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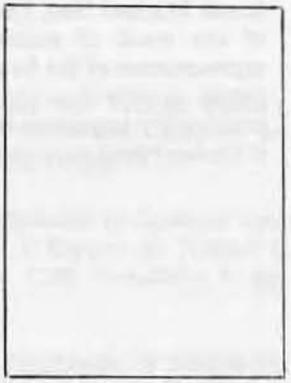
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NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

Richard Burghart, our Editor-in-Chief, colleague and friend, died on January 1st at the age of 49, after long months of suffering. Born in the United States, he received his higher education at Williamstown (Mass.) and Ibadan (Nigeria), and then settled in London to take up the study of social anthropology at the School of Oriental & African Studies in 1966. After obtaining an M.A., he first worked for the Belgian newspaper "Le Soir", writing articles on South Asia for its supplement. Dissatisfied with this experience as a journalist, he soon resumed his studies in London. He received his Ph.D. in 1976 and stayed at the SOAS where he worked as a lecturer in Asian Anthropology for nearly ten years, and where his colleagues came to value him as an outstanding partner. A hard start awaited him when, in 1987, he accepted the chair of Ethnology at Heidelberg University and became Head of a Department with a large number of students and with too small a staff. It took him some time to achieve the first steps toward "modernizing" the Department, in the widest sense of the term, by amending the curriculum, improving the technical equipment and, above all, by intensifying exchanges with scientists from other departments of the South Asia Institute and from institutions abroad. Stimulating seminars on the "Structure of Hindu Tradition" and "Sovereignty in the Himalayas", with participants from France, Britain, the United States, Nepal and India, were just two of his attempts to reconsider old ideas and motivate new research.



This is not the place for an appreciation of Richard's work as a whole. It will be sufficient to mention his articles analyzing the social organization of the Vaishnavite pilgrimage centre at Janakpur (where he did extensive fieldwork), the concept of the nation-state in Nepal, and the structure of Hinduism, and to point to those writings in which he made an attempt to transcend the then-prevailing structuralist and Dumontian perspectives on Indian society. His was a vision which always aimed at what one may call the *essence in its context*; it drew benefit from his talent for perceiving contrasts, hidden boundaries and underlying unities, and was articulated in concise, unpretentious language, without indulging in rigidly abstract or wholesale generalization. Sadly, several book projects, among them *Spoken Maithili in its Social Context* and *State and Society in Nepal* remain unpublished.

The European Bulletin of Himalayan Research owes its existence to Richard's initiative and commitment. He intended it to function as a genuinely European undertaking, a forum of information devoted to recent publications and ongoing research, to be produced in cooperation between different countries, and to be developed, step by step, into a Journal. It is in the spirit of this legacy that we shall continue with two new members on the editorial board: Michael Hutt, Lecturer in Nepali at SOAS in London is now in charge of the work of editing, while Brigitte Merz, the recently appointed representative of the South Asia Institute at its Kathmandu Branch Office, will supply us with ideas and manuscripts from Nepal. It is planned (according to a preliminary agreement reached in 1990) to pass on the Bulletin to the Centre d'Etudes Himalayennes in Paris around 1996 for a term of two years or so.

## REVIEW ARTICLE

### Journeys to the Holy Center. The Study of Pilgrimage in Recent Himalayan Research

Eberhard Berg

**Michaels, Axel** 1989. 'Pasupati's Holy Field and the Temple Priest's Authority in Deopatan (Nepal)'. In: *Prêtrise, Pouvoirs et Autorité en Himalaya* (eds. V.Bouillier/G.Toffin), Coll. Purusartha 12, pp. 41-59.

**Burghart, Richard** 1985. 'The regional circumambulation of Janakpur seen in the light of Vaishnavite tradition (Nepal)'. In: *L'Espace du Temple I. Espaces, Itinéraires, Médiations*. Ed. J.-C. Galey. Coll. Purusartha 8, pp. 121-147.

**Messerschmidt, Donald A.** 1989. 'The Hindu Pilgrimage to Muktinath, Nepal. Part 1. Natural and Supernatural Attributes of the Sacred Field'; 'Part 2. Vaishnava Devotees and Status Reaffirmation'. In: *Mountain Research and Development* Vol. 9, No. 2, pp. 89-104 and pp. 105-118.

**Aziz, Barbara N.** 1982. 'A Pilgrimage to Amamath -The Hindus' Search for Immortality'. In: *Kailash* 9, pp.121-138.

**Gutschow, Niels** 1982. *Stadtraum und Ritual der newarischen Städte im Kathmandu-Tal. Eine architektur- und anthropologische Untersuchung*. Stuttgart: Kohlhammer.

**Miller S.J., Caspar J.** 1977. *Faith-Healers in the Himalayas. An Investigation of Traditional Healers and Their Festivals in Dolakha District of Nepal*. Kirtipur: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University (unpublished Ph.D. Thesis).

**Sax, William S.** 1991. *Mountain Goddess. Gender and Politics in a Himalayan Pilgrimage*. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press.

In the last two decades the 'topos' of pilgrimage has been established as a distinct field of scientific inquiry within the humanities and the social sciences. Given both their specific geography and history, the Himalayas constitute a cultural belt that is strongly influenced by the Indian subcontinent in the south and by China and Tibet in the north. In the realm of Himalayan pilgrimage, research in the last two decades has provided a deeper insight into the complexity of this important social phenomenon.

In the following review, the results of selected works will be presented which may serve to highlight from a variety of perspectives some significant

characteristics of Himalayan pilgrimages. First, an overview drawing on several articles and outlining the salient features of Himalayan pilgrimage will establish a preliminary frame of reference. Thereafter, three case studies dealing with urban ritual enactments, with *jhākri*, and with gender politics in the context of a particular pilgrimage will be discussed. It is hoped that these insights may enhance our understanding of the complexity and essential heterogeneity which seem to be characteristic not only of Old and New World Christian<sup>1</sup>, but also of the realm of the Himalayan pilgrimage.

