life-styles to socio-cultural factors that "lag behind". It is equally essential to understand the nature of power relations involved in the process of "lifting out" social relations from local contexts of interaction and their "restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space" (4), especially by the media of money and expert systems.

1. Social anthropology and socio-cultural factors

This review is meant to discuss some of the issues which have constituted Western research on societal processes in Nepal, the results of which were published after 1985. Only a small portion of the existing publications could be "digested" here, but I hope to be able to sketch some important areas of inquiry and to point out several apparent deficiencies which prevent the

emergence of a fruitful and complex development debate within the social anthropology of Nepal. Some of the results presented by the geographers, economists and political scientists who have contributed to our knowledge will also be discussed. Since deep and long-lasting personal, and, to a lesser degree, institutional relationships between Nepalese and Western scholars have significantly structured the social anthropology of Nepal, it is also impossible to avoid quoting our Nepalese colleagues. Given my endeavor to present some of the most recent publications, there will be no space to do justice to the earlier contributions by Ch. von Fürer-Haimendorf, J.T. Hitchcock, Ph. Sagant, L. Rose, J. Sacherer, P. Caplan, A. Manzardo, D. Messerschmidt, P. Blaikie, J. Cameron, upon which present research is based to a large degree. (5)

At present, a growing number of social anthropologists, who are otherwise involved in "traditional" research, occasionally turn to development issues, probably because these, such as in the form of development projects, make themselves particularly noticeable in the field. That such encounters often result in embarrassment and doubt is testified in Todd T. Lewis's review article on Foreign Aid Processes in the Kathmandu Valley (1986). He describes his experience with the world of development workers and their projects as "extremely valuable but ultimately disillusioning" (1986: 168). Most social anthropologists, Nepalese and foreign, will agree with him that "the time should long be past when projects can be naive about socio-cultural realities or send in amateurs to design and implement critical efforts involving human survival" (ibid.).

The need to promote this perspective will be the *Leitmotiv* of this review. However, I suggest that we abandon the term "socio-cultural" which increasingly is applied to Nepal's peoples and/or local societies in the "development" jargon. While a few years ago it was essential to bring the terms "social" and "cultural" into the debate, nowadays this simplifying

phraseology disguises the complexity of human organisation to which any intervention must pay attention. The opposition between "development" and "socio-cultural factors", overtly or covertly present in many publications and project documents, conceals two crucial facts. Firstly, "development" is (or has) a culture as well, notwithstanding some experts' insistence that the Western rationality underlying the technical cooperation is "beyond culture". As Burghart points out in his article on health development, "the health planner sees himself as a scientist, or as a purely *rational* administrator, whose own cultural background (be it Nepalese or foreign) does not impinge on his own *decision-making*. It is other people, lacking professional knowledge, who are influenced by 'cultural factors'" (1988: 207, my italics). Secondly, the above-mentioned opposition narrows down the scope of human agency. People at the "bottom end" of the development hierarchies are not just embedded within specific social or cultural systems but have to make rational choices, for instance as economic or political agents - a fact that has often been neglected or played down in the development discourse so far. It is our task to challenge faulty stereotypes that are often repeated in public. How the Nepalese people are presented in the public is crucial, for, as Pigg remarks in her innovative article on social representations and development in Nepal: "Images of villages and village life accompany the promotion of development ideals" (1992: 491).

That the culture of development should become a new area of anthropological inquiry, was recently argued by Judith Justice. Her book *Policies, Plans, and People. Foreign Aid and Health Development* (1986) focusses on the Integrated Community Health Programme which was gradually transformed into Primary Health Care. Central to this book is the question: "how comes that information on social and cultural 'realities' [sic!, JPC] is generally not

used in planning health programmes?". For Justice, the reason lies in the nature of the Nepalese and international institutions involved, or rather in the bureaucratic cultures in which planning and implementing take place. I agree with the author that her study contributes to the much needed new anthropology "dealing with one of the major institutions now influencing our lives - the multinational organization, with its own goals and culture" (1989: 5). Having been herself exposed to the complex system of donor agencies, Justice is able to show the interfaces between governmental and donor agencies and the "people", and she discusses the possible role social scientists could play in facilitating the "meeting" process. While reflecting about this task, Justice describes the difficulties of social anthropologists interested in "modern issues": "One advisor repeatedly asked me why I was studying planners and the planning process instead of studying kinship, as other anthropologists did. (...) Ironically, knowledge of Nepali kinship networks could have increased advisors' understanding of decision making within the government. In addition to joking questions about why I did not carry a big stick as Margaret Mead did, I was most frequently asked what 'my group' was. When I replied, 'the Department of Health', or 'health planners', the conversation usually stopped" (1989: 136). Similar questions come from some social anthropologists as well.

A weakness of the book is that the author does not define what is meant by social and cultural "realities" (she never talks about societal divisions, conflicting interests etc.), and that she does not give a comprehensive account as to which elements in the "receivers" social life and world view condition their attitudes towards modern preventive and healing processes. Her section on "villagers' response to services" is far too short to bridge this gap, whereas other "socio-cultural" factors named throughout the book pertain basically to attitudes of the project personnel at

different levels of the planners' and implementors' hierarchy. The description of this hierarchy, the cooperation between the Nepalese government and the donor agencies (including constraints preventing it), the analysis of the impact of the international health policy upon Nepal, as well as the examples given about the planning and implementation process reaching down to the villages are, however, revealing. It is interesting to see, for instance, which ranks within the government are supposed to communicate with which ranks within the donor agencies (and with whom not), or how failures are deemed to occur when the government is under pressure to dispose of funds and when advisors are eager to produce quick results. There is also an interesting section on the bureaucratic culture rooted in Nepalese traditions which fits well into Dor Bahadur Bista's findings (published later) discussed in his *Fatalism and Development*. Besides suggesting that the social anthropology of Nepal should take up research on international and national institutions, and that development specialists listen to social anthropologists - the major value of this publication lies in repeated attempts to analyse the links between the "recipients" or "targets" of development projects and individuals and institutions of the Nepalese and international administration.

Obviously, this well-written book is primarily addressing planners and implementors; in Justice's eyes, the "dosage" of cultural and social issues depends apparently on what experts can digest; here I would have liked the author to go into more detail. A widespread dilemma becomes apparent here: what is obvious to social anthropologists is not known to the majority of those in charge of projects, who usually come from other disciplines, and, vice versa, academic scholars know little about the constraints of bureaucratic processes. How, is cooperation then possible? How is it possible, especially since, as Justice argues, our scarcely intelligible scientific language

is, not surprisingly, resented by development experts? Development experts are working under tremendous time-constraints (imposed by the system), seeking encompassing solutions, whereas we insist that realities of societal life are complex, hardly quantifiable, and to some degree unique. Justice suggests that anthropologists' approach to the planning process is different from that to gathering information (1989: 139). This is certainly a valid point, but, besides the ethical issue, it entails further practical problems. Let me come back to the basic question towards the end of this review, and turn now to two examples from the field of medical anthropology, which cast more light upon the issue of how to collect information about local societies (see also a small collection of articles in *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, vol. 4, a special issue on anthropology, health and development, 1976).

Linda Stone (1986) also inquires into Primary Health Care (PHC). She shows that there is also a gap between written intentions (that contain vague notions) and the actual procedures. Though this project emphasizes "community participation" (by now a tremendously widespread term in project documents), the author is doubtful whether this aim was really achieved. She argues that the project encountered problems for three reasons in Nepal: 1. "PHC fails to appreciate villagers' values and their own perceived needs. In particular, PHC is organized primarily to provide health education, whereas villagers value modern curative services and feel little need for new health knowledge. 2. PHC views rural Nepali culture only pejoratively as a barrier to health education. Alternatively, local cultural beliefs and practices should be viewed as resources to facilitate dissemination and acceptance of modern health knowledge. 3. In attempting to incorporate Nepal's traditional medical practitioners into the program, PHC has mistakenly assumed that rural clients

passively believe in and obey traditional practitioners. In fact, clients play active roles and are themselves in control of the therapeutic process" (1986: 293).

Stone indicates here how little is known on the donor side about people's actual knowledge, perceptions and attitudes. This deficiency is matched by the paucity of scientific data on "everyday" issues, such as productive practices or usages within the household. Burghart (1988) is a rare exception. He inquires into the cultural knowledge of hygiene and sanitation that he sees as the basis for health development in Nepal. He concentrates mainly on the complex issue of "water": on the criteria people use to evaluate drinking water; classification of water-sources; forms of domestic storage of water; indigenous methods of water treatment; and knowledge of water-related diseases. While discussing the adequacy of local knowledge of hygiene, Burghart examines the notion of "culture" that guides development interventions (see also above). While addressing the problem of getting planners to translate their concerns into the understanding of local people, he stresses that policies cannot be successfully implemented and taken up by a people if they do not acquire some positive meaning in terms of their local culture. But the process of acquiring some mutual understanding is impeded by the cultural complexity, including the fact that "cultural knowledge" is unevenly distributed across the culture. Also: "One might (...) learn the terms of the debate or the criteria by which something is evaluated, but one cannot formalize common knowledge for it is context bound: not merely by the purpose of the action (e.g. to decontaminate well water) but also by the persons who are negotiating the solution" (1988: 208-8). While describing the interaction between medical doctors and Maithili women (Terai) Burghart also warns: "cultural misunderstandings occur, despite the fact that everyone speaks the same language" (ibid.: 210). Here, a fascinating area is

increasingly opening up in both the applied and the theoretical context; studies on problems of development cooperation (transfer and translation of knowledge; power relations involved) could contribute to the theoretical framework in the anthropological field. To my knowledge, however, no comprehensive attempts that build upon the recent anthropological theories (6) have been published on related phenomena in Nepal, and Nepalese examples and related concepts have not found entry into the broader theoretical debate.

Similar concerns emerge in the broad field of scientific studies on the natural environment as conceptualized and shaped by people. It is a rather recent area of inquiry in Himalayan research, to pay attention to *environmental knowledge*, to *people's perceptions of environment*; and to *forms of management of natural resources*. (7)

The majority of the contributions so far stem from neighbouring disciplines (geography, biology, agronomy, ecology, economics) whose findings are being published, for instance, in the American periodical "Mountain Research and Development" (but it is then not surprising that anthropological research has yet to reach an interesting level of theorising). A useful collection of geographical approaches to "indigenous environmental management and adaptation" and to "conservation and human resources" is presented in No. 1 in Vol. 10, 1990 with two short introductions by the social anthropologists Don Messerschmidt and Linda Stone. Extensive research was done at the Institute of Geography at Giessen: among recent publications are Perdita Pohle's inquiry into the ethnobotany in Manang district (1990); Ulrike Müller-Böker's research on social and economic causes of the overexploitation of natural resources in Gorkha (1990), or Willibald Haffner's article on the use of ecological potentials in Gorkha district (1986). The activities of the Bemese Geographical

Institute were briefly sketched in Number 2 (1991) of this Bulletin. Several articles on Nepal are included in an important reader on sustainable mountain agriculture (Jodha/Banskota/Pratap 1992) that includes a large variety of topics in two volumes ("Perspectives and Issues" and "Mountain Farmers' Strategies and Sustainability Implications"). This collection is certainly of interest to social scientists. However, one might even suspect that it is symptomatic that social anthropologists were not invited to participate. The fact that they were not, may be seen, among other things, as an indicator of many "hard-core" scientists' suspicion about our objectives, methods and approaches.

Several social scientists have inquired into people's roles (8) in natural resource management. For instance, Anis Dani and Gabriel Campbell (1986) presented a document on people's participation in watershed management in the Himalayan area. The discussion of management is accompanied by the analysis of people's perceptions of local resource value, resource renewability, resource security, resource use management, and resource equity (1986: 35). Another interesting document, meant to contribute anthropological knowledge to a large development project, was produced by Charles Ramble and Chandi P. Chapagain (1990) in collaboration with Woodlands Mountain Institute's Makalu-Barun Conservation Project (Sagarmatha National Park). The first part of this document is a careful examination of the existing literature on society and culture in the project region (seldom do project documents present digests of existing scientific data; there is a widespread tendency to produce data compilations anew). Then follows a discussion of the Sherpas' and the Rais' attitudes to nature and nature conservation with some practical suggestions how to cooperate with the local population, firstly in order to understand their social relationships and cultural systems and to learn from the amassed

knowledge, and secondly in order to translate project objectives into the "local" cultural notions.

Ramble and Chapagain point to "world views in action". This topic is taken up by two other social scientists who have worked in Eastern Nepal (Andrew Russel's PhD. thesis on the concept of environment within the Yakha community has, however, not yet been published). Klaus Seeland has presented several articles in which he explores the notion of "environment" as shaped by nature, society and religiousness (1990: 5, see also 1986). He inquires into external factors (for instance the influx of Hindu agriculturalists) affecting the changes in environmental perception among Tibeto-Burman speaking groups who are not only increasingly exposed to new forms of production, and hence to new forms of interaction with nature, but also to new cultural values displayed by the powerful immigrants. In this context he asks how "cultural notions of environment shape patterns of social reaction to environmental degradation" (1990: 1), and seeks to establish the reasons for social erosion in rural communities of South Asia. Seeland's articles are rather rare attempts of theorizing on factors underlying cultural change, and of examining how cultural change relates to environmental issues.

Despite what has been said about suspicions about social sciences among "hard-core" scientists, interdisciplinary attempts regarding the relationship of man and nature in Nepal/Himalayas are on the increase. Two French books result from such cooperation. The first one, *Les collines du Népal central: écosystèmes, structures sociales et systèmes agraires*, consisting of two volumes ("Paysages et sociétés dans les collines du Népal" and "Milieux et activités dans un village népalais") is the outcome of a prolonged (9) multidisciplinary research carried out by ecologists, geographers, anthropologists and agronomists. Several of the articles included were even written by

interdisciplinary teams. It is a very dense publication, comprising important data, identifying relevant areas of inquiry, and aiming at enlarging the conceptual framework, even though descriptions prevail. Since the team concentrated upon one area surrounding the village Salme in Nuwakot district situated at altitudes between 1400 and 4000 meters, it was possible to give a rounded picture of the relations between man and environment while pointing to a striking ecological and cultural variation even within such a small research unit. The authors describe, in the first volume, the natural environment of the surrounding area, the local population groups (comprising a very interesting ethno-historical account of Tamang chiefdoms that existed in this area before the Gorkha conquest - written by G. Toffin, C. Jest, D. Blamont), the diversity of agricultural systems, factors for differentiation of agropastoral systems, and the variety and scope of local and regional exchanges. The second volume concentrates on Salme village and discusses the forest resources and their exploitation, the ethnography and demography of the local Tamang society, agricultural practices and potentials as well as husbandry techniques.

The study area comprises several disparate eco-zones. Denis Blamont first distinguishes two types: 1. mountain production in a cold and dry milieu (prominence of pastoralism with high mountain pastures, besides agriculture and trade), and 2. tropical mountain area with intensive agricultural production. Two intermediary forms are added: 3. a humid and moderate mountain production system (prominence of pastoralism, but with a large forest area and the possibility to practice more intensive agriculture), and 4. an intermediary form between 2. and 3. with dependency upon rice agriculture and pastoralism at the same time. The detailed examination of the interdependence between different forms of production within and between various zones as well as

of changes in productive forms that occurred here, provides a comprehensive picture of a small territorial unit.

Again, this book pays attention to the complexity caused by the tremendous climatic, natural and socio-cultural diversity in a mountain environment. Its value also lies in stressing the importance of pastoralism and the interconnectedness between pastoralism and agriculture, while usually research puts too much emphasis on agriculture and the social relations based upon it (plains perspective). The thoroughness of this book may not be appealing to development practitioners. Jean-François Dobremez, the editor, insists that this research project does not aim at any practical problems of development; rather it seeks to answer scientific questions. Still, the findings of this book are certainly valuable to development agencies. The results of the project have also been published in various article collections and other books, and, according to the editor, they have been communicated to Nepalese colleagues and officials through seminars. However, one may ask how the contents of this book can be disseminated to those within the Nepalese and the Western audience who are not fluent in French (and the same question pertains to a bulk of publications written in Nepali, German, Norwegian, etc.). With the huge amounts of "development"-money pouring into Nepal, setting up an excellent library on social research, containing abstracts of publications that were written in other languages than English, would be a comparatively modest project.

The second French publication concentrates on *Sociétés rurales des Andes et de l'Himalaya*, and thus stresses the fact that there is something specific to the mountain environment that needs to be explored. It is a promising attempt at bringing to light several interesting differences between Andean and Himalayan habitats and societies (different quantities of space at people's disposal; different relation-

ships between state measures and mountain peasant societies). The comparison is however not very far-reaching, and this volume is rather a collection of papers on different topics than a form of dialogue, lacking a concluding effort to conceptualize what is specific to the mountains. Its main value lies in initiating comparative research. (10)

The social anthropologists who contributed the Himalayan examples all concentrate on the question how *space* can be conceptualized by social science, and what kind of "local" categories there are. Gérard Toffin discusses different spatial levels of social morphology among the Tamangs of Ankhukhola, which intersect with spatial divisions given by forms of technological adaptation in the production process. Marie Lecomte-Tilouine gives an interesting account of perceptions through which space is being taken "apart" by a Magar society in Gulmi district. By giving a list of toponyms, the author stresses that symbolic dichotomies do not necessarily coincide with physical barriers. Claiming that "the village does not exist", Philippe Ramirez discusses the lack of homology of administrative units with "coherent" units which are given by natural features, economic or social reasons etc. These three short articles are imaginative and stimulating attempts to compare differing perspectives (e.g., of the local people vs. of government officials or of scientists) of the same (?) phenomena.

2. Space-time, economy, demography

Introducing the spatial perspective leads me to two attempts done outside social sciences and to think about the nature of development processes in the Himalayas. How does the fact that the mountain environment conditions relationships in space and time, affect the processes of change? The geographer Nigel Allan compares two models of mountains, and argues that new models are needed to conceptualize "mountain development". The altitudinal

zonation model, derived from biogeography, has been widely used as a vehicle for characterizing man's imprint on the mountain landscape (1986: 185). This model reflects successful human adaptation and manipulation of the great range in environmental conditions found in mountain habitats. Allan proposes an alternate model that takes into consideration the tremendous changes in productive practices and expanding markets which arose in the mountains (Alps, Andes, and the Himalayas) through road, track and bridge construction: "The altitudinal zonation model is no longer suitable for characterizing mountain ecosystems now that human activity is directed to new motorized transportation networks linked to a wider political economy and no longer dependent on altitude" (ibid.). In Allan's model the "plains" where there are societal centres (political-administrative centres, market centres) are increasingly encroaching upon the mountains.