#### **Pilgrimage in the Hindu-Buddhist Interface: an Overview**

In the vast area of culturally and socially heterogeneous South Asia the social phenomenon of pilgrimage has for ages fulfilled a crucial role in the integration of numerous social strata, different ethnic cultures, various cults, several religious traditions, etc. Hindu and Buddhist pilgrimage may thus be seen as an ancient institution that extends over an enormous geographical space and sustains a system of mutually-linked sacred places. Accordingly, this system helps not only to bind together diverse peoples but also to connect the multitude of sacred places to be visited which are scattered all over South Asia.<sup>2</sup>

Geographically, Hindu and Buddhist pilgrimage networks overlap. The geographical space delimited by the Hindu pilgrimage system extends from the southern tip of the Indian subcontinent to as far north as the Himalayan shrines of Badrinath and Kedarnath and to Mount Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva. On the other hand, the Tibetan Newar Buddhist pilgrimage system extends as far south as the Nepalese Tarai, the Banaras area, Eastern Uttar Pradesh, and Bihar. This crucial difference is due to the fact that most of the important Buddhist centers of pilgrimage represent sites which are traditionally associated with important episodes in the life of the historical Buddha, at the same time symbolizing the birth of Buddhism.

The fact that a holy site constitutes a distinct segment in the overall pilgrimage system, and is thus culturally as well as spatially linked to holy centers in distant areas, is demonstrated at the temple of Pashupati, situated about 3 km northeast of Kathmandu. For several centuries the priests of Pashupati have come from southern India. Due to this tradition a firm spatial as well as spiritual link between this important place of pilgrimage in Nepal and the south of the Indian subcontinent has been established.<sup>3</sup>

In this case the establishment of a specific link between holy centers clearly seems to be politically motivated. Axel Michaels mentions a document issued by Jagajjaya Malla dated 1734 A.D. According to this, the priests 'must' come from the south of the Vindhya mountains, they 'must' be Dravidian Telingana Brahmans, and they 'must' be married householders. The exact historical date when these Brahmans were invited for the first time to worship at the temple has not been determined yet. There seems to be no doubt, however, concerning the specific reason for the royal prescription.

The case of the sacred complex of Pashupati represents an interesting complementarity between priestly Brahmans who held powers of religious legitimization, and the king who held political powers.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly,

Michaels interprets this prescription as a deliberate royal effort to avoid the establishment of hereditary rites regarding the priesthood of the temple (pp. 42-6). On the other hand, he recalls that, despite its high degree of recognition among Hindu pilgrims the Pashupatinath Temple is not mentioned by most traditional Indian works on pilgrimage. This seems to be due to the 'peculiar and distinctive ritual isolation' of the sacred complex of Pashupati within its immediate surroundings caused by the royal prescription that the temple priests have to come from South India.<sup>5</sup>

As many instances prove, the ancient system of pilgrimage that integrates a wide network of holy places is by no means petrified tradition. On the contrary, it has evolved and it can change in the course of history. The same is true of the diverse ritual enactments performed at a particular sacred center. Both were and still are subject to historical change; in other words they can 'disappear' and 'reappear'.<sup>6</sup> This implies that the development of particular sacred sites as places of pilgrimage and the ritual enactments performed cannot be seen as static.

An illuminating example of the establishment and subsequent change of a regional circumambulation is represented by Burghart's investigation of the circumambulation of Janakpur, a Vaishnavite pilgrimage center in the eastern Tarai of Nepal. The circumambulation was actually 'set in motion' at the end of the eighteenth century by Ramavat ascetics. And at the beginning of this century the ascetics profoundly transformed the established regional circumambulation: a five-day event enacted by celibate ascetics was changed into a fifteen-day event celebrated by ascetics and laypeople alike.

It needs to be especially emphasized that these ascetics assumed the role of innovators who not only introduced the circumambulation of Janakpur but also transformed it again. They, however, believed the circumambulation to have always been there, but that it had disappeared in the Kali Yuga. Thus, they viewed the formation of the pilgrimage festival as an act of restoration rather than a 'new' creation.

The immense spatial networks of pilgrimage routes binding together a multitude of different holy sites constitute sacred geographies. Each sacred locale is imbued with particular sanctity, due to specific natural features. A web of symbolic meanings is composed around these features, which are most often closely related by myths and legends to particular deities. The most comprehensive account of an important center of pilgrimage in Nepal sacred both to Hindus and Buddhists has been published by D.A. Messerschmidt.<sup>7</sup>

The dramatic setting of a high Himalayan shrine, difficult of access and surrounded by certain 'miraculous' supernatural attributes - particularly the natural gas fires, ammonite fossils, and other natural features - constitute the very distinctive character of the famous pilgrimage locale of Muktinath. Of particular importance here is a specific combination of natural characteristics and selected myths that is projected onto this outstanding site. The myths are interpreted by the informed pilgrim according to traditions that legitimate, encourage and necessitate pilgrimage to a sacred locale like Muktinath. Hindus and Buddhists hold true different versions of the mythological origin of the holy center of Muktinath. For Hindus, Muktinath is both a shrine of Vishnu,

Lord of Salvation, and of Lord Brahma, the creator. For Buddhists, Muktinath is a holy site for devotees of Guru Padmasambhava, who is considered the founder of Tibetan Buddhism. Hence, as is often the case within the Himalayan realm, Muktinath's ritual space has to accommodate a diversity of discourses, meanings, and religious practices.

Regarding the pilgrimage route that leads through a sacred geography linking various holy sites, necessary information for the pilgrim is provided orally or by written guides.<sup>8</sup> The pilgrim's movement to various holy places, leading through, across or around sacred landscapes, serves to articulate the very existence of the pilgrimage network. The practice of pilgrimage certainly moves people to experience themselves in relation to others and their deities. Hence, pilgrimage may enhance the ordinary person's awareness of Hindu or Buddhist religious and cultural unity.

What exactly happens to the pilgrim en route to a sacred locale? B. N. Aziz has published a vivid account of Hindu pilgrimage to remote Amarnath cave, focusing on the pilgrims' movement and viewing it as a social process. The pilgrims start their long and arduous journey on foot to Amarnath cave as part of a huge undifferentiated crowd. But already on the first day the participant observer notes that each pilgrim spends the day walking alone through the rugged mountain scenery. A common bond which might unite the diverse pilgrims does not emerge in the course of these four days. On the contrary, the approach to the sacred center is paralleled by a growing dissociation from other pilgrims.

As this case study illustrates, striving for the same goal while making the same way up through the uninhabitable, barren mountain area, and thus suffering from the same hardships, does not necessarily lead to increased feelings of oneness. Each pilgrim seems to be exclusively preoccupied with him or herself in order to approach the divine manifestation in the best mental state possible. Reflecting on this rather unexpected behaviour, Aziz suggests that to the individual pilgrim a pilgrimage represents a deeply 'personal and private experience' (p. 123).

### Special case studies

#### 1. N. Gutschow on local forms of pilgrimage in the context of Bhaktapur's ritual processions.

The urbanologist Niels Gutschow has provided an interesting insight into various forms of local pilgrimage that take place annually within the urban realm of the Kathmandu valley. By directing his central analytical focus on ritual movements in and through the city's spatial realm which follow various processional routes, he explores a specific relationship between ritual and space. Gutschow's work illuminates the complex ordering of urban space through the performance of a multitude of symbolic enactments on the occasion of various festive events in the course of the annual cycle.

Although Hindu and Buddhist religious practices have different sets of sacred identifications in the Kathmandu Valley, the valley as a whole is regarded by both as a sacred space of unique importance. In both cases, rituals

as well as inscriptions testify that the valley is conceptualized as a mandala.<sup>9</sup>

According to this mandala scheme, the sacred space represented either by the whole Valley or by a particular urban space is structured and given its sacred order. The various festivals of the annual cycle play an important role in legitimizing the conception of the Kathmandu Valley as a sacred space. These festivals are held in the form of local pilgrimages. In many cases, local pilgrimages follow in a clockwise passage a circumambulatory route around a sacred center.<sup>10</sup>

Bhaktapur's various ritual processions may serve to illustrate Gutschow's main thesis concerning the ordering of urban space by ritual enactments. Compared to Kathmandu and Patan, Bhaktapur is still related to the larger economic and political networks on a modest scale. Due to these circumstances, Bhaktapur has retained many of the traditional features which have characterized the city for many centuries. The dense, but still stable population consists almost entirely of Hindu Newars. As their processions reveal, the Bhaktapur Newars, notwithstanding their caste and status differences, share a tradition, an identity and a culture.

The city of Bhaktapur is constructed of successive interlocking social units such as household, lineage, neighbourhood, section, and beyond this level, the binary division of upper against lower town. Each of these units is characterized by its own history which governs the enactment of its specific ritual processions. Due to these crucial features, Bhaktapur represents a highly integrated sociocultural system.<sup>11</sup> Moreover, the city's geography reveals a number of spatial divisions (cremation procession routes, the circumambulation route, the city's sections and its halves). Many spatial elements of importance are represented by particular stones, shrines, temples, places, areas, roads. It is at those significant sites that ritual enactments are performed thus marking these significant spatial characteristics.

There are different forms of processions and processional routes in Bhaktapur. In the course of the Navadurga celebrations, for instance, performed within the temporal framework of the Dasain Festival, the circumambulation of the whole town is achieved within only two days. All units of the urban community engage in the Navadurga processions and participate in their presence.

In the context of Indra-Jatra, marking the end of the rainy season, similar spatial divisions become manifest. Starting on the day before the full moon, four deities and an elephant representing Indra are carried around the city, following the circumambulation route on seven successive days. Thus, through the Navadurga celebrations as well as through the procession of Indra-Jatra, the heterogenous character of Bhaktapur is made manifest and its sociocultural unity is reaffirmed.

On the first day of Gai-Jatra, the whole population circumambulates the town following the circumambulatory course; thereafter the images of three deities are carried along the same route on the same day (p.57). In contrast to these deities, Bhairava, symbolized by a very small image, circumambulates the city's lower half on the evening of the third day and its upper half on the fourth and last day (pp.57-62). Thus, through the performance of this ritual

procession within the course of four days, thereby publicly marking the division of the procession into two parts, the city's most important units are articulated, and are made apparent to the performers as well as to the audience. At the same time these units are integrated into the sociopolitical whole.

A multitude of significant features are involved in the symbolic enactments of Navadurga processions within the ritual and temporal context of the Dasain festival. For present purposes a brief outline may be useful. In the autumn, the great festival of Dasain or Durga Puja marks the beginning of the harvest. A prominent role in the Navadurga celebrations is ascribed to Taleju. By providing the *mantra* necessary to empower the partial forms of the group of Nine Durgas to resume their manifestations of the Goddess throughout the city, it is Taleju who, by ritually starting the process of symbolic enactments, exerts control over the Navadurga celebrations. Mention must be made here of the fact that Taleju, once the Malla dynasty's lineage goddess, but nowadays still the city's dominant deity, is closely connected with a group of powerful high ranking Brahman Tantric priests.