Even though Allan points to environmental degradation as a consequence of enhanced access, his analysis of market forces integrating mountain economies is far too enthusiastic. There is no mention of the everlasting debates in social sciences (e.g., the dependency-models, applied to Nepal by various Nepalese scholars as well as by P. Blaikie, J. Cameron and D. Seddon) about the nature of the potential integration processes. While infrastructural development (expanding network of communication and transport) brings about crucial changes in the productive system and in the circulating process, accessibility may enhance the economic marginality in a periphery rather than reduce it - even though some sections of the population may take advantage of new opportunities. Inquiries about causes and consequences of market expansion in the distinct Himalayan environment constitute a new field of interest.

The renowned Indian economist Narpat Jhoda presents an alternative model

of mountain development (1992). He begins his inquiry by establishing mountain specificities. (11) The major characteristics of the mountains are their inaccessibility, in the sense of poor communication and limited mobility; fragility, given by their geological composition in particular; marginality, and diversity. In this model, "a marginal entity is the one that counts least in the 'mainstream' situation (...). Several entities acquire marginal status when they are linked to dominant entities on unequal terms". However, "mountains, owing to their heterogeneity, have several, often narrow but specific 'niches' which are used by local communities in the course of their diversified activities". Helping in this process are the human adaptation mechanisms as reflected through "formal and informal arrangements for management of resources, diversified and interlinked activities to harness the micro-'niche' of specific eco-zones, and effective use of upland-lowland interlinkages" (1992: 44-46). Jodha's approach to "mountain development" is much more cautious than Allan's who advocates opening up mountains to plains' dynamics. In his view, understanding the rationale of human adaptation mechanisms in the "niche" potentials can help in the search for sustainable development.

Jodha's model, however, also conceptualizes the mountains from the point of view of resources. It is again a plains' perspective, defining marginality in the sense of "too far", and "too little", that is, by pointing out specific deficiencies. It is obviously a very different perspective from the one prevailing among the social anthropologists who usually strive to acquire an understanding from the "top of the mountain", seeking to perceive the world from the point of view of the society studied. Jodha's detailed and differentiated model may then be seen as a point of departure to conceptualize "mountain development" from the human actors' perspective. While social anthropologists can contribute much

to the issues he raises, such as the scope of human adaptation under diverse conditions (see Dobremez 1986 discussed above), the most interesting question is how marginality can be defined in a positive way: as autonomy in seeking appropriate solutions (including strategies to "outwit" the interfering state); as interconnectedness of social systems, world views and nature (see Seeland 1990); and as specific properties of small societal entities to adjust to emerging opportunities quickly and innovatively (vs. potential sluggishness of large societies (12)) - a point that is briefly dealt with by Zivetz (see below).

And how can we conceptualize "local societies" anew? - Nowadays it is a most striking experience to "see" different worlds coming together in many villages - despite forceful tectonic barriers. While sitting in a remote Bajhang village, half devoid of male population due to their working as night-watchmen in Bangalore, interviewing a Brahmin priest on Dasain celebrations, and listening together to news on the Iraq war on Radio Nepal and the BBC in the breaks, I was made to realize the simultaneousness of various processes pouring into the place. Alan Macfarlane and Indrabahadur Gurung come to the conclusion that "the 'village' has to be conceived of now as essentially dispersed" (1990: 34). They argue that nowadays the Gurungs are reacting with a good economic sense to external market forces to which they adapt. Having lived on hunting and gathering in earlier times, "now, using the village as a base, they 'hunt and gather' all over the world, but their new territory is not the high pastures and thick forests of the nineteenth century, but the streets of Hong Kong, Bombay or Pokhara" (1990: 35).

"Mountain development", as conceptualized by Allan and Jodha, draws our attention in the first place to economic, demographic and environmental issues comprising such disparate and partly intersecting areas as: models of economic change and emerging linkages (dependency,

including center-periphery and circulationist models, models based upon the modernization theory), alternative strategies of (sustainable) mountain development, political economy relations, gender relations (including inequalities in access to resources), oppression, poverty, integration into the world economy, linkages between agriculture, trade and industrialisation, governmental policies (including international pressures), interconnection and conflicts of political, administrative and economic interests, local and regional exchanges, forms of cooperation (within households and communities), the connection between the micro- and the macro-level of the analysis; governmental and market mechanisms to enhance welfare, development policies (including import and export policies, subsidies, credit supplies), adaptive strategies to internal and external pressures, demographic factors, such as migration and population growth (in relation to the carrying capacity of natural environment, and to political economy), corruption and so forth.

Obviously, not all of the listed questions can be the object of socio-anthropological inquiries. The social anthropology of complex societies is in an everlasting process of defining itself. Many of the issues are subjects of economic and political inquiries, but there is no way of defining clear-cut professional divisions and areas of competence. No doubt, social anthropology has much to contribute. It is, however, striking how little attention Western social anthropologists have paid to this vast field so far (e.g., in comparison to the scope of socio-anthropological inquiries on related issues in other developing countries).

Poverty is not frequently discussed by Western scholars, though it is one of the major issues in Nepalese research (e.g., by C. Mishra). Besides the earlier work of Blaikie/ Cameron/ Seddon, and besides several articles by Stephen Mikesell, which

all concentrate upon class inequalities, Nancy Levine (1988) presents one of the rare contributions on economic and power relations in areas with scarcely monetized economies. (13) Levine concentrates on credit systems, indebtedness and poverty in six Humla villages. She concludes: "First, debtors and creditors in Humla neither stand ranged across any pre-existing social or ethnic divides, nor do they necessarily come from opposed social groups. Major loans are contracted between persons of the same caste or ethnic group, between have and have-not of any status, and loans play a major part in the village dynamic of changing economic advantage. Second, indebtedness is grounded at another economic level than the monetary economy and is more deeply rooted than modern needs for cash". I infer from Levine's detailed analysis that indebtedness and the resulting oppression cannot be discussed merely within class models. Subsequently, poverty ought to be studied also in the context of conflicts within small social units such as communities and even households. The themes of money-lending, forms of provision of rural credits, including the (partly newly emerging) forms of rotating credit associations ought to and certainly will be dealt with in studies to come.

There are not many Western attempts to analyse local economies and specific economic sectors in the context of the (changing) national economy (see, e.g., Schrader 1988). The major Western contribution in this area remains *Peasants and Workers in Nepal* (1979) (14) by Seddon, Blaikie and Cameron, which deals with poor peasants, rural artisans, porters, agricultural labourers, highway construction labourers, the urban labour force, and small business and petty bourgeoisie. Recently, Vivienne Kondos, Indra Ban, and Alex Kondos presented at the CNAS/ Sidney-conference in Kathmandu some results from their project on Nepal's manufacturing industry (see also A. Kondos 1987). After several years having passed

since the much discussed publications by the team Blaikie/Cameron/Seddon, a debate on how to theoretize on mode(s) of production in Nepal and on the related class relations is being carried on by Stephen Mikesell and Jamuna Shrestha (1988).

While poverty is a rare topic in Western research, so is also prosperity. As widely known, socio-anthropological research among upper strata is a difficult endeavour, since, for instance, prosperous entrepreneurs are reluctant to talk to strangers about the reasons of their success. Laurie Zivetz has succeeded in gaining access to entrepreneurs from several communities in Nepal: Newars, Marwaris, Thakalis, Sherpas, Tibetans as well as Gurungs and Manangis. In her book *Private Enterprise and the State in Modern Nepal* (1992) she explores the emergence and evolution of modern entrepreneurship in the context of Nepal's specific problems (size, lack of local raw materials, lack of access to sea-routes, India's political and economic strategy towards Nepal, the governmental constraints upon private enterprise). The most interesting section of the book is the analysis of why the above-mentioned minority communities have proved particularly successful in adopting an entrepreneurial culture, and also how the Newars' decline as Nepal's foremost entrepreneurial community has come about. In her very vividly written analysis, that is often "spiced" with proverbs and anecdotes, Zivetz comes to the conclusion that there is no single formula for success in business. But there are some regularities, such as a sense of community identity and internal cohesiveness; all the communities have gained their experiences in trade, and many have evolved internal systems to promote business within the community. "Most of these communities have inbuilt sanctions on the accumulation of wealth. However, in many cases they also place importance on relatively egalitarian social organisation and a measure of reciprocity within the community" (1992: 124). There is also the

tendency among the successful communities not to prevent women from venturing into business. One of the factors preventing the Newars from accumulation is identified in their reluctance to establish economic partnerships within the community. With regard to the issue of cooperation, it is interesting to see that a strong sense of unity based on cultural and social grounds may not be matched in the economic field; entering into economic relations with members of the same community is avoided in order to rule out frictions. Another revealing area of Zivetz's inquiry is her discussion of "marginality". While all the groups mentioned are marginal to the Nepalese society which is dominated by high-caste Hindus, each of the communities studied has been able to advance itself by building links with Nepal's ruling circles, through serving the rulers during the 19th century, and nowadays through establishing joint ventures either with Nepalese élites or with foreign entrepreneurs, and through bribery: "Social marginality - or, rather, minority status - has not prevented Nepal's entrepreneurial groups from co-existing quite successfully with the powers-that-be" (1992: 132).

Another area where various dimensions of inequality become apparent are *women studies* and studies on *gender relationships*. Many (female) scholars are actually conducting research on gender relations, female marginality and marginalization in the process of market expansion, prostitution, industrial labour in the urban context, and women's role in rural productive systems (the latter topics are being mainly researched by Nepalese scholars: Meena Acharya, Hisila Yemi and others). One recent area of inquiry is women's role in "community forestry" which will probably provide the most exciting data on female collective action. While in recent years a great variety of papers were presented at various conferences and seminars, or as project documents (one bibliography on women and

development was recently compiled at ICIMOD), I was not able to trace publications which would take up the issues introduced by Bennett/Acharya and their team (CEDA, 1981) in a similarly comprehensive manner. Valuable data were recently presented by Kate Gilbert (1992) who studied intra-family dispute over property and labour in Eastern Nepal as well as legal documents (Muluki Ain, 1978-79, Sections on Family Law). Gilbert analyses legal provisions for women in comparison with the actual practice within the confines of household and family. As usual, there is a large gap between existing rights and their means of enforcement. Even if they know their rights, women are "unable or unwilling to pursue (their) rights through the legal system because of the inherent conflicts between the legal rights offered to them and their own long-term self interest as members of families and workers in a subsistence economy" (1992: 733).

In recent years *demographic issues*, including the wide complex of migration, were mainly studied by Nepalese scholars (Harka Gurung, Nanda Shrestha, Poonam Thapa). (16) Among studies on family and household, an international team (Thomas Fricke, Dilli Ram Dahal, Arland Thorton, Willam Axinn and Krishna P. Rimal) has recently presented a report (Fricke et al. 1991), based upon research conducted among Tamangs in two areas within the Kathmandu Valley and within the upper Ankhlu Khola Valley over 11 months (1987/88). Economic change is seen here as one element of transformations in social organization with implications for family relationships, marriage, and fertility. It is, among other things, an interesting inquiry into changing patterns of household relations in the rural context: "Our hypothesis is that supports for high fertility in non-market economies are mediated by family organization through alliance building and household formation strategies. This organization is undermined when senior family members lose control

over primary production through processes, such as land fragmentation and the rise of educational and wage-labor opportunities" (ibid.). The report contains a discussion of the complementarity of ethnographic methods and of quantitative data collection, an overview of recent theoretical approaches to demographic transition, and a detailed bibliography. (17)

In view of its wide reception there is no need to comment extensively upon a recent comprehensive account on the political economy of social deprivation in Nepal, namely David Seddon's *Nepal: A State of Poverty*. After identifying the roots of poverty and inequality through the analysis of political and economic change since the "unification", Seddon examines the scope and the symptoms of the current crisis in Nepal. The deterioration of the natural environment and the population pressures are seen in the framework of an "essentially hostile social environment in which exploitation, oppression and discrimination are pervasive". The analysis of the economic basis of social inequality and social deprivation is followed by an inquiry into the role of the state. Conservative vested interests within the state bureaucracy and in the wider political economy, of which the government forms part, are crucial factors deepening the crisis. Seddon identifies the role academics as well as foreign aid agencies should play in providing effective support for those struggling to improve the living and working conditions of the Nepalese masses by presenting sharper and more critical analyses of the Nepalese society (the book appeared in 1987). Rightly, as we know now, Seddon identifies fundamental contradictions that became increasingly apparent in the course of the 80s, and that would eventually lead to political change. Seddon concentrates upon the necessary reforms in political and administrative bodies (including the legal system) as well as in governmental procedures. I would have preferred to put the emphasis not on the

"result" of the struggle as apparent in the new constitution, but on the process that brought about this change: as an indicator of a new societal force emerging in Nepal, a highly politicized civil society.

3. Interface between politico-administrative institutions and local societies

The encompassing processes of infrastructural integration in Nepal through enhanced transport and communication are, to a large degree, the result of governmental measures. At the same time, they provide a basis for further governmental expansion and the proliferation of state institutions, through which a large amount of development projects are channeled, even to the most remote regions of the country. So far, the governmental expansion to the 75 Nepalese districts (with more than 35 offices based in every district capital), rationalized by "the state" as decentralisation, has enhanced centralisation (there is some indication that the decentralisation process is now gathering momentum). (18) It has manifested itself in increased control over the citizens: maintaining law and order; controlling resources, e.g., through land and forest registration and/or nationalization; directing economic change and promoting welfare through central measures. It is difficult to assess the role of governmental institutions in effecting societal changes throughout Nepal, since there are other forceful factors involved. Certainly, a very important area where to find its impact is in establishing and strengthening existing institutional links with local societies. The emerging interaction between social entities with differing scopes (state vs. community) connects world views (including legitimacy patterns), rationalities, and that differ from each other power potentials. On the empirical level, it is important to understand the state in a threefold perspective: state as an autonomous agency; state as a steering mechanism; and state as reacting to internal (interest groups) and external (global politics; impact of international donor-

agencies) pressures. It is equally important to examine institutional aspects of "community life", including the process of institutional change and institutional innovation with its binding elements (e.g. world views) and discontinuities (such as unequal access to resources), and hence forms of cooperation and conflict within local social entities.

The *place* where state and people meet, can be located through examining the welfare functions of the state, the (re)allocation and management of economic resources, forms of law and order maintenance, and endeavours to establish and maintain legitimacy patterns on the one hand, and through understanding individual and collective action within local societies reacting to, and bringing about, specific state measures on the other, for instance through strategies to achieve access to public goods and/or to retain control over collective goods which the state seeks to appropriate, e.g. by the nationalization of forests. The Nepalese citizens' attitude towards the state - that can prove benevolent but also harmful - is ambivalent, all the more so because, with the increasing societal complexity, the state cannot redeem its promise contained in its self-portrayal as the major force of societal progress that it strives to retain. It is important to note, however, that while many Nepalese citizens try to benefit from what the governmental system as a developing agency has to offer, a substantial share of action occurs outside the realm of the state institutions.

Among publications focussing upon the interface between governmental institutions and "local" societies, Gilmour and Fisher's *Villagers, Forests and Foresters: The Philosophy, Process and Practice of Community Forestry in Nepal* is certainly a most interesting and useful contribution. This book was written with a practical purpose and addresses development practitioners above all: it is an attempt to elaborate a "holistic approach to community forestry" that is defined as the

"control and management of forests by the people to use them". Besides digesting a large body of recent literature on forests and forest management in a development perspective, the authors are very well acquainted with social, economic and political life in Nepal at various levels of the national hierarchy and are accordingly differentiated in their argumentation. Forests in Nepal are so ubiquitous that all major societal phenomena can be illustrated and analysed with reference to them. Accordingly, this publication is a treasure trove - be it in the sense of learning from the authors, be it in the sense of identifying gaps and future areas of inquiry.

The book is the outcome of interdisciplinary cooperation between a forester (Gilmour) and an anthropologist (Fisher), with a short introduction by a geographer (Jack Ives), and one chapter on "Cost benefit analysis", containing a critical assessment of economic approaches to project evaluation by Neil Byron. "Community forestry" is the focal point of several crucial debates about the quest for multi-disciplinary approaches (and the preventing constraints), about accepting that the profession of specialists is a culture (against conceptualising science as value-free), and about power relations (for instance between the national and local levels) involved in natural resource management. The forestry perspective prevails in the chapters: "The extent and importance of Nepal's forests" and "'Appropriate' silviculture"; the socio-anthropological perspective is stronger in "Community forestry as a social process", "Implementation", and "Political and institutional context: Can community forestry work?", while both disciplines are fruitfully combined in the chapters on "Indigenous forestry", "Research for community forestry", and "Monitoring and evaluation". The issue of the book is introduced by showing how the "old" concept of community forestry has recently become an important "paradigm" in the

development discourse. The authors draw upon their experience within the development institutions (especially in the well-known Nepal-Australia Forestry Project) pointing out a tragedy lying in the fact that substantial development intervention (measured by the quantity of resources spent) has neither reduced worldwide inequality nor enhanced the access of the poor and underprivileged social strata to natural resources. They discuss the fallacy of élitist approaches which assume that the modern science and technology incorporated by the Western educated élites are to be imposed upon the putative ignorant village people. The authors criticise the two widespread development stereotypes: the one presenting local people as incapable of sensible resource management and contending that people must be educated, motivated, informed, coerced, "convinced"; and the alternative: the "ancient wisdom"-view which sees the knowledge and activities of villagers as a reflection of the special and inherited wisdom of generations that enables them to solve every problem if only they are left alone. The approach chosen is to assess the scope of existing social mechanisms and technical knowledge in local management of forest resources: "We then need to recognise and support what is working and to *facilitate* local problem solving when things are not going so well" (1991: 56).