In the Navadurga processions the bulk of the ceremonial actors are Gatha, a low caste of landless gardeners and day labourers. It is their duty to represent the gods, i.e. to carry their masks as well as to care for them. Moreover, they have to act as musicians and to perform the dances. It is worth mentioning that all male members of the 45 Gatha households have to participate in the ritual enactments according to a rotational principle; even the female head of the Gatha community has to perform some ritual duties in this context in public.<sup>12</sup> Apart from these functions fulfilled by Gatha members, many other castes are tied into the complex whole of the Navadurga celebrations. To name but a few other outstanding roles performed in the framework of this religious celebration: a Jyapu (farmer) priest acts as the Gatha group's adviser concerning mainly the musical aspects of the performances; a Joshi (astrologer) sets the dates of performance according to the lunar calendar; a Purn (painter) makes the masks; the head of the Kumahnaya (potter) provides the clay for making the new masks.<sup>13</sup> Hence, the ritual performances centering on the Navadurga appearances in the context of Dasain necessitate the cooperation of representatives of high, middle, and lower caste groups in order to perform distinct activities. In the course of these highly orchestrated ritual enactments, obviously involving society as a whole, various modes of dramatic interplay - between religious practices, social status, and power relations - are articulated.

The Navadurga, i.e. the powerful Mother-Goddesses, ensure fertility and reproduction for the people of Bhaktapur.<sup>14</sup> In other words, they symbolize the life and well-being of the community as a whole. In the framework of the processions the Mother-Goddesses are represented by masks which are created anew for each festival. When the festival has come to its end, an event signalling the end of the rainy season as well, these masks are cremated. In the following year their ashes are used in the creation of the next generation of masks. Accordingly, the stages of their birth and death seem to reflect the critical phases of the agricultural cycle.

In the city of Bhaktapur, the Navadurga processions constitute the main ritual enactments of the Dasain festival. Over a sequence of eight days the sacred sites of the Mother Goddesses are visited for worship, thereafter the Navadurga take a rest. Then, two months after Dasain, they resume their symbolic enactments for the following six months. In sum, about 19 villages outside the city's territorial realm, though within the confines of the old Malla kingdom of Bhaktapur, and 21 public squares within the urban sphere, have to be visited. These processions through the streets and lanes of almost all of the city's quarters are commonly understood as a massive demonstration of the actual presence of the gods within the community.<sup>15</sup> By taking the chance to welcome them as their guests in their own quarter, or even in their own houses, people have the chance to participate in the power of the divine.

Based upon a detailed and thoroughly grounded description of the diverse rituals held within the realm of Bhaktapur's urban space, Gutschow establishes a useful distinction between two categories of local pilgrimage. Ritual movements through urban space such as those mentioned above are directed to the shrines of the Mother-Goddesses. They evolve in a linear mode by using the most direct way from the starting point to the sacred site which is to be visited (p.63;186). In sum, however, these collective movements within the temporal context of the Navadurga processions, for example, can be considered as 'ambulations' - as opposed to 'circumambulation' - through urban space. Essential to this mode of ritual procession as 'ambulation' is that it contextualizes spatially as well as temporally a fixed set of deities which happen to be localized at diverse sites throughout the city's spatial realm (p.67).

On the other hand, the city's route of circumambulation combines 20 out of the 24 main city squares as well as 7 out of 8 the 'dyochems', i.e. the goddess's house. Thus, it places all important sociopolitical sites as well as all ritual centres in one context. Bhaktapur's route of circumambulation does not lead around the whole of its urban space. More than one third of the whole length of the 4 km long circumambulation route follows the main road of the town, thus remaining within the realm of the urban settlement. Owing to this phenomenon, Bhaktapur's *pradakṣiṇā* does not define its own boundary.

## 2. C. J. Miller on faith-healers in the pilgrimage context

Interesting light has been shed on a still unexplored field within the realm of Himalayan pilgrimage research by C.J. Miller's pioneering 'Investigation of Traditional Healers and their Festivals in Dolakha District'.<sup>16</sup> The central focus of Miller's inquiry deliberately explores the *jhākri*'s role within pilgrimage festivals of regional importance. Not only does the author aim to investigate those roles and functions which set the traditional faith-healer apart from other specialists working in related fields, such as priests and modern doctors; he also seeks to discern what kind of 'professional' organization they may have developed, and to learn about how the ordinary people, their potential clients, view them.

According to the author, the chosen framework of a particular pilgrimage festival can be illuminating "...because these festivals provide *jhākri* and lay

people (both clients and spectators) with opportunities and interaction..."(p.184). For the limited purpose of this review, Miller's observations concerning the symbolic enactments performed by *jhākri* in the pilgrimage context, their relationship with the pilgrims, as well as the specific modes of their interaction, are of special interest. The following will mainly refer to the case study dealing with the pilgrimage to Kalingchok mountain, situated in the north-eastern part of Nepal, on the occasion of Saun Purnima, i.e. the fullmoon of Saun (July-August).

On this auspicious date, about a thousand pilgrims flock together on the remote mountain top of Kalingchok (12,513 ft.). It is a holy site which is regarded by the population of the region as the divine abode of the Mother Goddess Kali. Within an existing regional set of at least seven sacred sites which are associated with diverse forms of the Mother Goddess all being closely related by kinship ties, Kalingchok Mai represents the eldest sister.