The authors take the diversity within and among local societies as given. Instead of trying to reduce the societal complexity to a unifying model that allows one to neglect "idiosyncrasies", they advocate interventions which are flexible enough to adjust to specific local conditions. The knowledge of local societies, as I infer, is translated into action in the sense of making the practitioners aware of diversity, without compelling them to know every detail. This awareness is the basis for designing projects that adjust to local conditions, acknowledging that members of "local

societies" are the carriers of the projects, including the planning process, instead of viewing them as mere "recipients". Arguing against uniformity, Gilmour, Fisher and Byron touch on some rather delicate points concerning the procedures of Nepalese and foreign bureaucracies involved: they argue against the need of formal committee structures (users' groups) to carry out projects, against the overall need to design formal growth/yield models to manage forests, and against the need for cash-flow budgets for tree production and management systems. This may not be surprising to social anthropologists, but in development practice one rarely encounters the argument that farmers will adopt new practices when and if these make sense to them - regardless of the sophistication of project designs on paper.

The farmers discussed are to a lesser extent individual household members, and to a larger extent local communities that do not necessarily coincide with any administrative boundaries. In recent publications, the collective spirit of local (non-Hindu) communities emerges as a broad issue, with much hope being put in its role in development processes. Gilmour and Fisher differentiate in this area. Probably having rational choice-minded planners in mind, whom they choose to convince, they stress the importance of social values and norms as important cultural elements that bind societies together. However they do not exaggerate the issue: "community forestry" is not only about cooperation, but also about conflict, about decision-making and reaching consensus, as well as about inequality within local communities involving different interest groups. (19) The authors give enough examples to demonstrate how difficult it is to mobilize collective action and what kind of internal frictions prevent cooperation, and how successfully collectives can manage. They describe internal dynamics by showing, for instance, how local ward leaders make claims on behalf of their constituents,

seeking to enlarge their power base; they also deal with the inherent difficulty of making project objectives "public" in the initial stage of development interventions.

The sections on the interfaces between the state and donor agencies, personified in Forest Department officials of different weights, and the local societies (ideally not represented by any leaders) are most interesting. Gilmour and Fisher show that projects are social processes - visible events of policy implementation "around" which the state apparatus and aid agencies organize their activity. In their analysis, two social systems (with their own values, norms, institutional arrangements and limitations) meet in various forms and situations. In both systems, the actors are bound by the constraints of their own system. (It is difficult to collect data on these problems, unless one is himself/herself, like the authors, part of the process.) The authors indicate specific negative stereotypes prevalent on both sides, making both "parties" distrustful about each other's motives and hindering concerted action. They make important remarks on the devolution of state control over forest resources in the overall process of decentralisation (that now finally seems to be getting underway). It is indeed paradoxical that at present the Forest Department "is being asked to use its authority to give away its authority!". In this process, District Officers are put into an ambiguous position which they try to exploit for their own benefit; they "have a tendency to hand over *responsibility* for management but keep important elements of the *authority* for themselves".

The state's failures in this process are described in the final section. As already done by Justice, the working of the national bureaucracy is criticized mainly with reference to the traditional political culture. Once more we encounter the *chakari*-complex, and the great reluctance of officials to make decisions. Personal attitudes, as shaped by traditional patterns, are certainly among the

most forceful obstacles to the overall development process. However, one is glad to credit Dor Bahadur Bista with writing so much on this problem, thus creating room to address new issues in the future, since cultural attitudes are but one factor contributing to the failures of the political-administrative bodies in Nepal. In the context of forest management in Nepal one would like to have a more comprehensive final discussion on institutional limitations acting upon the governmental bodies concerned: coordination of forest protection and utilization between various ministries and the Planning Commission; legal inconsistencies and problems with legal enforcement; institutional pressures created by various donor institutions active in this area; shifting economic policies and hence shifting assessments of the importance of forest resources in relation to economic development; conflicting objectives of the administrative and the political process respectively (see, e.g., D.R. Panday 1989).

Despite putting the main emphasis on the local efforts, the authors attach great importance to governmental bodies. They point repeatedly to the emerging dilemma of the state's power monopoly and the imperative need for self-restriction in the decentralisation process at the same time. They show how powerful members of local societies have succeeded in enlarging their power base by establishing links to state officials (see also Brauen 1984). Regarding the equity issue, the major role is attached again to state agencies! But is the state able to advocate equity demands? Despite having given much evidence to the contrary, the authors believe, for instance, that in the long run radical changes in the attitude of the institutions and individuals can come about, and that the Ministry of Forest staff will be able to ensure that forest management plans allow for the provision of products to all segments of the population. Apparently, Gilmour and Fisher untie the Gordian knot by expressing their hope in the government changing itself. But how can that happen?

Gilmour and Fisher do not explicate the models underlying their analysis (in the fields of new institutional economics, economic theories of politics, social organisation, political theory); and I am inclined to assume that they put too much emphasis on the state's role in creating societal change.

The question of the institutional channels through which interventions, such as knowledge or technology transfer occur, is nowadays addressed increasingly by development theoreticians. (20) The constitutional change in Nepal has additionally reinforced the scientific interest in political institutions, governmental policies as well as in the process of the Nepalese people's politicization, in the sense of discovering new social and political forces active in Nepal at the national and/or local level: "concerned citizens" undertaking action in solving societal problems (e.g., Human Rights Fora); political mobilization (strikes, protest against governmental measures such as the Tanakpur-issue); attempts to define and pursue measures of self-restraint (especially in view of environmental degradation) (21); and striving for self-assertion in defining and pursuing development objectives (aims, priorities, forms of implementation and evaluation).

The forceful *political changes* during the last decade gave impetus to socio-anthropological inquiries into the political process. Several authors have imaginatively related cultural values to political action: for instance Martin Gaenszle (1992) points out the symbolic importance of blood sacrifice as a tribute to the democratic movement. Bert van der Hoek (1990) poses the polemical question relating to the political situation before Spring 1990: "How can it be explained that the ever-changing political circumstances, especially of the last two centuries, are accompanied by the persistence of rituals of an utterly conservative nature?" (1990: 149). The democratic movement itself was documented (and illustrated) by Bonk (1990

and 1991), and the problem of *human rights* has been recently discussed by Krämer (1991). Not surprisingly, little research has been done (or published?) on institutional aspects of the government, on informal relationships between political factions, or on powerful interest groups and their action. Alex Kondos's article on corruption (1987) is one of the exceptions. Several articles on ethnicity, identity and national integration have been written by Western scholars (this issue was also addressed especially by P.R. Sharma on the Nepalese side, see also the "Ethnicity"-issue in *Himal*, 1992) for instance by David Gellner (1986) and Declan Quigley (1987) who discuss the nature of Newar identity. (22) Many earlier publications deal with political conflicts in villages (see, e.g., Blustein 1977). A recent low-caste attempt to oppose Brahmanic rules was described in the semi-documentary film *Makai* by Bieri/Garlinski.

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The inquiry into the ongoing socio-political process in Nepal concerns two major interrelated topics: the process of change in state-systems and the limits to statehood, and the ongoing political process, in the course of which hidden societal cleavages and pertinent questions are coming into the open. Nepal faces various specific problems rooted in her traditions, the Himalayan environment, and geopolitical conditions, but also global problems, such as the environmental degradation, that call for civil action all over the world. The process of politicization, as already mentioned, is accompanied by a critical examination of the existing order and power images. There are common themes of universal importance, such as the critique of the progress imperative; and the related debate on the sociology of knowledge, the function of science, and the role of scientists within the societal order. In the context of inequalities within the world system, conflicts among those who are part of the process may initiate attempts to think of

solutions. By questioning the adequacy of Western research, our Nepalese colleagues "dragged" social anthropology into the public arena. This should remain one of the "places" where we are to continue our dialogue.

Footnotes:

- (1) a. First National Congress of Sociology/Anthropology in Nepal. Structure and Transition: Society, Poverty and Politics in Nepal. Organised by Sociological/Anthropological Society of Nepal (SASON), 4-6 September 1992. b. The Anthropology of Nepal: People, Problems and Processes. Organised by the University of Sydney and CNAS, 7-14 September 1992.
- (2) Several *Subaltern Studies. Writings on South Asian History and Society* volumes have been published by Ranajit Guha since 1982 in Oxford University Press, Delhi; for a good overview see: O'Hanlon, R. 1988.
- (3) Kirtipur: Tribhuvan University, CNAS 1989.
- (4) Giddens 1990: 21.
- (5) I have omitted here the names of those scholars whose research is mentioned in this review. For political change see Rose/Scholz 1980 and several other publications by Rose and various collaborators, Goodall (1978), Borgström (1976, 1980), Caplan, L. (1975), Boggs (1982). On ethnic relations, and on ethnic relations and state see Burghart (1984), English (1982, 1985), Manzardo (1985), von Fürer-Haimendorf (1975, 1978, 1981), Höfer (1979), March (1979), Gaige (1975, on regionalism), etc. On social change see L. Caplan (1970), Poffenberger (1981), Prindle (1983), etc.
- (6) See, e.g., Fardon 1985.
- (7) While talking of "environment" it is also important to mention the urban settings (see, e.g., Herdick 1988), and human shaping of the habitat by constructing houses and settlements (e.g. Toffin 1991/1981). An important source on the present debates is *The Himalayan Dilemma* by J. Ives and B. Messerli (1989). Further research outside social anthropology was done by C. Rieger,

J. Carter, B. Brower, I.-M. Bjonness, J. Kawakita, and others.

- (8) It would be very interesting to have an inquiry into the notion of "people" in publications dealing with development.
- (9) Several research phases are distinguished in the introduction. The main period was between 1978 and 1983.
- (10) The above-mentioned publication by Jodha et al. (1992) also contains several articles on the Andes. See also *The State of the World's mountains: A Global Report*, edited by P. Stone (1992).
- (11) These are not necessarily confined to mountain areas but characterize the Himalayan features.
- (12) See, e.g., Hondrich 1992.
- (13) While going through the Himalayan Research Bulletin XI (1-3), 1991, I found several indications of recent research, such as by J. Fortier on Land Tenure, Labour Practices, and a Theory of Multiple Modes of Production in Jajarkot district, or M. Cameron: "A Critical Examination of Structure and Practice in Nepal's Jajmani system: Exchange, Domination, and resistance from the Perspective of Low Castes" (probably based upon her field data from Bajhang). Again, the majority of "critical" issues are being brought up by Nepalese scholars at various American Conferences. See also research done by H. Zimolong on power structure in a Hindu caste society in the western Nepalese village G. (Gorkha district) concentrating mainly on the oppression of low castes, and low caste people's perception of social inequality.
- (14) For a critical assessment of the application of the centre-periphery model, as is done in several publications by P. Blaikie, J. Cameron and D. Seddon, see Macfarlane (1990) and Mikesell (1988). However, pointing out theoretical deficiencies of their model is not meant to diminish the importance of their contributions to the political economy of Nepal in any way.
- (15) But there are many important recent contributions such as Enslin (1990), Allen/Mukherjee (1990), Schuler (1988),

Levine (1988), see also the literature on relations within households, and Kondos/Ban (1990).

- (16) A very useful earlier collection was presented in *L'Ethnographie*, 77-78 (1978), see also R.C. Peet (1978).
- (17) See also Fricke (1988), Seeley 1988, Gray/Mearns (1989).
- (18) See, e.g., Knall 1989; Lindsey 1991.
- (19) Gilmour and Fisher refer here to a large body of socio-anthropological data on indigenous management systems and forms: see, e.g., von Fürer-Haimendorf 1964; Campbell 1978; Molnar 1981, several publications by Messerschmidt. There is also an interesting publication by Ben Campbell on cooperative forms among the Tamang, forthcoming. See also Stone (1989).
- (20) See, e.g., Long 1988.
- (21) Being a pertinent issue in Western democracies as well, see, e.g., Offe 1989.
- (22) See also *Kailash* issue XV (3-4), 1989, containing contributions by M. Hutt, D.J. Mathews, A. Macfarlane, A.W. Macdonald, Ch. McDonough, T. Riley-Smith; and also Pfaff-Czarnecka (1989), M. Gaborieau 1993, and Anne de Sales, forthcoming.

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ARCHIVES

Nepalese Archives of the Department of Ethnomusicology in the Musée de l'Homme (Paris, 1960-1975).

Mireille Helffer and Anne de Sales

Early in the sixties, anthropologists and linguists within the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) started to collect oral and specifically musical traditions of various groups in Nepal. In 1966 the ethnomusicologist Mireille Helffer joined them and within a research programme directed by Prof. Millot, conducted several missions focusing on musical collections. Dr. Helffer then supervised the listing of all the collected documents - about 500 tapes that were presented to the Department of Ethnomusicology in the Musée de l'Homme. Each recorded tape was copied and classified in a file describing its contents (duration, place and conditions of recording, as well as the subject). A copy of the file was given to the collector. This is how Marc Gaboriau, Mireille Helffer, Corneille Jest, Alexander W. Macdonald, Philippe Sagant, and to a lesser extent Jean-François Mouel and Alain Fournier, presented their recordings between 1960 and 1975. A copy of Bernard Pignède's recordings (1958) was added to this very rich collection representing the Indo-Nepalese castes, including the Muslims, as well as most of the ethnic groups of Nepal.

It is regrettable that, since then, researchers who have carried out fieldwork, have ceased to present their recorded documents to the Department of Ethnomusicology in the Musée de l'Homme.

CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTIONS

1) The Indo-Nepalese castes

Two rich sets of recordings emerge. The first one concerns the *Gāine* repertoire,

popular songs of the *jhyāure* type, ritual songs such as *mālsiri git* and panegyric songs of the *karkha* type. Numerous missions were concerned with this caste of beggar-singers:

- 1961-62: A.W. Macdonald, assisted by Dor Bahadur Bista, recorded about a hundred pieces accompanied on the viol *sarangi*.

- 1966: survey by M. Helffer in the Kathmandu Valley and central Nepal (Pokhara area, Baglung etc.)

- 1966-70: recordings by M. Gaborieau in the Kathmandu valley and the Gorkha area.

- 1965-70: recordings by C. Jest.

The second important set of documents concerns the caste of tailors-musicians, the *Damāi*, recordings of whom were made in various areas of Nepal. In 1969, during a mission in Dadelhdhura (West Nepal), M. Gaborieau and M. Helffer collected an exceptionally rich body of musical material on the *dhohi-hudkiyā*. Besides these two specifically musical sets, various other recordings should be mentioned:

- tales and accounts related by Bahun and Chetri;

- recordings of linguistic interest;

- documents concerning the Muslims of the Kathmandu Valley and of Central Nepal (M. Gaborieau).

2) The ethnic groups

Musical samples were recorded among several ethnic groups such as the Chantel (C. Jest), the Gurung (B. Pignède and Champion), the Hayu (C. Jest), the Limbu P. Sagant), the Magar (C. Jest), the Newar (M. Helffer, C. Jest, G. Toffin), the Sherpa

(C. Jest, A.W. Macdonald), the Tamang (M. Gaborieau, M. Helffer, C. Jest, A.W. Macdonald) and among Tibetan populations of the high Himalayan Valleys.

These recordings illustrate various musical genres: seasonal songs accompanying work in the fields, planting out or harvesting rice, songs sung while gathering in the forest, sheep- or yak-herding songs and festival songs. The narrative songs are represented by the Indian epics of the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa and by the Tibetan epic of Gesar, as well as by chantefables (*bār*), by heroic accounts (*bhārat*) from West Nepal (to be compared with repertoires from Kumaon) and by such foundation myth as the Tamang *hvāi* and the Limbu *mundhum*.

Other recordings include performances by various categories of religious intercessors (*jhākri*, *lha-pa*, *puimbo*) as well as ritual music of the Tibetan Buddhist and Bonpo traditions.

COLLECTIONS OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

About a hundred musical instruments collected in Nepal by various researchers, especially by C. Jest, are kept in the Department of Ethnomusicology in the Musée de l'Homme. The whole instrumental range of the *Damāi* is represented (long trumpets, oboes, kettledrums of various sizes, and cymbals). Among the drums used by the religious intercessors there are single-sided drums such as the *rnga* of the Gurung, the *ring* of the Chantel, the *damphu* of the Tamang, as well as double-sided drums like the *dhyāgro*. Mention should also be made of lutes (*sgra-snyan*), small fiddles with sympathetic strings (the *sārangī* of the *Bādī*), hourglass drums (the *hudko* of the *dhohi*) and a few instruments used by the Newar.

USE MADE OF THE COLLECTIONS

The collected recordings have been used for the sound-tracks of films and for exhibi-

tions, and provided the basis for the following publications:

Helffer, M.

1969a: "Fanfares villageoises au Népal", *Objets et Mondes* IX/2: 51-58.

1969b: *Castes de Musiciens au Népal*, record 30cm/""t, Musée de l'Homme LD20, with a booklet in French and English, the Nepali text of the songs, photos, musical notations (no longer available).

Helffer, M. et Macdonald, A.W.

1966 "Sur un *sārangī* de *gāine*", *Objets et Mondes*, VI/2: 133-142.

1968 "Le vers népalé chanté", *L'Homme* VIII/3: 37-95 and VIII/4: 58-91.

English translations in A.W. Macdonald: *Essays on the Ethnology of Tibet and South Asia*, Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1975: 175-265.

Helffer, M. and Gaborieau, M.

1968 "Problèmes posés par un chant du Tihar", *Ethnographie*, 68-89.

1974a: "A propos d'un tambour du Kumaon et de l'ouest du Népal", *Studia Instrumentorum Musicae Popularis III*, Stockholm. Musik Historika Museet: 75-79.

1974b: Remarque sur l'utilisation des tambours-sablés dans le monde indien, le Népal et le Tibet", *ibid*, 268-272.

CONCLUSION

This collection is the legacy of an era when neither radios or cassette players were known in Nepal. It can therefore be used as a reference that enables one to evaluate the changes in repertoire and styles over a period of more than 30 years. A number of works in progress are using the collection in this way (J. Glodé, C. Tingey, Ph. Ramirez, H. Weisethaunet).

It is hoped that this summary will encourage young researchers to deposit their recorded documents with descriptive files in archives where they can be consulted. Only in this way can they be of value to future research.

TOPICAL REPORTS

Economic Development, Participation, and Decentralization in Nepal

Bruno Knall

Nepal figures in three lists of UN statistics. Because of the low per capita income, it belongs to the Least Developed Countries (LDC); with regard to the consequences of the oil crisis, it figures in the list of the Most Seriously Affected Countries (MSAC); and since it has no direct access to sea, it is classified as one of the Landlocked Countries. Seeing these and other well-known parameters of underdevelopment, one needed to ask why Nepal has failed to produce a higher rate of economic growth and, above all, to improve the living standards of the poorest groups of the population.