Holy sites such as this are regarded as the abode of the local protective deity. The religious performances held there by pilgrims as well as by *jhākri* and priests represent rituals that are meant to pay respect to the local gods (and demons - see G.Toffin) by paying worship to them in order to assure the revered deity's protection of individuals and their family, of kin groups, and of the local as well as of the wider community.<sup>17</sup> In the Himalayas the cult of local gods is practised among adherents of Buddhism as well as of Hinduism. Religious people associate a holy mountain with a double meaning. On the one hand it is considered as the home of a god and/or goddess to be worshiped, usually the tutelary deity of the locality or region. On the other hand, it represents a deity whose power reaches as far as the mountain can be perceived from afar. Very often a holy site in the remote Himalayas combines a mountain with a lake, the latter being regarded as both the representation of a goddess and also of her abode. At such a place god and goddess are imagined to spend their existence in eternal harmony.

The devotees come from the whole region - in the main from Sindhu Palchok and Dolakha District. This pilgrimage is no easy task. Moved by the desire to pay a ceremonial visit to the Mother Goddess, to bring offerings and worship her at her shrine, the pilgrims are willing to undertake a fairly difficult journey on foot in the rainy season.

For the devout pilgrims, on Kalingchok Mountain there are three sites of special veneration and worship. Two different, but distinctively shaped stones situated at the far eastern end of the summit are used for blood sacrifices (one for fowls, the other for young female goats). The third site is a small pond called Bhagawati Kunda. At this pond the majority of devotees usually crowd together during the pilgrimage festival.

The worship of the powerful Mother Goddess is effected by the performance of a set of pious acts. These include the circumambulating of the mountain top clockwise, thereby praising the Goddess aloud; hymns are chanted by men and women in separate singing groups; offerings are made by individuals scattering grains of husked rice (*achetā*), as well as by incense, lights, flowers, and coins.

This multitude of ritual acts, which are meant to assure the worshiper of the goodwill of the revered deity, are performed by individual pilgrims. Among them there is no doubt as to what gifts are suitable to be presented in this context. The offerings made are identical, but the meanings attributed to them may vary individually. Given the varying ideas as to the content of the various gifts and procedures, these pious acts, according to Miller, serve at least the common function of giving a name to the invisible power of the divine contacted at the place of pilgrimage, thereby trying to exert some control over it.<sup>18</sup> The author attributes the laypeople's observed vagueness and variety of ideas to the absence of religious specialists representing an 'institutionalized' religion, whether they be Hindu priests or Buddhist lamas. It is implied that, if these were present on the occasion of this pilgrimage festival, authority would be ascribed to them to impose an official interpretation on the congregation. The latter would include the sacred site, its history and meaning, and the ritual procedures appropriate to the worship of the Mother Goddess to be performed at this site.<sup>19</sup>

Here on the mountaintop of Kalingchok, contact is being made with the venerated deity, with the pilgrims thus participating by their presence in the invisible powers of the divine. On the part of the pilgrims, worship is offered to the visible images of the unseen divine powers, hoping for the Mother Goddess' blessings in return. But although the common illiterate farmer's experience of the flow of his everyday life demonstrates the blessings of health, wealth, progeny, and harmony usually expected in this context, these are constantly threatened by the interference of powers which are beyond his control. A salient feature of this holy site, however, consists of the complete absence of any representative of a formally legitimized and institutionalized religious authority to teach the individual pilgrim the meaning and history of the sacred site and to instruct her or him what to do there. Instead, there is to be encountered only a 'living tradition'. This tradition concerns the observation of the polarity characteristic of the sacred locale in the context of ritual performance: the two stones as the site of blood sacrifice each performed by a 'priest'<sup>20</sup>, and the Bhagawati Kunda as the locus for the other modes of worship described. The *jhākri* present on the occasion of the pilgrimage festival on the mountaintop of Kalingchok act as officiating representatives of this living tradition.

In this particular context, one way of coping with a world which is governed by the invisible powers of mighty gods and goddesses consists of turning 'to a man who claims to see and have power' (p.7). As Miller points out, these popular expectations seem to constitute the precondition for not only accepting, but fully appreciating the *jhākri*'s specific abilities on the part of the congregation. Owing to these circumstances, the remote holy center seems to be an appropriate setting for the *jhākri* to stage his ritual enactments effectively.<sup>21</sup>

On the auspicious day of the festival, the participant observer counts about forty *jhākri* who have gathered at the holy mountain site. Usually the *jhākri*, fully dressed in his characteristic costume and equipped with his paraphernalia, appears accompanied by a considerable following. On the way

up to the sacred site, on the ritual journeys around the mountain top, as well as on his way back home, he is preceded by some male attendants bearing the sacred vessel (*bumba*) and occasionally, when the *jhākri* is busy with other activities, also beating his drum. These drumbeats herald the *jhākri*'s presence and his ritual activity. He is followed by a group of young singers the size of which can vary according to the *jhākri*'s reputation. All members of the *jhākri*'s group seem to be members of one village community (whose social status in everyday life is not mentioned).

At times, the ritual movement of a *jhākri*'s group, backed by his drumbeat and incantations and the singing and praying of his followers, comes to a standstill. Having announced that he is about to beg Kalingchok Mai for power, a controlled up-and-down shaking of his shoulders renders visible his short contact with the invisible forces of the divine. This controlled state of bodily trembling is considered to be the proof of his brief immediate contact with the invisible world and its powers.

It requires the full concentration of his spiritual strength to repeatedly establish this short contact in the course of the pilgrimage festival. Due to these communications he is able to recoup the strength he needs to perform a successful job as a local healer in the year to come. Not unimportantly, though, his strength as a *jhākri* is highly dependent on what the local laypeople think of him. Accordingly, his image as a successful *jhākri* has to be renewed constantly.<sup>22</sup> He tries to establish this positive image by publicly demonstrating his capabilities on festive events of particular importance at a remote sacred locale (as well as at his home).