That the concepts of "decentralization", "participation", "development from below" and "basic needs strategy" have increasingly gained in importance in the context of the economic and social development of the Third World is due not least to the fact that the often - quoted "trickle-down effect" has proven insufficient. In other words, planning as decreed and executed by top-level instances has failed in letting the poorer groups participate in economic growth. A new development paradigm claims the active participation of the population, in particular of those social groups which have hitherto been deprived of the benefits of development. At the institutional level this participation necessitates a change from centralism to a more decentralized way of planning in which the processes of decision - making and implementation are to be shifted to a much larger extent than it has been the case till now from the national to the local instances. Five arguments may be cited in support of this new paradigm:

- (1) The success of development projects largely depends on the participation of the population both in planning and realization. Those concerned the most are thus put in a position to articulate their needs and ideas and to contribute local resources, such as capital, labour and material. In addition, the use of appropriate technology warrants the integration of the project into the local population's way of life.
- (2) Participation enhances the people's trust in their own capabilities, strengthens their solidarity and ability to self-help.
- (3) Participation furthers democratization; in this sense, democratization is synonymous with decentralization.
- (4) The inadequacy of ministerial bureaucracy in rendering public services in the fields of transport, health, education and social welfare provides a further argument in support of decentralization and participation. Participation may offer a palliative in that the people, thanks to their acquaintance with the local conditions, can make use of their own skill and know how.
- (5) Participation gets a process started which is likely to effect a change in the attitude of non-local bureaucrats and experts who now have an opportunity to acquire a better understanding of the local population's needs, values and social structure.

While one cannot expect from these two strategies to work miracles, they should nevertheless be regarded as utterly important components in, or even preconditions of, a steady growth in underdeveloped national economies. This insight has in the meantime been widely accepted, and in what follows I shall exemplify its implications with reference to Nepal.

April 1990, when King Birendra abolished the Panchayat System, marked a major divide. To be sure, participation and decentralization were not inexistent prior to this date; what lacked, however, was suitable political and economic framework that would have facilitated the manifold attempts in the field to unfurl their full effect. Development planning was initiated in 1955 as a part of the instrumentarium of the Five Years Plans. It is a widely accepted view that no plan can be successful in its implementation phase unless it fulfills two criteria, namely the criterion of communication and the criterion of active participation. The former is fulfilled if there exist adequate channels of information between the planning agency, the public sector (ministries, state or mixed corporations) and the private sector (industrial companies, professional associations, trade unions, consulting firms, research institutes, etc.). This criterion also implies that the measures to be taken are formulated in a language which is intelligible to all participants in the process, and to the population in particular. The second criterion, that of active participation, stipulates that, rather than being the task of an esoteric group of technocrats, the implementation be carried out with the participation of individuals and private organizations, such as cooperatives and rural communities. A predominant majority of the population must see in the plan an expression of their own needs in order to be prepared to submit to the efforts and sacrifices the implementation requires from them.

As a matter of fact, the first three Development Plans in Nepal were initiated and executed exclusively from above, that is, by the National Planning Commission in loose cooperation with the ministries concerned. Only in the fourth Development Plan (1970-1975) do we find some rather reluctant attempts to make provisions for people's participation. Chapter I of the Plan states explicitly: "According to the Panchayat System's goal of enlisting greater cooperation of the people in the economic develop-

ment of the country, attempts will be made to make involve Panchayats of various levels in the process of both plan formulation and implementation in order to make the participation of people in the local development work more active and dynamic." Such programmatic aims are not lacking in the subsequent Five Year Plans either. They remain, however, wishful planning which made investment funds available not only to the public and private sectors, but also to the panchayat sector, and expected from the panchayats at the district, village and town levels to mobilize additional funds and labour. Dr. Shrestha, former Vice Chairman of the National Planning commission, aptly described this potential of participation in stating: "A plan can enlist an active and creative participation of the common people in the village only when it is fully reflective of their genuine needs, hopes and aspirations and also provides an effective outlet to ventilate their grievances."

The first onset to achieve a genuine break-through towards participation and decentralization was made in the seventh Five Years Plan (1985-1990). A Decentralization Law, the first one in the history of Nepal, was promulgated in November 1982, but it took two more years to work out the administrative provisions in the execution of this law. This attempt assigned a central role to the direct beneficiaries of projects at the district, village and town levels. It envisaged a procedure in which the projects were to be conceived at the lowest levels and then passed on to the district to be integrated into the district plan by five expert committees; after its approval by the District Panchayat, the district plan was to be submitted to the National Planning Commission in Kathmandu. Unfortunately, this procedure could not be followed in all 75 districts, partly because of the delayed provisions and partly because the local decision makers were not sufficiently trained for coping with their task. To meet the demand for trained personnel, I developed, in collaboration with some other foreign experts and with the

financial support of the Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale Entwicklung, a curriculum for a three-month course to train Local Development Officers. That despite their good qualification these LDOs failed to effect a decisive and long-term impact must be attributed to the fact that the above-mentioned criterion of communication remained unfulfilled, since the officials of the various ministries were unwilling to come to an agreement with the LDOs over individual projects.

In addition, the Panchayat System with its political hierarchies also impeded participation. Not only was it a rigid partyless system which left no room for dissenters, but it also made decentralization the task of its highly centralized political structure - a system - immanent *contradictio in adjecto*. This is not to assert that the Panchayat era lacked in successful projects, but to presume that with more people's participation much more could have been achieved. The example of the Small Farmers Development Programme (SFDP) demonstrates how it was possible to stimulate participation among the poor with subsidies from the state during the Panchayat period. Initiated by FAO, the Programme came under the management of the Agricultural Development Bank whose qualified workers, the so-called Group Organizers, were commissioned to organize groups among poor small farmers and motivate them to take up credits for income-relevant activities, such as crop cultivation, irrigation, livestock, bio-gas plants, etc. Credits were also provided for activities of social importance, such as the construction of latrines, washing places, initiatives in family planning, adult education and the like. Group Organizers acted as advisors to the farmers and as mediators between them and the ministries. Being organized by external agents, the SFDP cannot be regarded as participation from below in the strict sense of the term, but it is a positive fact that by now more than 40 such projects could be set up in a total of 75 districts, and in most cases with lasting

success. The Programme has had its limitations in the increasing difficulty to recruit adequately trained and psychologically capable Group Organizers. Another limitation became manifest in those instances where local Panchayat elites managed to misuse such projects for their own benefit.

The Dhading Project, supported by German development aid, provides a second example of a successful undertaking that dates back to the Panchayat period. This is the first rural development project to be executed in accordance with the Decentralization Law. It gives the rural population the opportunity to decide on all those measures that concern the village and is designed as a self-supporting project to be continued even beyond the term of external financing. As observations show, villagers are definitely in a position to identify their problems, formulate and carry out action programmes in their sole responsibility; their technical abilities have also exceeded the expectations of the administration. Among the negative, critical factors were the deficient professional qualification of the population and the dullness of the administrative machinery, not least of the Panchayat bureaucracy into which the project was integrated.

Article 25 of the new democratic Constitution of the 9th November 1990 lays down briefly and unequivocally that "It shall be the main responsibility of the State to bring about conditions for the enjoyment of the fruits of democracy through maximum participation of the people in the governance of the country through the medium of decentralization of administration." In June 1990 already three laws were promulgated to determine the roles of the District Development Committee, the Town Development Committee and the Village Development Committee. The new Government under G.P. Koirala has adopted the decentralization policy, and the function of the Development Committee at the different levels has been the object of a number of deliberations since the summer of 1991. Thus, the Ministry of Local Development organized a

meeting in August 1991, in which MPs and Nepalese experts exchanged their views on form and function of these future "local governments". Convened by the Tribhuvan University, the political parties and other non-governmental organizations, several seminars and symposia provided a forum for discussing the tasks of the Local Development Committees. In October 1991, an Administrative Reform Commission was established with the aim of formulating proposals for a more efficient administration and a more adequate personnel structure with due regard to the principles of decentralization. In March 1992, Parliament had passed a Local Body Election Procedure Bill regulating the modalities of the elections to the Village, Town and District Development Committee, which took place in last May and June.

This development laid the institutional foundations of a democratic decentraliza-

tion and a more efficient people's participation. Fortunately and quite in contrast to the Panchayat System, the Government now aims at an intensive cooperation with non-governmental organizations, too, in the conception and execution of economic and social projects. It should also be noted that the eighth Development Plan (1992-1997) gives particular consideration to improving the living standard of the poor; up to 70% of the public development expenditure shall be for the benefit of the rural and backward areas.

To conclude, Nepal has arrived at a turning point by taking important steps towards economic development, decentralization and people's participation. Their success, however, presupposes an improvement of the so-called talk-action ratio: the hitherto prevalent discrepancy between word and deed must diminish considerably, indeed.

European Researchers affiliated with Tribhuvan University

Mangala Shrestha

Nepal was opened formally for foreigners after 1950. The foreigners were attracted to Nepal on account of its natural beauties, the virgin land, its unique and hidden culture, history, unique anthropological background, diversified geographical conditions, art and architecture and the high Himalayan ranges. The affiliation of foreign researchers with Tribhuvan University (TU) began only in 1968 (Shakya, 1984). However, many foreign scholars had done their researches on different disciplines even before the establishment of Tribhuvan University (1957) in Nepal.

The first authentic foreign researcher in Nepal was Kirkpatrick followed by Hamilton and Hodgson. In 1952, the Swiss government appointed with the permission of the Nepalese government a geologist,

Toni Hagen, to conduct a geological survey for Nepal. At present, there are many foreign researchers formally affiliated with different institutions or central departments or R.D. of T.U. The Research Division of T.U. renders academic administrative service to foreign researchers, i.e., receiving application forms and research proposals, evaluating the research proposals by the departments concerned and research centres, accepting or rejecting the proposals, affiliating the researchers to the departments concerned or research centres and recommending non-tourist visas through the Ministry of Education, Culture and Social Welfare.

The aim of this paper is to explore the number of European researchers formally affiliated with T.U. between the year 1980-

1990 and their areas and fields of research.

Number of European researchers affiliated with T.U. (1980-1990)

There were altogether 104 European Researchers registered for their research studies in T.U. during the years 1980-1990. It was found from the Research Division's records that researchers from 14 different European countries were registered to conduct their researches in affiliation with T.U. during the years 1980-1990. Among these 104 foreign researchers, 34 came from Germany, 30 from U.K., 8 from France, 7 from Switzerland, 6 from the Netherlands, 5 from Norway, 3 each from Sweden, Austria and Denmark, and 1 each from Spain, Hungary, Finland, Belgium and Ireland. The percentages of researchers from different European countries were 32.69% from Germany, 28.84% from U.K., 7.69% from France, 6.73% from Switzerland, 5.76% from the Netherlands and 4.80% from Norway. Likewise 2.88% researchers were from Sweden, Austria and Denmark and 0.96% researchers were from Spain, Hungary, Finland, Belgium and Ireland.

Popular Fields of Research for European Researchers

Out of 104 European researchers affiliated with T.U. over the year 1980-1990, 68 research studies were related to the social sciences, 15 were related to science and technology, 7 were related to medicine, 5 were related to forestry, 4 were related to agriculture and 2 were related to education. Likewise 1 each was related to music, law and management. Among the different subjects of the social sciences, the most popular fields of research for the researchers were anthropology, sociology and culture.

The percentage of foreign researchers occupied in the field of social sciences was 68.38%. Similarly the percentage of those researchers who did their researches in the fields of science and technology, and medicine were 14.42% and 6.73% respectively. The percentage in forestry, agriculture and

education were 4.80%, 3.84% and 1.92% respectively. Likewise in management, music and law the share of percentage was only 0.96% (Thapa, Shrestha, Sharma et al., 1991). The most attractive fields of research for the Europeans were anthropology, sociology, culture, science and technology, geography, medicine, forestry and so on.

Conclusion

After the political change in Nepal, the country was opened for foreigners in 1950. Like other foreigners, Europeans also started taking an interest in Nepal. The European researchers were interested in Nepalese culture, history, archeology, and the sociological and anthropological aspects of Nepal. Some also were interested in medicine, science and technology, forestry and so on. Nepalese life, its cultural heritage, castes, geological structure and other aspects were new to Europe, so the European researchers were attracted towards these subjects. Through its Research Division, Tribhuvan University helped to affiliate those researchers with T.U. who came to Nepal to undertake research projects on subjects related to Nepal.

As a consequence, the flow of European researchers has been increasing every year. However, T.U. has not had maximal benefit from these researchers due to the fact that many of the researchers collected the information and data in Nepal and returned to their countries without submitting the final reports to the Research Division (Thapa, Shrestha, Sharma et al., 1992.)

Among the European researchers German researchers were highest in number. The reason for this may be due to the fact that Tribhuvan University has an agreement with the Nepal Research Centre and Heidelberg University regarding the conducting of research by their researchers through these institutions.

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Table 1: Countrywise European Researchers and their field researches (1980-1990)

Field of Research	Social Science	Science & Technology	Medicine	Education	Forestry	Agriculture	Management	Music	Law	Total	
Countries											
Germany	27	3	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	34	32.69
U.K.	16	6	3	-	4	1	-	-	-	30	28.84
France	6	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	8	7.69
Switzerland	5	-	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	7	6.73
Netherlands	2	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	-	6	5.76
Norway	4	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	5	4.80
Norway	2	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	3	2.88
Sweden	2	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	2.88
Austria	1	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	3	2.88
Denmark	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.96
Spain	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.96
Hungary	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.96
Belgium	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.96
Ireland	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	0.96
Finland	68	15	7	2	5	4	1	1	1	104	
Total	65.8	14.42	6.73	1.92	4.80	3.84	0.96	0.96	0.96	100	

Source: Research Division, Rector's Office, T.U.

Sāmkālīn Sāhitya and the Democratisation in Nepali Literature

Michael Hutt

The Panchayat period (1962-90) brought huge changes to Nepal. Like everything else, the world of Nepali literature changed irrevocably. When King Mahendra dismissed the Congress government in 1960, the older, more established writers were still adjusting to the atmosphere of freedom that had followed the Rana's downfall ten years earlier. Younger writers had yet to find their feet. Then suddenly new restrictions were imposed and new uncertainties came into being. Just as the first generation of post-Rana regime children entered the sixth and seventh years in the first rash of new schools, freedom of expression was curtailed.

It might have been assumed that censorship, even mild censorship, would inevitably retard the growth and development of literature that was still comparatively young. But in the case of Nepali literature the need to express dissent opaquely led to a kind of disciplined restraint, and the development of rich allegorical writing. This was especially true in the poetry, which remained the most sophisticated and commonly-published genre. Nepali literature's most serious shortcomings were the scarcity of full-blown novels, the lack of a developed tradition of criticism and a failure to reach an audience beyond the tiny urban minority.

The Panchayat governments tried to encourage the development of Nepali literature and to extend the scope of the language in every sphere of national life. This they did to the exclusion of Nepal's other languages: Newari, Hindi and Maithili disappeared from the official media. The Royal Nepal Academy, established by King Mahendra, became devoted almost entirely to the promotion of Nepali literature, particularly poetry. But the

quality of the literature its members produced was severely compromised by the culture of sycophancy that developed within its walls. The poet Bhupi Sherchan's huge popularity was due to his searing indictments of the Nepali establishment, but once he had become an Academy member these no longer appeared. It may seem to be a contradiction, but the increasing richness of Nepali literature during the Panchayat period was due more to the regime's censorious tendencies than to its attempts to foster development.

After the end of the Panchayat system, the freedom has been bewildering. Nepal's writers and poets are in the process of finding a new direction. As one poet put it in summer 1992, "if you have been kicking against a wall (*parkhāl*) for thirty years, what do you do when the wall falls down?" There seems to have been a weakening in the spirit of Nepali poetry. Verse genres were the principle medium for the expression of dissent, after all, and in a multi-party democracy the issues are less clear-cut, though the scope for expression is broader. On the other hand, writers of prose seem to have gained in confidence. This might reflect the continued westernisation of the educated urban class: having modernised poetry, there now seems to be an urge to modernise by moving the emphasis away from verse altogether.

These are subjective impressions and they would be misleading. However, they are supported by the content of *Sāmkālīn Sāhitya* (Contemporary Literature), a quarterly published in Nepali by the newly-constituted Royal Nepal Academy. In 1990, the interim government was strongly criticised when it appointed a new Academy membership that consisted almost entirely of allegedly pro-Congress male writers. Nevertheless, these members remain in

place and *Sāmkālīn Sāhitya* (chief editor Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan, editors Bairagi Kainla and Ishwar Ballabh, assistant editor Avinash Shrestha) represents a major advance.

The first issue of *Sāmkālīn Sāhitya* is dated *Māgh, Phāgun, Cait* 2047 (the first quarter of 1991), and was published just a few months after the promulgation of Nepal's new democratic constitution. Pradhan's purpose as editor-in-chief is clear from his first editorial:

"Now we are in the pale light of multi-party democracy after a political change. Democracy is not merely a release from constraints: it is also a system, an opinion, a profound responsibility and an open invitation to construct a future. We ourselves must change radically if we are to accept democracy and establish it in our minds, customs and conduct. If we oppose it, if we do not resolve contradictions such as "we have not changed, only society has" or "we have changed, but society has not", there will be an imbalance."

The most striking feature of *Sāmkālīn Sāhitya* is the total absence of Nepali poetry. No explanation is offered for this: Pradhan simply states that the journal is *gadya-pradhān* (mainly prose), though it does sometimes include Nepali translations of poetry from other languages. The emphasis on prose may stem from Pradhan's own preferences (he is a respected essayist and critic, with a major study of the Nepali novel to his credit), or from the fact that the Academy also publishes *Kavitā* (edited by Mohan Koirala), which is devoted entirely to poetry. Two other features of *Sāmkālīn Sāhitya* are notable. First, there is a regular section on foreign literature, headed *deśbhā-hira*:

"So the world is shrinking, countries are coming closer to each other. The sun that shines in one place filters through to other places too. When one country suffers an earthquake, others are shaken too... We, our countries and our democracy, are all shores onto which the new waves of revolution and

change will wash... National and international developments have their own backgrounds and contexts. Contemporaneity will not be the same everywhere... We need to understand the changes, trends and experiments that are taking place in contemporary literature."