In this particular context, the relationship between *jhākri* seems to be of little importance. Only a few instances are described, and these clearly demonstrate that there is hardly any interaction between them.<sup>23</sup> Nevertheless their relationship seems to be delicate. Miller summarizes it as follows: "...no open hostility, simply an ignoring of one another even when coming face to face or rubbing shoulders in the packed crowd." (p.31)

In the course of the *jhākri*'s symbolic enactments within the framework of the Kalingchok Jatra, the field researcher observes the emergence of a special kind of 'unity in action' among all the pilgrims present (p.21). It is this particular social state, resulting from the pilgrimage process itself, which seems to constitute the salient feature of the whole festival or, at least, of its climax. According to the ethnographer, the great diversity of the congregation assembled - Tamang, Sherpa, Thami, Brahman, Chetri, Newar, Jirel, Damai, Kami, Sarki, and Magar listed in numerical order - is 'united' on the same holy ground. Thus, the pilgrims of diverse castes and ethnic origin, sharing the same spiritual purpose for the short duration of this festival, constitute a 'community'.<sup>24</sup> And it is at the sacred place on top of that remote mountain on this occasion that an interesting reversal of socio-religious roles happens to take place. In normal everyday life the high castes rank on top of the Hindu socio-religious structure, and the mere existence of *jhākri* seems to be a delicate problem. For the short duration of the festival, however, it is the *jhākri* who assumes the 'highest rank' among the pilgrims (p.22).

It is noteworthy, however, that the *jhākri* does not seem to actively

'appropriate' this leading rank within the congregation. On the contrary, it is the heterogenous community of pilgrims who ascribe this prominent role to him. For it is he who can obviously fulfill the mediating role between the realm of the mundane and that of the divine, i.e. between the different pilgrims present and the Mother Goddess who is believed to reside on this mountaintop.

The fact that in this particular framework the heterogenous community of pilgrims assigns the lead role to the *jhākri* is not due solely to his particular spiritual powers. As outlined above, the salient characteristic of this holy site consists in the complete lack of any representative of each of the two institutionalized religions who could be credited with giving authoritative interpretations to the laypeople concerning the history and meaning of the sacred locale. Moreover, to this absence is added the above-mentioned expectations of the pilgrims, associated with their visit to the shrine of the Mother Goddess. In this particular framework, for the pilgrims it seems but a logical outcome to entrust the *jhākri* with the function of communicating with the invisible world of the divine. These religious specialists are not only present; they are also endowed with particular capabilities which may serve to fulfill this special task, as the public display of their strength in this setting clearly seems to prove.

### 3. W. Sax: Gender and Politics in a Himalayan Pilgrimage

In his comprehensive study of a set of local and regional pilgrimages in Garhwal for the worship of the regional protective deity, W. Sax draws attention to several competing religious and secular discourses which are at play within this context. In the case of these regional pilgrimages the conflicting discourses are not the result of a variety of perceptions and understandings 'imported' by pilgrims to a sacred locale; on the contrary they are 'home-grown' and are staged by the regional population concerned.

Viewing the pilgrimage complex as a dynamic social and cultural context, the ethnographer seeks to explore why and how these conflicting discourses are played out in this particular setting. His focus mainly aims at investigating the conflict and articulation of two different, but mutually-linked discourses. One occurs in the course of a pilgrimage procession predominantly between two rival priestly factions and involves several political as well as territorial aspects of regional importance. Quite contrary to Turner's ideal of 'communitas', in the case studies presented factionalism and conflict are inherent characteristics of all the ritual processions observed. Notwithstanding the various instances of more or less serious conflict which arise in this context, ultimately all these pilgrimage processions serve to generate social unity on their respective levels (village, locality, region).

The other type of discourse, one between females and males concerning gender politics, emerges in all the different types of pilgrimage and reflects a structural feature of the society. As Sax sees a complex link between the pilgrimage processions and the politics of gender he presents an explicit and detailed treatment of this crucial aspect of Uttarakhand society. In the present context the analysis of this discourse adds an important, but so far little known

aspect to the realm of pilgrimage research. Hence, in the following a short outline shall be presented concerning the gender problem as mirrored in the context of Nandadevi's pilgrimages.

"The Royal Pilgrimage of the Goddess Shri Nanda is among the longest and most difficult pilgrimages in the world: a three-week, barefoot journey of 164 miles led by a four-horned ram during the foul weather at the end of the rainy season. After traversing rain-swollen rivers, dangerous windswept passes, and terrifying ice fields, pilgrims reach the lake of Rupkund, located at fifteen thousand feet and surrounded by hundreds of human skeletons. Then they cross a narrow vertical spot called 'the Path of Death' and proceed to Homkund, 'the lake of the fire sacrifice' where, according to the faithful, the four-horned ram leaves the procession and finds its way, unaided to the summit of Mount Trishul, which is called 'Kailash' by the local people." (p.161-2) This impressive pilgrimage represents an outstanding mode of worship to the most popular deity of the entire region. For reasons not given, though, the Royal Pilgrimage occurs very rarely.<sup>25</sup>

Nandadevi's periodic processions comprise two other distinct forms of pilgrimage. The annual Small Pilgrimage leads the devotees through an area which is regarded as the home of the deity. And several annual village pilgrimages constitute the third category of processions in honour of the divine regional protectress.

Notwithstanding the marked differences between them, there is a central feature common to all three categories of pilgrimage procession. None of them leads to a sacred site associated with a deity that is to be worshiped in the course of Nandadevi's processions. People regard all three forms as pilgrimages of the goddess, not of the pilgrims (p.57). When the goddess leaves for her ritual journey, she travels as a divine bride in a wedding palanquin to the abode of her husband, Lord Shiva. On these festive occasions the devout pilgrims travel with the deity, in other words they accompany her on her journey.

Nandadevi is regarded as a village daughter married outside the village according to the rules of residence. At the same time she is the popular regional goddess who, being married to Lord Shiva, has to leave her natal home in order to reside at her husband's place. Hence, the ritual journey of the goddess can be seen as the epitome of the married woman's usual lot in that society. Nandadevi is feasted and worshipped during all three forms of ritual procession and then sent back to her husband's place. All ritual journeys are conceived of as 'departures' and 'escortings' of the divine daughter Nanda from her natal place back to that of her husband (p.37). Accordingly, these journeys achieve their significance in relation to the actual movement of human women between their natal homes and their husbands.

As in most of Hindu North India, in Uttarakhand a newly married couple is expected to live in the husband's home. Sons of the family thus remain members of the consanguineal group, whereas daughters become identified with the affinal group and its lineage. Hence, Sax maintains that, due to the strict rule of virilocality, married women have to suffer considerably from various problems.

The male part of the population claims that marriage works as an important social mechanism which brings about a complete substantial and moral transformation of the bride. According to Sax, however, this male conception ignores the reality of social life. It consciously denies any notion of a woman's enduring links to the place and family of her birth. Moreover, the male conception ignores the resulting worries and emotional tensions and the quarrels with her husband on the part of the married woman. Quite contrary to the male's ideologically-charged claim, Lynn Bennett has observed among high-caste women in Nepal that in real life the married woman visits her natal home frequently, thereby maintaining strong emotional and ritual ties.<sup>26</sup> Inspired in this context by Bennet's findings, Sax sees the male conception as a crucial element of a male ideology aiming at keeping control by containing women; virilocal residence is but a logical and powerful means of realizing this goal. In opposition to the male's claim, the author suggests that the woman remains part of her natal place even after marriage (p.98).

In order to lend proof to his hypothesis, Sax focuses upon a detailed study of diverse versions of the religious songs sung in praise of Nandadevi, interpreting them from a woman's point of view.<sup>27</sup> He observes that tensions, quarrels, and open conflicts due to the woman's desire to return to her natal home and the husband's refusal, which in everyday life erupt occasionally, constitute a prominent theme of Nandadevi's songs. Men, however, refuse to accept the validity of these songs. They legitimize their discourse by referring to the fact that Nandadevi's songs are less fixed and more variable than the classical scriptures of Hinduism. Hence, the author concludes that whereas written texts have come to be associated with male, Brahman priests, oral texts seem to be associated with 'lower ranked ritual specialists and women' (p.23).

Moreover, the deity's reluctance to leave her natal place after marriage is not only vividly reflected in her songs. This same theme is dramatically enacted around the climax of the pilgrimage procession when the goddess is about to climb the summit of 'Kailash', her divine husband's abode. The ethnographer describes how her palanquin stops several times and races back down the mountain at great speed. Whenever this happens, all the men gathered drag her palanquin back up the mountainside. The male palanquin bearers have their own interpretation. They insist that they are 'pulled' by the power of the goddess. However, the author comments on this dramatic procedure differently: "Though Nandadevi is reluctant to return to her 'sauryas' [i.e. husband's home], village men force her to do so, while married women look on and weep." (p.59) The author suggests that the pilgrimages help to reproduce social relations of male domination and female subordination. So why do women in Uttarakhand continue to take part in them? As Sax sees it, these pilgrimages offer them a 'partial remedy' for their frustration at being forcibly separated from their natal home. (p.206)

#### **'Plurality of discourses', 'status and communitas'**

Combining the various segments of the Himalayan pilgrimage complex presented, which are drawn from a variety of research perspectives, the unfolding picture reveals an interesting complexity. It is this complexity

which can be regarded as a salient characteristic of the pilgrimage phenomenon. To become meaningful for future research, however, the results of empirical research on Himalayan pilgrimage have to be confronted with recent theoretical discourse on pilgrimage. The evidence collected from the Himalayan field suggests that there can be no doubt as to the validity of Durkheim's claim that ritual events such as pilgrimage festivals serve to maintain the given social order; in many instances, they even reinforce social boundaries and distinctions.

Moreover, the very complexity discovered in the field obviously contradicts Turner's influential, but overly deterministic theoretical model. It now seems appropriate in this context to rethink Turner's purportedly universal categories such as 'communitas', 'structure' and 'anti-structure' by taking into account the very particularity of historically and culturally specific meanings and practices encountered in the field.

The significant heterogeneity of the pilgrimage process within the geographical realm of the Hindu-Buddhist interface can be attributed to the high degree of historical and cultural diversity played out in this particular ritual context. The picture outlined illustrates that the practice of pilgrimage as well as the sacred powers attributed to a particular shrine give shape to varied competing, or often even conflicting discourses among the different sectors of the cultic constituency. Hence, as the late M. Sallnow suggested, one has to expand Turner's work on pilgrimage by showing that pilgrimage is both 'functionally integrative' and 'structurally disintegrative'.<sup>28</sup> In real life the pilgrimage process can constitute an arena for the staging and playing out of conflicts, and also a context in which those conflicts - at least temporarily - can be dissolved. Moreover, Sallnow (p.4) points out that pilgrimage festivals represent one of the means by which the great and little traditions keep in touch with each other, thereby maintaining the unity of the religious system as a whole.