The nine volumes of *Sāmkālīn Sāhitya* that have appeared so far have included Nepali translations of stories and poems from Bangladesh (vol. I), Pakistan (II), Sri Lanka (III), India (IV), China (V), Japan (VI), Africa: Senegal, Sudan, Kenya, Angola, Congo, Cape Verde and Mozambique (VII), Latin America: Colombia, Mexico and Puerto Rico (VIII) and the USA (IX).

Each issue also includes a section headed *deśbhītra* which features Nepali translations of contemporary works originally written or published in another language of Nepal. This is a significant sign of a change in the establishment's attitude to Nepal's linguistic and cultural diversity. It was evident in the revolutionary poetry of the Democracy Movement itself, and is also reflected in the new constitution. In his preface to volume I, Pradhan wrote:

"In this *deśbhītra* column this time, the literature of Nepāl Bhāṣā is presented. It would be an exaggeration if we were to claim that such a brief account could provide a full acquaintance with the literature of any language. Nor is that what this journal is trying to do. What we do intend is that the readers and writers of one language should have at least an inkling (*ābhās*) of what is going on in the contemporary literature of the country's other languages... We should not claim too loudly that this will create a new culture... But we do feel that this will provide a taste of parallel experiences, sensibilities and sufferings, even as we keep our own ethnic characteristics and cultural authenticity in perspective."

Translations of Newari literature (Headed "Nepāl Bhāṣā" in volume I, then "Newari" in other issues) have featured in four issues:

Vol. I: Stories by Cittadhār 'Hṛdaya', Rāmeśvara and Kedār 'Situ'; poems by Durgālāl Śreṣṭha and Sudah Khusaḥ.

Vol. III: Introduction to Newari literature by Keśavmān Śākya; stories by Sūryabahādur Pivāḥ and Bhūṣanprasād Śreṣṭha; poems by Ānanda Jośī, Buddha Saymi, Sureś Kiraṇ.

Vol.V: Stories by Pūmadās Śreṣṭha, Dhusvām Saymi and Keśavmān Śākya; poems by Śyāmbahādur Saṃyajū, Sundar Madhikarmī and Pratisarā Saymi.

Vol. VIII: Stories by Jagdīs Citrakār, Āśārām Śākya and Darveratna Śākya; poems by Pūma Vaidya, Rāmeś Madhu and Triratna Śākya.

Translations from Maithili literature have also featured in four issues:

Vol. II: Essay on modern Maithili literature by Yugeśvarprasād Varmā; stories by Rājendra P. Vimala, Rāmbharos Kāpaḍi Bhramar and Surendra Lābh; poems by Bhuvaneśvar Pāthey, Mathurānanda Caudhari Māthur and Revatīraṃaṇ Lāl.

Vol. IV: Survey of Nepalese Maithili literature by Rāmbharos Kāpaḍi Bhramar; play by Mahendra Malaṅgiyā; story by R.N. Sudhākar; poems by Dhīrendra, Hariścandra and Ayodhyānāth Caudhari.

Vol. VI: Stories by Rājendra Vimala, Bhuvaneśvar Pāthey, Surendra Jhā Śāstrī; poems by Dharmendra Jhā Viḥval, Digambar Jhā Dinmaṇi, Śyāmsundar Śaśi and Rameś Jhā Bhāvagra.

Vol. VIII: Stories by Dhūmketu and Dhīrendra.

Volume VII contained works translated from Limbu: a summary of the development of Limbu language and literature by Bairāgī Kāilā; a story ("the first modern short story written in Limbu") by Kājīmān Kandaṅgbā; poems by Mahāguru Phālgunanda Liṅgden, Thāmsuhāṅg Puṣpa Subba Asita, Yir Nembāṅg, Yehāṅg Lāvati and Virahī Kāilā.

The original Nepali content consists of new short stories, plays, essays, criticism, travel reminiscences and sometimes 'contemplations' or a writer's profile of another writer. Some of it is challenging and controversial; little of it could have appeared in an Academy publication before 1990. *Samkālin Sāhitya* is one of the best and most interesting mirrors currently available of the changes that are taking place in Nepal's intellectual culture as a result of democratisation.

INTERVIEW

Reflections of a plant-hunter in Nepal: An Interview with Dr. Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha

Charles Ramble

Dr. Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha is currently the coordinator of Nepal's National Heritage Programme in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). During his distinguished career as one of Nepal's foremost botanists he has published "not very much really: just four or five books and twenty or so scientific articles." In the late 1980s Dr. Shrestha headed the task force responsible for conducting the

research that culminated recently in the creation of the Makalu-Barun Conservation Area. At that time the present interviewer had an opportunity to work with him, and was struck by his breadth of knowledge and interests. In the course of a lengthy interview, some extracts of which are printed here, Dr. Shrestha attributed his advocacy of a wide perspective to a decade in the Royal Nepal Academy, where he held the post of

Member Secretary for a year. Frustration at the oversimplification of complex situations was a recurrent theme during our conversation: for example, the eclipsing of governmental legerdemain by the conspicuous Tanakpur dispute, or the upstaging of Nepal's most pressing ecological concerns by issues such as the Himal Cement factory and Godavari Marble, currently two of the arch-fiends in the demonology of Kathmandu's ecologists.

Early in his career, after a period of teaching in high schools and in the Amrit Science College, Dr. Shrestha joined the Department of Medicinal Plants. The initial task of assessing Nepal's wealth of medicinal and aromatic herbs launched him on a trajectory as a plant collector that would eventually take him throughout Nepal.

TBS: The first trip I made was to Trishuli in 1962-63, travelling through Dhading, Gorkha and so on. We found that people were very dependent on medicinal herbs for their cash income. For commodities such as oil, kerosene, thread, cloth and suchlike they relied on the sale of herbs. We collected samples without knowing the scientific names for them. One of the plants that are sold is *bikh* [Aconitum], but there are seventeen or eighteen types of *bikh*, and we didn't know which one was which. In fact we don't know some of them even today. Scientifically speaking, it was essential to make a thorough collection, so I gradually became a plant collector. I found it fascinating, travelling and collecting plants. I've been a plant collector ever since. I collected everything I could see, as far as my resources would allow me. At that time we were permitted only two porters, because the budget was limited. Later I travelled with John Adam Stainton [author of *The Forests of Nepal*, etc.], who died recently. I travelled with him all over Nepal between 1965 and 1968 in extended tours. At that time our main interest was to discover new species, especially since

there was no constraint on the number of porters. He could afford it. The only constraint was my own physique. If I was strong enough I could collect as much as I liked, and Stainton was very supportive.

CR: How many districts have you collected in?

TBS: Most districts. The districts I haven't travelled in are... let me think... No, I've collected in all districts of Nepal.

CR: Do you think there are still many plant species to be discovered?

TBS: Among the lichens and fungi, and even the ferns, there certainly remains a lot to discover. But I don't think there are many undescribed species among the angiosperms [higher plants]. On the other hand, there is much scope for discovering the medicinal and other chemical properties of the plants we do know. That hasn't been done.

CR: Your doctoral work focussed on Western Nepal, didn't it?

TBS: Yes. The thesis was entitled "The Ecology and Vegetation of North-west Nepal". It was later published by the Royal Nepal Academy [1982]. In 1972 I had met Dobremez, who had a plan to make a vegetation map of the whole of Nepal. I put together all my previous collections, and since one set was in the Natural History Museum in London, I spent most of my time and money while in France - my doctorate was from Grenoble - travelling to England. And happily my wife was in London at the time, in 1978, doing her Ph.D.

CR: In 1979 you became a Member of the Royal Nepal Academy. How was it to be a natural scientist in an institution dedicated primarily to the arts?

TBS: Originally the Academy was a home for arts and literature, but under the patronage of the present king, in 1975, Lain Singh Bangdel was asked to reorganise it. The new vision was to have a single Academy that would accommodate all the different branches of knowledge, and the constitution also included science. They had *kalā*, art, *saṃskṛti*, culture, *sāhitya*, literature, *gyān*, knowledge or philosophy,

and *bigyān*, science. I was asked to fill the science slot. My own scientific work was done at Godavari, where I was a member of the Department of Medicinal Plants, a post that I had already held for some time. I came to see the Academy as a very important platform where people from different disciplines could sit together. I saw that there was great potential for educating literary people in science, and also for being educated from the literary point of view. At the Academy I used to spend lots of time with people such as Bhupi Sherchan (the late poet). He knew how to put words together so that they could really penetrate into the hearts of the people. I didn't realise how important it was to work with such people until I had left the Academy. The appreciation of all these things comes only later. My approach was to integrate science with literature, science with culture. For example, I wrote a book called *A Hundred Questions in Science*, aimed at addressing some of the questions children ask. At that time my daughter was just five or six, and I realised that kids ask so many questions that you can't answer from the scientific point of view.

CR: Is the book used in schools?

TBS: Not in schools, out of school. Actually, the book sold very well. The main idea was to suggest various books to be read by young mothers, so that when their kids ask them awkward questions they should be able to provide some answers.

CR: For the last of your ten years in the Royal Nepal Academy you held an important position as the Member Secretary, immediately below the Vice Chancellor. Why did you resign this position?

TBS: Following the democratic movement we felt we should resign to facilitate the process of democratisation and to avoid embarrassment to the Academy. Members of the Academy and the Member Secretary were appointed by the King, following nomination by a committee under the chairmanship of the Minister of Education.

CR: You mentioned earlier that you gained a

lot from talking to literary people and artists. Do you think the writers benefited from the presence of a natural scientist?

TBS: Yes. I soon became aware of the need among non-scientists for access to science. Scientists speak their own language in their own vocabulary, and the only aspects of science that are accessible to others are media events. If somebody landed on the moon, the writers might write about it. It seemed to me that the writers themselves were the best medium to communicate with people, so I regarded our collaboration as very important. I remember having a tough time talking to the poets about the role of an insect. In one of his poems Madan Ghimire used the phrase "as useless as an insect". I argued that he would not exist if there were no insects in the world. You can't categorically say, "As useless as an insect". I'm pleased to say that he was persuaded by my explanation, and rephrased the poem. I've always felt that knowledge is a convergent phenomenon, not a divergent phenomenon. Unless you converge, knowledge is not generated.

CR: Is there still a policy of interdisciplinary collaboration in the Academy?

TBS: Unfortunately no members have been appointed from the sciences. I wish it were otherwise. There is a feeling that science is not required in the Academy because there is the Science Academy itself. I had fought hard against this argument for several years. The Science Academy is for the promotion of science. It is not there as a prison for scientists. There is now also a demand that fine arts and performing arts be separated from literature. I feel that that is a loss, because literature is enriched by science and the arts.

CR: So you no longer see the Academy as a true forum for the different branches of knowledge?

TBS: No, not really. The Academy has two principal facets. One is as an organisation to promote a discipline or a particular branch of knowledge, and the other is as a forum. It is not a resource. When I prepared my books I

brought my own funds to publish them. I didn't use the funds of the poets, because I knew that the government had not spent money on the poets and literature. If you publish a book, that's sixty thousand rupees. And in science, once you start conducting experiments, that kind of money is nothing. So I brought my own resources from elsewhere. The Academy is not important as a financial resource, but as a place to integrate. I used to tell my friends that it is a *cautāro*. A community may have many distinct components - Damai, Kami, Rai, Limbu - but when they come to the *cautāro*, they sit together, and with a *bāsuri* they play the same music: they have an idiom with which to congregate. I've written papers on that analogy.

CR: While you were Member Secretary of the Academy you were also the head of the task force responsible for setting up the Makalu-Barun Conservation Project, between Sagarmatha National Park and the Arun. As I understand, this project originally began as a hunt for a new type of bear. How did it culminate in the creation of a conservation area?

TBS: One day, in the early eighties, I received a visit from Daniel Taylor-Ide, who told me that he wanted to go to the Barun to discover a new bear. He asked if I would accompany him on a month's trip to investigate the habitat, and I agreed. So we spent some time in this deep, dense Barun Valley, but we didn't succeed in trapping any bears, although we found plenty of evidence of the animals. People were very frustrated - John Craighead, for example, the international expert on bears. But we did find bear scats, scars on trees, and a sort of nest made by bears. On the way back, I told Dan that there was no doubt that the bears were there, but that the forest would not be there much longer if we didn't protect it. So I proposed that there should be some programme to preserve the habitat first, and afterwards to launch the bear project. He thought it was a good idea, and started to promote it. He needed some superlative

terms to describe the Barun, so as the plant-collector I again accumulated a lot of specimens. And then Kaji [Hari Saran Nepali, the eminent ornithologist and naturalist] was with us. He was fascinated by the number of birds in the area, and collected so many birds he hadn't seen elsewhere. So I think the credit goes to the birds of Kaji. Bob Fleming [co-author of *Birds of Nepal*] was also there. Kaji and Bob Fleming together felt that it was a really special area. Gabriel [Campbell] came in later at a seminar that was held in Saldima. Gabriel's presence was very important to bring people into the whole process. As an anthropologist he emphasised the people's point of view, and that dimension has remained important ever since.

CR: You say there really was evidence of a tree bear? It isn't just a juvenile black bear?

TBS: That there is a tree bear, there is no doubt. People have seen the animal, we have seen the evidence, and we have analysed the scats. Whether it is a new species or the juvenile of the ground bear has yet to be researched, and that will not be possible unless we preserve the habitat. People talk of the tree bear from West Nepal to East Nepal, and Dan found that the Barun had the highest concentration of bears, because he was counting skulls from village houses. We took some to the Smithsonian, and started to analyse them. But we don't have any definitive evidence yet as to say whether or not it is a new species. And bears are very variable. Four or five types of bears that were once considered to be distinct species have now been merged into one by the taxonomists. Dan was also very keen on the yeti thing. He thought it might be a high-altitude bear. But I discouraged him from doing research on that. If the main thrust of your research is to disprove the existence of the creature, that's not good. If you want to do research, make it positive. The yeti isn't something that has been brought to Nepal by tourists and mountaineers. People believed in yetis long before foreigners came. It's not of the same magnitude, but to some degree

it's like proving there is no God. The footprints of the yeti are in the minds of the people. Similarly, there is a tree bear: OK, let's try to find a tree bear. But let's not spend our time and money trying to say that there is no tree bear.

CR: You've now been working with the International Union for the Conservation of Nature for about two years. Does the IUCN in Nepal still play a largely advisory role?

TBS: The IUCN has been here for quite some time, but not as the IUCN. It helped the Planning Commission to produce the National Conservation Strategy. Almost all departments and ministries, as well as the university, were involved in developing this strategy. My involvement related mainly to medicinal plants. This work was approved by HMG in 1987 as a policy document, as a basis for the five-year plans and suchlike. The document was called "Building on Success". As the title indicates, the main approach was not to prescribe anything new but to build on existing success. For example, the document strongly advocates the *guthi* as a project for managing the temples, the heritage of the Gaine, and so on. Similarly, it stresses the importance of traditional forest resource-use methods, such as the Sherpas' rotational system of collecting firewood. "Building on Success" really was a success. [laughs] Except that people now don't like it because the foreword was written by Marich Man Singh.

CR: How is the IUCN's work in Nepal likely to develop?

TBS: HMG requested the IUCN to implement the National Conservation Strategy for the National Planning Commission. The IUCN is not a country office yet. Maybe next year. At the moment it is assisting the Planning Commission at the policy level. For example, most of the work of the Environment Protection Council was backed by the professional staff of the IUCN. Now the IUCN is housing - not hosting, housing - the Nepal Environmental Policy and Planning Project. The IUCN brings funds, but it also provides expertise

and professional support. But in addition to this there are some demonstration projects at the district level - district environmental planning - in Argakanchi and Lamjung. Broadly speaking, this means helping people to organise themselves to address environmental problems. Drinking water, for example. This is a very interesting phenomenon in Nepal. From *satra sāl* [1960] to the present day we have been talking about drinking water. Earlier this year I revisited a village in Rasuwa that I had been to in 1963. No change. No drinking water. No health facilities. There is some education, but the people don't want it. That's interesting. They don't want it. They don't need it. No use to them. It takes their kids away from daily productive activities. The IUCN in Lamjung and Agarkanchi is trying to identify local NGOs or traditional organisations that can provide an entry point for different projects.

CR: Has there been a policy change in the IUCN with regard to people's participation in conservation?

TBS: The IUCN was one of the pioneer organisations to bring people into environmental protection. At the Fourth IUCN Conference, in Caracas [1992], the main focus was on people's participation in protecting nature, and the protection of nature for the benefit of people.

CR: Has the IUCN got a policy on tourism with regard to the environment?

TBS: Yes. In the Heritage Programme that I'm coordinating we see tourism both as a potential source of funds as well as a potential threat to the ecology. That is one of the concerns that recently took me to Manaslu. Manaslu has just been opened for tourism, and the Ministry of Tourism has requested the IUCN to look into the prospects of ecotourism and the problems of pressure from tourism on natural resources.

CR: Do you think tourism can be a positive factor in conservation in ways other than generating funds?

TBS: Tourism has always been a factor of change. Tourism doesn't bring only dollars.

It brings ideas too. Tourism, if I may say so, brings the third eye, and tells us, "This is unique in your country; we have come here to see this pagoda, this dance, this species. You should save it." "Is that so?" we say, "Aha, well perhaps we should."

CR: Will the management of tourism be handed over to a particular agency, as it has been for example in Mustang?

TBS: It is too early for us to say. Mustang is already oversold. Still, if you're willing to pay \$ 500 to step through my gate, why shouldn't I accept it? But Manaslu is not in the tourism agenda yet. To me it seems that Manaslu would have more tourism potential than Mustang. I personally feel that Mustang is very dull country, unless you have special eyes for the lost cultures of Tibet. What has been lost in Tibet can be found in Mustang. That's the sort of feeling people have. I personally felt that the monasteries in Tibet are nicely kept, but they are not a living thing. They're museums. But in Mustang the monasteries are still a part of people's lives. But how long this life in Mustang can continue is something to worry about - and not only for the Ministry of Tourism, or ACAP, or the tourists. Unless there is international concern - people in this country are bogged down with various other issues. Like Tanakpur. If someone comes to this country and reads the papers, he would think... anyway, Mustang could be viewed as a relic of some existence, but Manaslu has its own personality. If tourists are here to click their cameras at Everest, that's fine. But if they really want to be in the Himalaya, and feel the thin air, I think Manaslu or Kanjiroba, or many other places for that matter, are much more distinctively Nepalese. I think people should be interested to discover terra incognita, rather than photographing the same mountain for decades. It is nice in its own way, but we have something more to offer.

CR: Are there any other areas that deserve special attention from the IUCN?

TBS: Yes. I am especially interested in protecting the environment of

Kanchenjunga. We have plenty of information from the Japanese and the British. One recent visitor who wrote a paper on the area said that he followed Hooker's trail. Hooker travelled through East Nepal in 1848. This man followed the same trail as Hooker, and he said that things are still intact. Things have not changed. I put the question to a group of Japanese scientists who were going to spend several months there. When they came back they agreed that it was still the same as described by Hooker. I thought it would be very interesting to protect that area, and IUCN in Nepal has agreed to respond to the request by the Ministry of Forests. To me it seems that deforestation has been exaggerated for the high hills and mountains. Earlier this year I compared the vegetation map made in 1972 of a part of Rasuwa, and it has not changed. The problem is in the Tarai, the Siwaliks, the middle hills and a few higher areas like the stretch between Lukla and Jorsale, which has been deforested. With aircraft arriving there every day, and the large numbers of tourists, the people need more firewood.

CR: The Royal Chitwan National Park was established in 1975, partly at the recommendation of the IUCN. Do you think Nepal still has a place for parks of this nature, where surrounding villagers are allowed only very limited use of the forest? Might these parks be modified so that certain zones can be used for grazing?

TBS: [Laughs] Chitwan is being used for grazing at the moment anyway. Properly managed grazing could be feasible. But if there had been no park established in 1975, do you think that the forest or the rhinos would have survived by now?

CR: It's not likely.

TBS: Of course not. They would have gone, because they have gone from the rest of the country. The park would never have been able to sustain exploitation by the huge migrant population of Chitwan. If you leave the park to the people, in less than a decade it will all be ricefields. No grasslands, no rhinos, no tigers, no trees. Then what will the

people do? Ultimately the people will be facing the same problems as they are today, but in ten years' time. In ten years' time they won't have grazing land for their cattle. It should be possible in Chitwan to develop a way of life that is compatible with conservation. At a recent conference in Italy I gave a presentation on the distinction between the Annapurna Conservation Area Project and the Makalu-Barun Conservation Project. I see a clear distinction. Both areas are designated as conservation areas. But whereas ACAP involves conservation for the people, in Makalu-Barun we are doing things the other way round. We are mobilising people for conservation. This comes down to more education, and enabling people to have sufficient resources without harming the core areas.

CR: How do you see the role of the army in protecting national parks?

TBS: In Chitwan at least the question of the army presence has unnecessarily become an issue of debate. The matter of cost has been raised as a major objection, but the soldiers have to be paid whether they are patrolling a park or doing drill on the Tundikhel. The debate should have been about the role of the army, and whether we want to change that, and to develop some dialogue between the park warden and the colonel or whoever. You can't talk about co-existence unless you recognise the existence of the entities involved. The army had been doing its job, protecting the park, and they should be given more power to protect, more scope to maintain dialogue with the people. Their role should have had a new dimension added to it, rather than their existence being questioned. When it comes to questioning something's existence, even a cat will fight back, not to mention the army. The presence of the army in the park is something that you need ultimately.

CR: Is there any dialogue at the moment?

TBS: No dialogue. Only debate. Debate

about the presence of the army in the park. Now if the Makalu-Barun Conservation Project is initiated without the army, that's a different matter, and no-one is going to raise any objections. But the army has always been in Chitwan. They were responsible. And now we're suddenly saying, Out you go. For places like Chitwan the army is important.

CR: Is the presence of the army equally essential in the upland parks?

TBS: In Sagarmatha and Langtang the army is not important. It's redundant. In Shey Phoksumdo, it's a disaster. Why do we need the army there? The wildlife is protected by the religion itself. You don't need the army. The people themselves provide all the protection. You can see blue sheep within fifty yards. They aren't afraid of people, because people don't allow guns in the area. Now there is an army unit there, with their guns, and their itching fingers. Completely counterproductive.

CR: I know that the multidisciplinary approach of the Makalu-Barun Conservation Project pleased you. Does the IUCN also have a broad disciplinary base?

TBS: We have units on the Heritage Programme, Environmental Education, Environmental Impact Assessment, and on Environmental Planning at the District Level. Another small unit is the Public Information Programme, that produces a newsletter, organises exhibitions, that sort of thing. I think there are good reasons for admiring such an approach. Scientists work in a given geographical area that's used by different disciplines. An area is not something that only one species of plants can colonise, or only one scientific discipline should occupy. My association with the Academy made me appreciate the tremendous importance of tradition and culture in the conservation of the natural environment.

RESEARCH REPORTS

Geomorphological Studies in the Bagmati Valley, South of Kathmandu

Robert Kostka

As a result of the rapid population growth in the mountain regions of High Asia, the limited space for land use must be exploited to a maximum. Since even the border zones of the living space are cultivated and used for house construction, the areas used by man are increasingly threatened by natural hazards. Soil erosion, and abrasion of terraces and river banks due to changing runoff conditions in a monsoon climate pose severe problems to the mountain dwellers, and have for many years been particularly well known in Nepal.

The objective of this study using remote sensing data was (a) to document recent relief formation processes, and (b) to show how useful this method could be for the mapping of hazard areas, which in turn might provide important information for planning and other measures for the protection of such areas.

The application of different remote sensing methods was demonstrated by our investigation into a selected area along the Bagmati river in the southern part of the Kathmandu Valley (Buchroithner *et al.* 1991). Various maps and series of space- and airborne remote sensing data were available for this area.

These investigations concentrated on geology, geomorphology, as well as aspects regarding the climate or soil and natural vegetation. The influence of natural changes on human activities (above all cultivation on terraced field) in the agricultural areas constituted the most important part of the study.

Extensive investigations in the Kathmandu Valley as a whole and in an adjacent part of the Mahabharat Lekh were carried out with the help of the existing topographical 1:50 000 scale maps (enlargements from

the original 1:63 360 scale), satellite image maps, and LANDSAT image data.

The detailed studies near Katuwal Daha in the Bagmati Valley would not have been possible without the large-scale Kathmandu Valley Maps 1:10 000 and 1:25 000 (Arbeitsgemeinschaft für Vergleichende Hochgebirgsforschung 1977) and the corresponding aerial photographs produced within the framework of the Nepal Himalaya Research Scheme (cf. Höfer & Höfer 1982). Two different sets of aerial photographs were used: 23 x 23 cm size vertical, photogrammetric black & white images taken by Erwin Schneider on December 13, 1971 (cf. Kostka 1993); and 6 x 6 cm size vertical, stereoscopic colour slides taken by Erwin Schneider and Robert Kostka on December 10, 1986 (cf. Schneider & Kostka 1987).

The evaluation of these stereo-images provided graphic representations of the erosion- and abrasion-prone areas in this intensively used agricultural region of the Kathmandu Valley (s. figure below).

The area of this detail study comprised a rather flat section of the Bagmati river in the southernmost part of the Kathmandu Valley, lying just before the v-shaped gorge where the river breaks through the Mahabharat Lekh. As comparison shows, changes through erosion and abrasion, that have occurred in a period of 15 years, are rather insignificant in proportion to the total area. Larger changes can be found only near the banks of the Bagmati.

Nowadays, new and different types of spaceborne remote sensing data provide an excellent basis for such extensive investigations and overview studies. Still, as already mentioned, large-scale aerial photographs remain fundamental to detailed investigations of this kind. These aerial photographs, we should add, are the fruit of the late Erwin Schneider's initiative and tireless efforts under the difficult conditions of this mountain area. Even during the last years of his

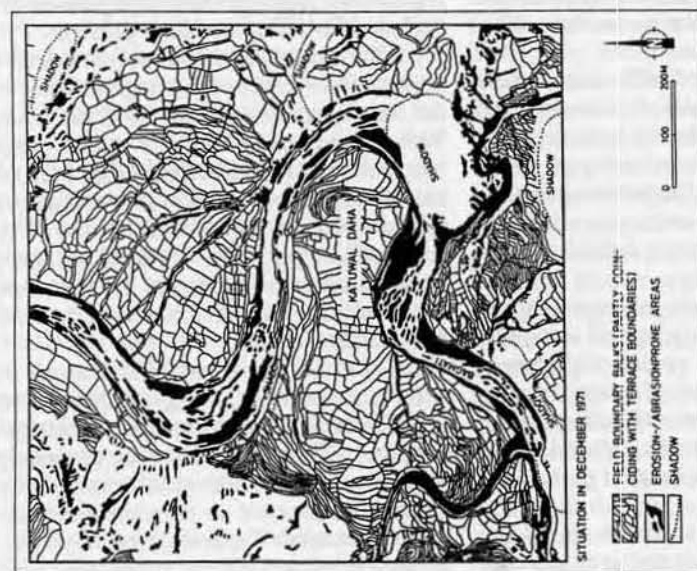
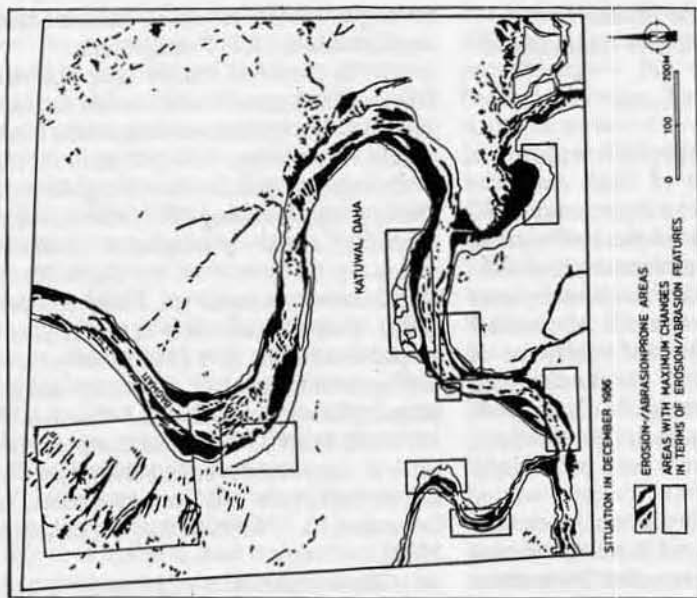


Fig.: Erosion-prone and abrasion-prone terrain in the area of the detail study at Katuwal Daha in the Bagmati Valley. Comparison of the situation in December 1971 with the situation in December 1986 indicates the areas of change in this time period.

life, when ill-health prevented him from carrying out terrestrial survey work, he went on taking, from a Pilatus Porter aircraft, the aerial photographs by himself.

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The Ruins of an Early Gurung Settlement

Mark Temple

A recent visit to the ruins of a Gurung village provided evidence that supports current views about their origins.

Khola Songbre is one of the names by which the local people know a ruined village which is considered to be amongst the oldest Gurung settlements. The author visited the site in April 1992. The suggestion to go looking for these ruins came from Dr. Alan Macfarlane, a social historian who first researched among the Gurungs 25 years ago (Macfarlane 1976). He has known of the ruins for many years but had not visited them.

The Oral tradition among the Gurungs of many of the villages to the North East of Pokhara, including Thak, Tangting, Khilang and Siklis, is that their villages were founded by forebears who moved down from Khola Songbre. Gurung legends and myths recall long wanderings over forested mountain ridges (Gurung & Macfarlane 1990). The origins of the Gurungs are thought to lie to the North of the current homelands of West-Central

Nepal. Their language is a variant of Chinese and Tibetan. Many thousands of years ago their ancestors may have lived in the high mountains of western China. So the tradition that their villages were founded by people from Khola Songbre can only represent the last chapter of a long story of migration. The ruins were reported to be high on the hillsides above Tangting

Dr. Macfarlane suggested that if the ruined village was visited, the party should note the shape and number of the houses and photograph the ruins. The original shape of Gurung houses, oval or square, has been a question of some controversy amongst those interested in Gurung culture.

At Tangting the help of Damarsingh Gurung was enlisted to act as guide. His earlier interest in hunting had led him to know the jungle paths well. It took two days of not very hurried walking to arrive at the ruins. They are on the South facing slope of the ridge to the North of the Ganch Khola at a height of about 3300 metres. The area is the highlands to the South of Lamjung Himal but the accurate position is 28 degrees 22.7 minutes North and 84 degrees 11.7 East. To reach the site requires a one day detour from the main trekking routes from Tangting or Siklis to the Namun Pass. The site would

only be normally visited by cattle herds from the Bhujung area who graze the pastures in this part of forest during the monsoon. The site is at an altitude where rhododendron jungle gives way to areas of grass and large pine trees. No terracing or other signs of cultivation were seen around the site. A knowledgeable local guide is needed to follow the minor forest paths. Damarsingh had been there many years before and lead us to the ruins without difficulty.

The ruins are extensive and the most intact walls still stand about 14 feet high. The plan shows the largest and most intact building which lies on its own one hundred yards to the West of the main settlement. The sketch map shows the layout of the main village where a small central square and alleys between the clustered houses are discernible. In the centre of the square is a stone post about three feet tall. All the houses have four sides and the corners are often the best preserved part of the walls. None appeared oval. From the height of the walls it seems clear that at least some houses had two storeys. Large trees grow from within the ruins and it seems certain that the site has been abandoned for several hundred years and perhaps much longer. We did not have time to explore the area thoroughly but the sketch shows about forty houses in the main settlement.

On the Northern edge of the ruins is a "goth". This Nepali word refers to the temporary shelters made by shepherds and cattle-herds. They occupy them in the monsoon for a few nights while their livestock utilise the nearby grazing. A goth consists of a stone base with stakes as rafters over which the shepherds throw a bamboo mat which they carry from site to site as they migrate with the livestock. The forests below Lamjung Himal contain many goths because the pastoral life-style is still actively pursued in the neighbouring high Gurung villages. The proximity of the high mountains mean that they still have access to large forests and alpine pastures. No-one could mistake the ruins of Khola Songbre for a

goth.





Khola Songbre is 1300 metres higher than the highest village occupied by the Gurungs today. Our guide, Damarsingh, explained that it is said in his village of Tangting that the people from Khola Songbre occupied three other sites above Tangting before the present day village was founded. More ruins can be observed in these places but the author did not have the opportunity to see them.

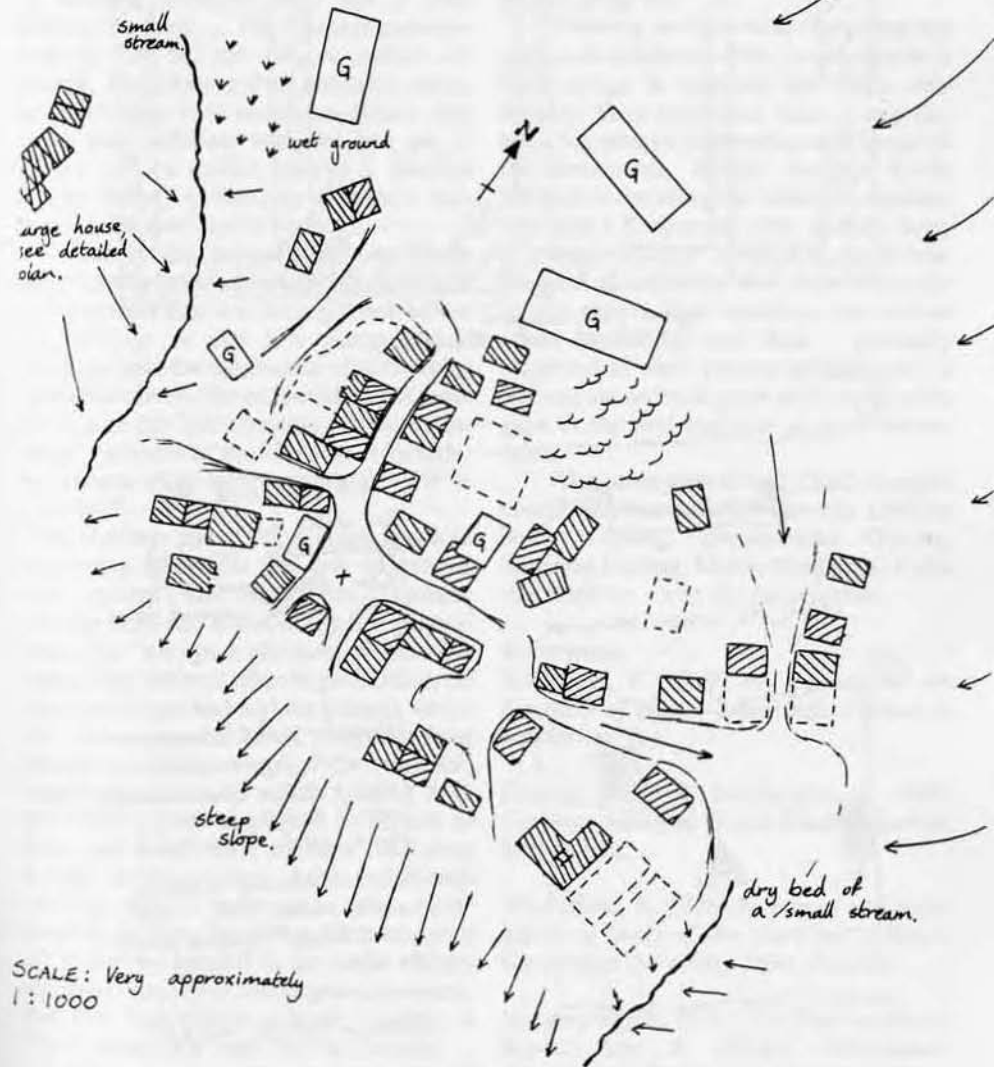
What do the ruins of Khola Songbre imply about the origins of the Gurungs? The fact that this village was settled in an era when there must have been a lot of available forest at lower altitudes suggests that its climate and resources were preferred by the early Gurungs who founded it. They presumably moved in from a similar or higher area and so their livestock, life-style and perhaps even crops led them to select this site. This is consistent with the view that the early Gurungs were primarily a pastoral and hunting community (Macfarlane 1976, Temple 1991). They could have moved West or East along the Annapurna Range but the proximity of the Namun Pass makes a migration from Manang or Tibet an interesting possibility.

Of course, the existence of an oral tradition that the Gurung villages lower down were founded by the inhabitants of Khola Songbre is not in itself conclusive proof that events followed that course. One could theorise that the Gurungs having arrived from some other direction would have come to know the ruins because they were out and about in the forest so much. Over a long period of time the ruins in the jungle might have become incorporated into the account of their origins. But this is mere speculation. Nor does it explain why villagers from Khilang and Siklis, who do not frequent the forest around Khola Songbre, should have the same tradition. The best working hypothesis is to take the folk memory at face value.

The earliest written English account of the Gurungs is that of Francis Buchanan.

KHOLA SONGBRE - A Rough Plan of the Settlement.

	building foundations.	X	stone post.
	raised ground -probable foundations.	↘	downward slope.
	herdsman's hut, a "goth".	⌘	rubble.
	possible 'entrance'.	⌘	rectangle set into floor (1 x 0.75m).

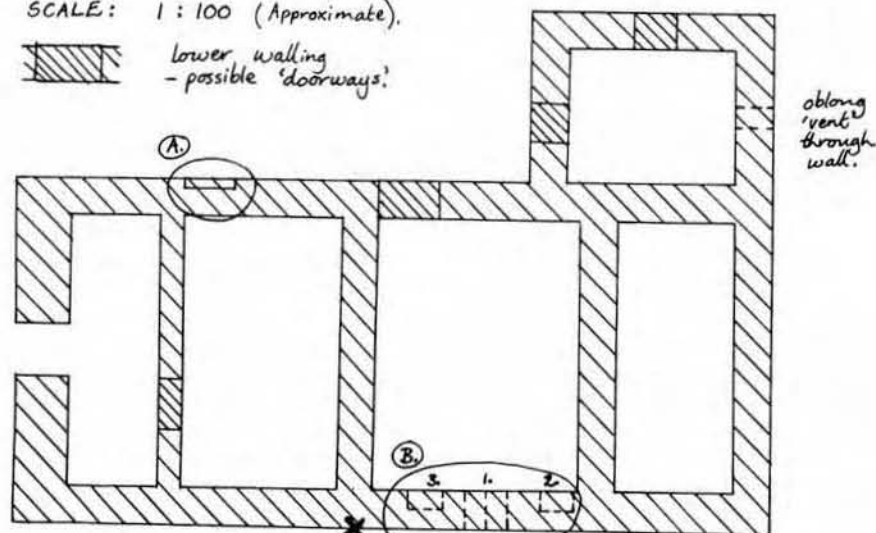


KHOLA SONGBRE - Plan of Large House to the West of the Settlement.

SCALE: 1 : 100 (Approximate).



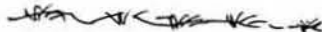
lower walling
- possible 'doorways'.



Highest point measured
3.5m of wall still standing.

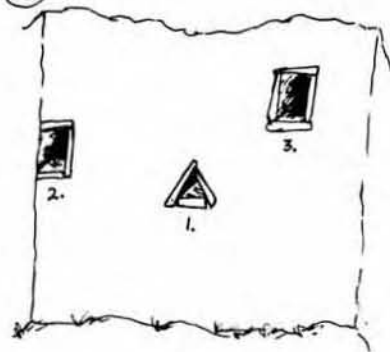
DETAILS:

A.



Small recessed ledge in the outer wall.
Approximately 1m long,
15cm deep and 0.5m above present ground level.

B.



1. Triangular 'vent' through the wall, (approx. 30cm in height) 0.5m above outside ground level; about 1m above inside 'floor' level.
- 2./3. Pair of oblong recesses in the inside wall - set at different heights above the floor.

(DETAILS NOT TO SCALE)

Based on information collected in 1802-3 he wrote: -

"Near the Magars was settled a numerous tribe named Gurung, whose wealth chiefly consisted in sheep, but whose manners are, in most respects, nearly the same with those of the Magars, except that, in the course of their pastoral life, they frequent the Alpine regions in summer, and return to the valleys in winter. The men also employ themselves in weaving blankets; they are a tribe addicted to arms..... The Gurungs cultivate with the hoe and are diligent traders and miners. They convey their goods on sheep, of which they have numerous flocks. The crops they cultivate with the hoe are 1. Barley 2. Uya (naked barley) 3. Maniya (finger millet) 4. Kangum (Panicum Italicum) 5. Phapar (buckwheat)."

But if the supposition that Khola Songbre was deserted several hundred years ago is correct then one must go back before the writings of the first Europeans to envisage how the inhabitants of these ruins might have lived. The only evidence of those times is in the "pie" (myths) recited by the "poju" (priests) of the Gurungs. Macfarlane's resume of the information in the "pie" is as follows: -

"The Gurungs consisted of small bands of wandering shepherds and hoe cultivators who circled the Himalayan foothills, moving from site to site every few generations. The "pie" give glimpses of this existence. They recount, often in great detail, the various villages and regions through which the tribesmen wandered. Hunting was clearly an important part of the existence. Large-scale hunts, in which hunting dogs and beaters were employed in pursuit of deer, and a full-scale uniform (including special jackets, knives, kilts and blood-carrying flasks) was worn. Other "pie" describe herding (including the man going off to live by himself in the forest to herd animals) - usually of sheep, goats, chickens, and two long-haired animals (variety of Yak?) called "Yo" and "Pri" in Gurung."

That is about the present state of

knowledge of the people who inhabited the ruins of Khola Songbre. Macfarlane (1976) and Strickland (1984) have documented the changes of the Gurung economy in the last two hundred years and the author (Temple 1991) has described the economic forces at work that transformed the farming systems of most Gurung villages to one of sedentary multi-cropping with fewer livestock. The process of change has been demonstrated to be still going on.

Standing in those ruins one cannot but respect the hardiness of the people who built their village in beautiful but tough, cold country. Their successors went on to populate a big area of the Southeastern slopes of the Annapurna Range. Perhaps Khola Songbre is the village to which Dr. Macfarlane and I.B. Gurung refer in their book "Gurungs of Nepal" when they say in relation to their origin hat "they came to a single village, where their traditions and culture were confirmed and then gradually dispersed to their present settlements". It will require archeological skills to fill in the gaps in the oral tradition of their descendants.

The party that visited Khola Songbre comprised Damarsingh Gurung, Lekhbahadur Gurung, Bhesbahadur Gurung, Surjiman Gurung, Martin Wright and Catharine Ruthven - who did the sketches.

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An Investigation of the Intensity of Weathering of Soils developed from Glacial and Glaciofluvial Deposits and their Relationship to the Glacial History of Central and Eastern Nepal

Martina Kemp, Annegret Siebert, Rupert Bäumler, Wolfgang Zech and Helmut Heuberger

An investigation of soil genesis on glacial and glaciofluvial deposits was carried out in order to quantify the intensity of soil development. The degree of weathering was for a relative estimation of the age of the deposits and subsequently for an interpretation of the glacial history of the landscape. In addition we want to reduce the great lack of information on soils and soil development in the areas mentioned above.

Our working areas included the Langtang Valley, the Helambu-Gosainkund region in Central Nepal and the Solu-Khumbu region in Eastern Nepal.

INTRODUCTION

The present study is based on work by Heuberger (1956, 1984, 1986) and Heuberger & Weingartner (1985) on Pleistocene and Holocene glaciation in Eastern and Central Nepal.

Former glaciations in the Langtang Valley have been discussed by various authors. Franceschetti (1968), Vivian (1971) and Usselmann (1980) described several moraines and associated terraces in this main valley. Heuberger (1984) first identified several glacial advances in the valley and assigned them to main- and late-glacial stages. Ono (1985, 1986) also differentiated three terrace systems with the associated moraines, which he thought to be of

Temple, M.L. 1991. *Population, growth and labour shortage in Nepali agriculture*. Unpublished paper given to the "Himalayan Forum" at SOAS

late-glacial origin. In addition, after his calculations the age of the maximum advances of the Little Ice Age in the Langtang Valley should have been 1815 AD, and he identified neoglacial moraine ridges probably dating from about 2800 yr BP.

Shiraiwa & Watanabe (1991) published the most recent work on glaciation in the Langtang Valley. By means of relative dating methods and ^{14}C -datings, they classified the moraines into five stages. The Ghora Tabela Stage is defined by the deeply weathered so called Lower Till extending down to 3200m a.s.l. The Langtang Stage (3650-3000 ^{14}C yr BP) corresponds, according to Shiraiwa & Watanabe (1991), to the greatest advance in the Holocene, followed by a series of smaller advances in the Lirung Stage (2800-550 ^{14}C yr BP), and finally by the two smaller Little Ice Age advances (Yala I and II Stages).

The main difference between the authors concerns the dating of the glacial advances. Heuberger (1984) and Ono (1986) correlated the moraine remnants near Kyangjin to late glacial events, whereas Shiraiwa & Watanabe (1991) dated them to Neoglacial or Little Ice Age. All authors are of the opinion that the maximum extent of the last main glaciation reached down to 2400-2600 m, marked by a clear bending point of the valley. There the glacial trough configuration ends.

The glacial history of the Khumbu region has also been discussed by several authors. The first observations were published by Heuberger (1956), with reference to the valleys of Nangpo Tsangpo and Imja Dranka. He found that in the Nangpo Tsangpo valley the main valley glacier stopped a long distance upvalley during the

late glacial period. Therefore the moraine ridges at Thame were deposited by tributary glaciers of the Thame Valley from Kongde Ri. Fushimi (1977, 178) investigated the moraine ridges near Pheriche (4243 m). He distinguished between three moraine systems corresponding to different advances: After a minimum date of 1200 years BP at the top he supposed the moraine to be of Holocene age. Heuberger (1956) estimated the same wall system to be late glacial, whereas Rötthlisberer (1986) supposed that it corresponded with the advances of the main glaciation. Further, Heuberger & Weingartner (1985) give an overview of the extent of the last main glaciation in the Khumbu area. The maximum advance reached the village Ghat (2500 m). In addition, Heuberger (1986) found several signs of a second and perhaps third main glaciation in this area.

WORKING AREAS

Langtang valley

The Langtang Valley is located about 60 km north of Kathmandu. It is surrounded by mountains ranging in elevation from 5000 to 7200 m and belongs to the Inner Himalaya. The Langtang Khola drains the area to the west and flows into the Bhoite Kosi at 1480 meters.

The geological conditions are largely uniform. The parent rock of the whole valley are gneisses (Shiraiwa & Watanabe 1991).

A monsoon climate is predominant with the highest precipitation from June to September. In the winter and spring season further important rainfalls are registered. At Kyangjin annual precipitation is about 1220 mm, the mean annual temperature is +2.7°C. The climatic snow line is at about 5300 m (Miehe 1990).

Because of intensive pasturing and the cutting of firewood, the forest vegetation in the upper part of the valley has been destroyed, and the vegetation cover now consists of dwarf bushes.

A small population of about 570 people lives in the valley. Agriculture (barley,

buckwheat, potato) reaches heights of 3540 m, but the main source of living consists of pastoralism (dairy farming) and tourism.

Helambu and Gosainkund

The Helambu and Gosainkund regions are situated to the south of the Langtang Valley. They are separated from the Langtang Valley by a mountain range with peaks of between 5000 and 6800 m. With respect to the geographical situation and the climate, Helambu and Gosainkund belong to the 'Himalayan South Side'.

Helambu

The investigation area extended over the upper part of the Melamchi Khola valley. The uppermost part of the valley is formed by a geest called Pemdang (3550 m) and it was dammed by a huge moraine in the south, consisting of big boulders. Downvalley the Melamchi Khola becomes more narrow. The steep slopes are partly interrupted by small terraces between 2500 and 2900 m.

Acid gneisses are dominant. The climate is humid with an estimated annual precipitation of about 3500 mm. The highest precipitation is during the monsoon period in the summer. The mean annual temperature is +4-5°C at Pemdang with a temperature gradient of 0.58°C/100 m (Miehe 1990). The highest permanent settlement is the monastery of Neding (3000 m). The region is covered by forest vegetation. In the lower parts *Abies spectabilis* and *Rhododendron spec.* are dominant. Places which have been destroyed by fire have a bamboo-vegetation. In the upper part (Pemdang) *Betula utilis*, *Juniperus recurva* and *Rhododendron campanulatum* become more abundant.

Gosainkund

The area of Gosainkund consists of three stepped cirque lakes at an altitude of between 4080 and 4380 m. The surrounding peaks reach altitudes of between 4800 and 5100 m. Each lake is dammed by a moraine ridge. Additional moraine ridges can be

found around the upper lake (Gosain Kund, 4380 m). There is also a *roche moutonnée* south of the Gosain Kund lake.

Climatic data are not available for this region. The climatic conditions are, presumably, comparable to those of Helambu, but precipitation and annual mean temperature are probably lower because of the altitude. The precipitation is estimated at about 2500 mm and the mean annual temperature is around 0°C. The working area is situated above the limit of forest growth. The vegetation consists of low bushes, grass, moss and lichens. The area is intensively grazed. The small village of Gosainkund with 2-3 households is a permanent settlement. At the end of July there is a big festival in honour of Shiva, attended by thousands of Hindu and Buddhist pilgrims.

Solu-Khumbu

The high mountain landscape to the south of Mt. Everest consists of a main valley system and a few side valleys draining the area to the south. The relief is formed by Pleistocene glaciation and by tectonic-lithological structures, which have been affected by the river system. (Vuichard 1986). Our working area includes the upper part of the high valleys of Dudh Kosi, Beni Khola and Basa Dranga (Solu) and their respective spring valleys of Imja Drangka, Nangpo Tsangpo and Dudh-kunda Khola.

The landscape is characterized by deeply carved valleys with steep slopes. A monsoon climate is predominant with a rainy season from June to September. In our working area precipitation decreases from the south (2742 mm near Lughla; Haffner 1979) to the north (1030 mm at Namche Bazar; Dobremez 1976). Temperature mainly depends on height and local climatic conditions. At Namche Bazar, the mean annual temperature is +7°C (1964-1968; Dobremez 1976). The climatic snow line is at about 5700 m. In this region migmatitic igneous and basal paragneisses are the dominant initial rocks (Vuichard 1986).

MATERIALS AND METHODS

The locations of all soil profiles were selected according to morphological criteria. They are described in detail in Bäumler (1988), Bäumler *et al.* (1991), Siebert (1992) and Kemp (1992).

Langtang Valley

The working area was situated near Kyangjin at 3980 m in the upper part of the valley, where a tributary glacier (Lirung glacier) meets the main valley. Samples were taken from the high end moraine of the Lirung glacier and from two moraine ridges belonging to the moraine wall system in front of the end moraine. Further profiles were situated on the Kyangjin terrace, a moraine ridge near the airstrip deposited by the main glacier (Langtang glacier) and a further moraine ridge situated 120 m above the valley floor on the southern slope, believed to be a lateral moraine of the Langtang glacier.

Helambu and Gosainkund

In the area of Helambu three locations were studied. One was the moraine at Pemdang, the second was the soil on a terrace at Badja, a summerhut at 2950 m, and the third was a ridge between Badja and Neding. In the Gosainkund area, the moraine damming the lowest lake, Saraswati Kund (4080 m), a moraine on the east slope 80 m above the Gosain Kund lake and a medial moraine on the north side of the *roche moutonnée* were investigated.

Solu-Khumbu

25 soil profiles, mainly developed from glacial and glaciofluvial deposits, were sampled at different locations between 2670 m and 4900 m. Part of the working area is covered by eolian material of recent and Pleistocene origin.

ANALYSES

Analyses were carried out on air dried samples of the fine earth fraction <2mm. They included the pH, content of organic

carbon and nitrogen, cation exchange capacity, exchangeable cations, fractionation of pedogenic iron oxides and particle size distribution. In addition, an analysis of the total element contents was made by X-ray-fluorescence. Further, several fossil soil horizons in the Langtang valley were sampled for radiocarbon dating (^{14}C).

The content of total pedogenic iron oxides, compared with the total Fe-content (Fed/Fet) and the content of well-crystallized Fe oxides compared with the total Fe content (Fed-o/Fet) were used to characterize the main weathering zone in the soil profiles.

The degree of soil weathering was quantified by a weathering index according to Kronberg and Nesbitt (1981). This index describes the degree of mineral weathering (cation leaching and desilication). It is applied to a cartesian coordinate system, where abscissa and ordinate are defined as follows:

$$\text{Abscissa} = \frac{(\text{SiO}_2 + \text{CaO} + \text{K}_2\text{O} + \text{Na}_2\text{O})}{(\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 + \text{SiO}_2 + \text{CaO} + \text{K}_2\text{O} + \text{Na}_2\text{O})}$$

$$\text{Ordinate} = \frac{(\text{CaO} + \text{K}_2\text{O} + \text{Na}_2\text{O})}{(\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3 + \text{CaO} + \text{K}_2\text{O} + \text{Na}_2\text{O})}$$

RESULTS

Langtang Valley

All profiles show low pH-values between 4 and 5, thus reflecting the climatic conditions and the acid substratum. Due to the former forest cover, the contents of organic carbon are high (8-15% organic material). Particle size analysis show a clear dominance of sand fractions. Several profiles are covered by eolian material with high contents of fine sand and very coarse silt. Fe-fractions of the more intensively weathered soils clearly show podzolisation by maxima in the illuvial horizons.

The radiocarbon datings dated the deposits to between 3100 and 450 yr BP, which agrees very well with the datings

given by Shiraiwa & Watanabe (1991). Three glacial advances could be distinguished during this period. By means of the results of the weathering indices and the ^{14}C datings, the following conclusion could be drawn according to soil development and the age of the glacial deposits: The profile on the end moraine of the Lirung glacier, classified as a Dystric Regosol, clearly represents the least developed soil profile. It shows the lowest content of organic carbon, the lowest cation exchange capacity, and the degree of acidification measured by the exchangeable cations is low as well as the degree of formation of pedogenic iron oxides. These results are confirmed by the results of the weathering index. According to the glacial chronology of Shiraiwa & Watanabe (1991), the moraine wall dates from advances of the Little Ice Age, probably around 1815 AD.

The profiles on the two moraine ridges situated just in front of the described end moraine, both classified as Dystric-Regosols, show a very similar degree of weathering. Compared with the profile on the end moraine, they show the initial development of a brown coloured B-horizon. The weathering index also classifies these two soil profiles as very young soil formations. According to the glacial chronology, the two profiles developed on deposits of the Lirung Stage (2800-550 yr BP). To get a better idea of the age of the profiles, we compared them with the profile of a terminal moraine near the airstrip. The beginning of the development of this profile, classified as a Haplic Podsol, could be dated by ^{14}C to 2500 ± 115 yr BP. In contrast with the profiles on the Lirung moraines, this soil shows clear signs of podzolisation. The weathering index also classifies it to be more developed. In consequence, the profiles on the Lirung moraines are considerably younger and thus probably date from the end of the Lirung Stage (around 550 yr BP).

The profile on the Kyangjin terrace shows a more pronounced development than the profiles on the Lirung moraines. This

means that the accumulation of the terrace material is not correlated to the deposition of the Lirung moraines: it must be older. This corresponds with the results of *Shiraiwa & Watanabe* (1991), who correlated the terrace accumulation with the Langtang Stage.

The soil profile of the lateral moraine on the southern slope 120 m above the valley floor shows clear signs of podzolisation. The weathering index proves that it is significantly more intensively weathered than the other profiles of the Langtang valley. According to this, and to its location high above the valley floor, it can be deduced that this moraine has its origin in an older glacial advance. This corresponds with the studies of *Heuberger* (1984) who dated this moraine to be late glacial.

Helambu and Gosainkund

The pH-values of the profiles of the working areas of Helambu and Gosainkund are very low. They vary 3.9 to 4.8. The topsoil horizons of the Gosainkund soils are more acidic. The pH-values reach 3.5. The cation exchange capacity at soil-pH is low. In consequence to the acid pH-value, the exchangeable Al-content is very high. The Al-saturation amounts to 80-90%.

At Pemdang a Typic Haplorthod has developed. It is characterized by high iron content in the B-horizon. No clear maximum of the iron fraction could be shown. The Fe-translocation includes all subsoil horizons while the Al-fractions show a clear maximum in the upper part of the B-horizons. At Badja we could find a loamy profile with clay translocation and clay contents up to 33% in the B-horizons. However the low pH-value in the profile indicates that the translocation process cannot take place currently. This soil is classified as a Haplic Alfisol. At 3100 m at the ridge between Badja and Neding, another loamy textured profile is located. In spite of the loamy texture, this soil shows translocation of iron and aluminium and is classified as a Haplic Podzol.

The estimated snow line depression, which corresponds to the moraine of Pemdang, amounts to about 500 m. Snow line depressions of this extent have also been calculated for late-glacial advances in the Alps (*Maisch* 1982). This consideration agrees with the results of the iron fractionation and the weathering indices. Therefore the moraine of Pemdang is estimated to be late-glacial. The profiles at Badja and Neding are both intensively weathered. The weathering indices show a higher degree of soil development in comparison to the other soils of Helambu and Gosainkund. It is possible that both profiles have not been reached by the ice of the last main glaciation.

In the Gosainkund area all profiles show a surface layer of fine textured material, but the current dominant pedological process is podsolization. There are now two different possibilities to explain the origin of the surface layer. On the one hand, highly weathered material could have been deposited, e.g., by eolian transport. On the other, clay minerals could have been formed in situ during a warmer period.

The profiles of Gosain Kund lake are all presumably of late-glacial origin. This could be shown by the weathering indices as well as by considerations of the snow line depression in this area. It is possible that the profile on the moraine damming the lowest lake (Saraswati Kund), which contains 27% clay, might be older.

Solu-Khumbu

The pH values of all soils are very low (4.0-5.6) and normally increase with increasing soil depth. Because of the acid substratum, the cation exchange capacity values are also very low, depending on the content of clay and organic carbon. Part of the soils show second maxima of organic carbon and pedogenic oxides in the subsoil horizons indicating stratification of the solum or translocation processes, which are typical for podzolisation. Otherwise, they decrease continuously with increasing soil depth. Sand and silt fractions dominate mainly with

more than 80% in all soils. They are classified as Podzols, Acrisols, Leptosol, Cambisols, and Regosols.

According to the results of the iron fractionation and of the weathering indices, the soil profiles can be separated into two groups: one group of younger soils with their maxima of weathering in the topsoil horizons, and one group of intensively weathered soils with their main zone of weathering in the subsoil horizons. The position of the main zone of weathering of a greater depth indicate considerably longer, probably interglacial periods of soil development. This was in full agreement with higher clay contents (up to 40%) in the group of old soils.

Furthermore, a clear differentiation of the soils could be shown due to the altitude and bioclimatic zones, which strongly influence processes of physical and chemical weathering. Cambisols, Alfisols and Acrisols predominate in the hill and lower tropical mountain zones between 2000 and 3000 m. The subalpine and alpine zones with coniferous and Rhododendron forests and dwarf bush vegetation is characterized by podzolised soils. The alpine zone above the forest line (4000-4200 m) and sites of erosion normally yield shallow and stony Regosols or Leptosols.

Within the group of young soils, developed from deposits of the last main glaciation or even more recently, a linear correlation between soil development and altitude could be shown. There is an average decrease of 3.5% clay per 1000 m for the working area between 2500 m and 5000 m. This is parallel to the thermal gradient (0.54°C/100 m; *Dobremez* 1976) indicating that climate conditions are the main controlling factors of weathering processes and soil development in high mountain regions.

A clear indication of the history of the landscape is given by the location of soils with different ages and intensity of weathering near Monjo in the Dudh Kosi valley and opposite Ringmo in the Beni Khola valley. Intensively weathered soils of presumably interglacial origin were situated

at higher altitudes than soils developed from deposits of the last ice age. This might give indications of ice marginal grounds, as the old deposits are completely preserved and were not truncated by ice erosion during the last main glaciation.

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NEWS

Conferences

The Problem of National Identity of Ethnic Groups and National Integration. April 15-16, 1993 in Kathmandu

Martin Gaenszle

This seminar was organised by the "Ethno-Students' Forum", a "nonpolitical volunteer organization, established in July 1992" by students of Tribhuvan University, and had the objective "1. to identify the problems of nationalities and indigenous peoples; 2. to increase indigenous peoples' publicity all over the country; 3. to raise awareness of the need for national integration & ethnic identification among students, intellectuals, political activists, social workers and planners too; 4. to encourage the indigenous peoples' organisations & communities to preserve and develop their cultures." (quote from the proposal)

Not surprisingly the issues raised during the seminar were not entirely unpolitical, as it was widely felt - and also stressed in the inaugural speech of the Minister for Housing and Physical Planning Bal Bahadur Rai - that the ethnic groups in Nepal still lack equal opportunities. The topicality, however, did not diminish the academic quality of the papers, and as, significantly, most of the commentators were chosen from "high castes", discussions were critical and lively.

Om Gurung in his paper on the "Formation of the Nation-State and the Creation of a National Identity" stressed the power aspect of national integration: he described processes like Nepalization as survival strategies rather than expressive of the peoples' wishes, and therefore the result was a destruction of ethnic identities. In his comment Prayag Raj Sharma warned against an ideology of tribalization, as only a secular outlook of modernization can bring

any advance.

Novel Kishor Rai spoke on the "Status of Multilinguals in Educational Development". Though the right for primary education in one's mother tongue is established in the new Constitution, it is still not clear whose responsibility it is to provide for this. Rather than wait for the government to do something, Dr. Rai called on the people's own initiative to organise evening classes and to promote linguistic and lexicographic work on the numerous languages. The paper was commented on by Madhav Pokharel.

Gopal Singh Nepali, speaking on "Questions of National Integration", emphasized that though the process of Nepal's unification in territorial, economic and administrative terms has long been completed, this cannot be said about the emotional aspect. But the only solution, he said, is a modern value system: With the return of democracy, the "parbatiya-model" of a caste-society must be replaced by a model of cultural pluralism.

The second day began with a paper by Sitaram Tamang on the "Current Socio-Economic and Political Conditions of Ethnic Groups" which consisted largely of statistical figures concerning the distribution of high castes and Newar vs. "the ethnic groups" (*janajāti*) in higher administrative and educational positions. The commentator, Chaitanya Mishra, pointed to flaws in the census data, and stressed the necessity to take into account the internal differentiation of "the ethnic groups".

In his paper on the "Problems of the Development of the Backward Indigenous People" Bihari Krishna Shrestha pointed out that backwardness (or poverty) is independent of ethnic affiliation. He called for an identification of absolute poverty so that those who are really in need can be given special assistance. Dilli Ram Dahal, in his commentary, reminded him that cultural differences are not to be disregarded, because, for example, Brahmins always

send their children to school even if they are poor.

Stephen Mikesell presented a paper on "Democracy and Political Participation of Ethnic Minorities". Describing political parties in Max Weber's terms as bureaucratic organisations with their own internal power structures, he warned that multi-party democracy in itself is not sufficient as long as old structures persist and people on the grass-root level are not in a position to hold their "representatives" fully accountable. The paper was commented on by Anantaraj Paudyal.

The last paper was on "Ethnic Identity Among the Mehawang Rai" by Martin Gaenzle. He drew attention to the traditional sense of ethnic identity which is rooted in the mythology of the *muddum*. Whereas this kind of identity is relational and inclusive, regarding cultural difference as ultimately deriving from common origins, in recent developments of Rai ethnicity the ethnic boundary is redrawn in more absolute terms.

As most of the papers and discussions were in Nepali and some in English, it was difficult to come to an agreement on terminological matters (e.g., the use of terms such as "nation" and "ethnicity"). In any case, the event showed that it doesn't require a fancy budget to have a fruitful and well attended seminar.

The Himalayan Forum at the London School of Oriental & African Studies, Spring Term, 1993

In the spring seminar series the following papers were presented and discussed

February 4 - Jane Carter (Overseas Development Institute, London): Indigenous environment knowledge: a case study from Dolakha district, Nepal

February 11 - Poonam Thapa (IPPF, London): Non-governmental organisa-

tions and development in Nepal
February 18 - Robbie Barnett (Tibet Information Network: 'Little door, big door': reforms in Tibet in 1992

February 25 - (in conjunction with the Bhutan Society of the U.K.) Sonam Chhoki (SOAS): Patterns of Bhutanese village life

March 11 - Tamara Kohn (University of Durham): Learning beyond language: brides and anthropologists in the hills of east Nepal

May 13 - Robbie Barnett (Tibet Information Network): 'Little door, big door': reforms in Tibet in 1992

May 20 - Myra Shackley (Nottingham Trent University): The impact of tourism in upper Mustang, Nepal

Project

Himalaya-talenproject "Himalayan Languages Project" Rijksuniversiteit Leiden

George van Driem

On the 8th of April this year, the **Himalayan Language Project** of Leiden University (Rijksuniversiteit Leiden) was inaugurated in Leiden at Snouck Hurgronje House. The project director is Dr. George van Driem, and the sponsors are the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (Nederlandse Organisatie voor Wetenschappelijk Onderzoek), Leiden University and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen).

The project will recruit six or seven young linguists for the description of languages of Nepal and Bhutan. Each linguistic description, which is meant to serve as the individual researcher's doctoral dissertation, is to consist of an introduction, grammar (phonology,

morphology, syntax), verbal paradigms, analysed texts and a glossary. Researchers will also be encouraged to incorporate a study of the indigenous religion, pantheon, rituals and oral traditions into their grammars. Such a grammar must be completed within four years and should preferably be written in English. In exceptional cases, a well-designed proposal for a substantive dissertation which deviates from the above format, e.g., a comparative grammar of Newari dialects, may be approved. The oral defence of the dissertation will take place in Leiden and be conducted in Dutch. In exceptional cases, the term of employment may be extended by an additional fifth year, provided that the integral manuscript of the dissertation has already been completed. The costs of fieldwork and necessary vaccinations will be defrayed within prescribed limits. Salaries will be in accordance with

Symposia

Report from the Symposia Bhutan - A Traditional Order and the Forces of Change School of Oriental and African Studies, 22-23 March 1993

Michael Hutt (convenor)

The idea of this conference was suggested by three Himalayan Forum seminars on Bhutan during late 1991 and early 1992 which attracted great interest. There is growing political crisis in Bhutan which has so far led to the arrival of approximately 78,000 refugees on Nepalese soil and about 20,000 in India. Bhutan, the world's last Mahayana Buddhist state, remains little-known. In 1991 it was possible for its government to state that it had revised its official population figure from 1.2 million to 600,000. In a situation in which perhaps one-sixth of the population has fled or been expelled, but in which basic population data

the Dutch norms for *onderzoekers-in-opleiding*. A good command of spoken and written Nepali is an absolute prerequisite. In Bhutan, a good working knowledge of Dzongkha is essential, in addition to a good command of Nepali.

In addition to the team of young linguists, **The Himalayan Languages Project** will fund short-term projects by scholars from Nepal, Bhutan or other countries, either working in the Himalayas or as visiting scholars in Leiden. These projects are meant to yield some tangible result such as a publication.

Applications, requests for information and suggestions may be addressed to: Dr. George van Driem, Himalayan Language Project, Rijksuniversiteit Leiden, Postbus 9515, 2300 RA Leiden, Kingdom of the Netherlands.

are not available, exaggerated claims can be made on both sides of the argument - claims which are difficult to evaluate. Because most analyses of the causes and nature of the crisis have been polemical and biased, it was felt that dispassionate academic scrutiny of (a) the culture that Bhutan is seeking to protect, and (b) the nature of the perceived threat to that culture, might be both constructive and timely.

I visited Bhutan for two weeks in September 1992. There I was the guest of the government, whose foreign minister took the view that an academic appraisal of Bhutan's current situation would be of benefit to the kingdom. In Thimphu the resident UNDP representative agreed in principle to funding the attendance of Bhutanese delegates to the conference. Similarly, in Kathmandu, the British Council agreed to consider sending the editor of *Himal*, a well-known journal that had recently focused on Bhutan. Both promises bore fruit.

A programme gradually evolved, growing from one to two days: of the 19 papers eventually presented, about half had

a direct bearing on the political crisis. The others addressed aspects of Bhutan's heritage: architecture, environment, religion and textiles. There were contributors from Bhutan (3), India (1), Nepal (1), the USA (3), France (2), Germany (1), Belgium (1), Hong Kong (1), Japan (1), Holland (1), and four from the United Kingdom (of whom one was a Bhutanese national).

A minor crisis arose a few weeks before the conference. Two leaders of exiled dissident groups were planning to attend, either to present papers or as members of the audience. It became apparent that if they did attend, the Bhutanese government would be reluctant to send delegates. The choice thus became one between a conference at which the Bhutanese government would be represented, or a gathering from which it had withdrawn. In view of the effort that had been expended to draw in government representatives, it was decided that the former option was preferable. Therefore, the conference was attended by Dasho Jigmi Thinley, Secretary to the Ministry of Home Affairs, but not by any representative of the exiled opposition. Ultimately, the politics of such a conference had to be the art of the possible. As the convenor, I had to do douse rumours of political blackmail, but after the event there was general agreement that the conference had been benefited from the presence of the Bhutanese government more than it would have from the presence of the opposition.

The conference was attended by 250 people. They included not only academics and journalists but also representatives of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees, the United Nations Development Programme, VSO, the World Bank, donor agencies from New Zealand and Holland, the Nepalese Embassy, the Indian High Commission, Amnesty International, and members of the general public with an interest in Bhutan from 16 different countries. Of the two central themes of the conference (Bhutan's cultural heritage and its present political crisis), various aspects of

the crisis tended to dominate discussions. Since this was the first international conference that has ever focused on Bhutan, and the first occasion on which a gathering had ever discussed the highly contentious political issues, there seemed to be a general consensus that this was appropriate.

The non-contentious papers were on the environment (from Bruce Bunting of the World Wildlife Fund), textiles (from Diana Myers of the Peabody and Essex Museum in Salem, Massachusetts and Françoise Pommaret of the CNRS in Paris), architecture (from Wolf Kahlen of the Technische Universität, Berlin, and Marc Dujardin of the St. Lucas School of Architecture in Ghent, Belgium), and Buddhism (from Michael Kowalewski and Sonam Chhoki of SOAS). Most of these provoked interesting and constructive discussions. Dujardin's illustrated presentation, backed up by an exhibition in the foyer, was especially appreciated.

The conference was addressed early on the Monday morning by Michael Aris of St. Anthony's College, Oxford, who is the leading western authority on Bhutanese history. Aris described several instances in which disputes had been settled through traditional means of conciliation. His scholarly but adventurous paper set the tone for much of the rest of the conference. Another paper of particular value and interest was that presented by Leo Rose, who discussed the role of the monarchy in Bhutan's present crisis. Other speakers were Yasuyuki Kurita (Osaka), George van Driem (Leiden), A. Sinha (Shillong), Thierry Mathou (CNRS, Paris), Brian Shaw (Hong Kong), Karma Ura (Thimphu), Nicholas Nugent (BBC World Service), Kanak Mani Dixit (Kathmandu) and Kinley Dorji (Thimphu).

The discussion of the political issue was dominated at first by the government's view, which is that Bhutan has become the victim of an orchestrated campaign designed to destroy its distinctive culture and to reinstate thousands of illegal immigrants who were recently expelled. The alternative

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 Nepalese 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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Manfred G. Treu

knowledge of the people and their problems; from 1960 to 1961 he conceived and led the successful programm 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

Notes to Contributors

The European Bulletin of Himalayan Research welcomes for consideration manuscripts and short notices dealing with any of the following topics.

1. Topical reports on ongoing, or recently completed, research projects.
2. Information about archives with literary, historical, archaeological, ethnographic, botanical, etc. materials collected in the Himalayan region.
3. Reviews of books on the Himalayas, including books published in Nepal, India, Pakistan and China which because of poor distribution may be inadequately known in Europe.
4. Current political developments in Nepal, India, Pakistan and China and the implications of these developments for research carried out by European scholars.
5. News about recent or forthcoming conferences, and on funding opportunities for European scholars working in the Himalayas as well as for scholars from the Himalayan region itself to visit Europe.

Manuscripts should not exceed 5,000 words (ca. 20 pages) in length. All contributions will be published in English. Copy can be submitted in German or French with the understanding that the editors in Heidelberg will arrange for its translation. Anything submitted in English by a non-native speaker will be copy-edited in Heidelberg by a native speaker.

The deadline for submissions for our sixth issue is October 30, 1993. Anything received after that date will go into the seventh issue, expected in spring, 1994.

The views expressed by individual contributors are their own and do not represent those of the Editorial Board. All correspondence to The Editors, European Bulletin of Himalayan Research, Südasiens-Institut der Universität Heidelberg, Im Neuenheimer Feld 330, D- 69120 Heidelberg, Federal Republic of Germany.