Further research on Himalayan pilgrimage, as I see it, has to take into account the fact that the Himalayas constitute a vast Hindu-Buddhist contact zone. The multitude of diverse caste and ethnic groups inhabiting this area represent the 'cultural pluralism' which is regarded as characteristic not only of Nepal.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the castes and ethnic groups demonstrate a considerable capacity to adapt themselves to changes brought about by influences from the southern as well as the northern civilizations. As B.N. Aziz suggests, this interface between the two great religions constitutes a suitable framework of reference for fruitful research within the realm of Himalayan pilgrimage. It is here that the two great traditions meet, thereby steadily transforming the little traditions. Not surprisingly, this vitality at the interface currently also gives rise to new pilgrimage patterns.<sup>30</sup>

An appropriate understanding of the effects of the rapid process of change on the phenomenon of Hindu and Buddhist pilgrimage will be fundamental for further research on this subject. In a global context of the powerful resurgence of a variety of 'revitalization' movements and the emergence of state-centered and ethnic nationalisms, future scientific investigation of Himalayan pilgrimage patterns may open up some new perspectives.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>On this realm see J. Eade/M. J. Sallnow (eds.): *Contesting the Sacred. The Anthropology of Christian Pilgrimage*. London: Routledge 1991. A 'new agenda in pilgrimage studies' is advocated and some new theoretical approaches presented by Eade & Sallnow in their comprehensive introduction. (pp. 1-29). The most recent contribution on pilgrimage, but only comprising papers delivered at a conference at the University of Pittsburgh in May 1981, is the anthology *Sacred Journeys. The Anthropology of Pilgrimage*, ed. by A. Morinis. Westport, Ct./London: Greenwood Press 1992.

<sup>2</sup>On the pilgrimage network see A. Bharati: 'Pilgrimage in the Indian Tradition.' In: *History of Religions* 3 (1963), pp. 135-167; S.M. Bhardwaj: *Hindu Places of Pilgrimage. A Study in Cultural Geography*. Berkeley: University of California Press 1973; J. J. Preston: 'Sacred Centers and Symbolic Networks in South Asia.' In: *The Mankind Quarterly* 20 (1980), pp. 259-293.

<sup>3</sup>Another interesting example in this context is the case of the chief priest of Badrinath who comes from a Namboodri Brahman family in Kerala. A candidate for this post has to be recommended by the Kerala government to that of Uttar Pradesh to forward his name to the king of Tehri-Garhwal. The latter is the tutelary head of the sacred complex of Badrinath. See D. Kumar: 'The Sacred Complex of Badrinath.' In: M. Jha (ed.): *Social Anthropology of Pilgrimage*. New Delhi: Inter-India 1991, p. 205-216. See p. 210.

<sup>4</sup>On the close connection of political power and religious authority in the context of religious festivals see e. g. R. Burghart: 'Gifts to the Gods: Power, Property & Ceremonial in Nepal.' In: D. Cannadine/S. Price (eds.): *Rituals of Royalty: Power & Ceremonial in Traditional Societies*. Cambridge: C. U. P. 1987, pp. 237-270; P. Ramirez: 'Drama, Devotion and Politics: The Dasain Festival in Argha Kingdom.' In: G. Toffin (ed.): *Nepal. Past and Present*. New Delhi: Sterling 1993, pp. 47-59.

<sup>5</sup>A. Michaels: 'Pilgrimage and Priesthood at the Pasupatinatha Temple of Deopatan (Nepal).' In: H. Bakker (ed.): *The History of Sacred Places in India as Reflected in Traditional Literature. Papers on Pilgrimage in South Asia*. Leiden: E. J. Brill 1990, pp. 131-159; see p. 138.

<sup>6</sup>This process has been analyzed by R. Burghart in: 'The Disappearance and Reappearance of Janakpur.' In: *Kailash* VI (1978), pp. 257-84.

<sup>7</sup>F.-K. Ehrhard also provides valuable information on the Tibetan view of Muktinath in Tibetan Sources of Muktinath: Individual Reports and Normative Guides (in press).

<sup>8</sup>Both traditions have given birth to a distinct genre of literary descriptions of pilgrimage routes and sacred sites. Many scholars have devoted considerable effort in translating and analyzing such texts; see e. g. the *Nepālamāhātmya*, ed. and transl. H. Uebach. München: Fink 1970; K. Dowman: 'A Buddhist Guide to the Power Places of the Kathmandu Valley.' In: *Kailash* 7 (1981), pp. 183-291; A. W. MacDonald: 'A Little Read Guide to the Holy Places in Nepal.' Part 2 (in collaboration with Dvags-po-rin-po-che). In: A. W. Macdonald: *Essays on the Ethnology of Nepal and South Asia*. Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar 1987, Vol. I, pp. 100-134.

<sup>9</sup>On the whole valley see M. Slusser: *Nepal Mandala. A Cultural Study of the Kathmandu Valley*. Princeton: Princeton U. P. 1982. 2 Vols.; on Bhaktapur, Vol. I, p. 346.

<sup>10</sup>According to D. Gellner, in some cases learned interpretation sees this movement around a sacred center as 'marking out the framework of a mandala'. *Monk, Householder, and Tantric Priest. Newar Buddhism and its Hierarchy of Ritual*. Cambridge: Cambridge U. P. 1992, p. 190.

<sup>11</sup>R. I. Lévy mentions that "...every mature individual is involved in a great number of different culturally defined and validated realities and experiences calling upon and evoking different aspects or even kinds of 'self' as he or she moves from one to another" In: *Mesocosm. Hinduism and the Organization of a Traditional Newar City in Nepal*. Delhi: Motilal 1992 (orig. 1990), p. 31.

<sup>12</sup>Gutschow and G. M. Basukala give a closer description in 'The Navadurga of Bhaktapur - Spatial Implications of an Urban Ritual.' In: Gutschow/ A. Michaels (eds.): *Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley*. St. Augustin: VGH Wissenschaftsverlag 1987, pp. 135-66, see p. 139.

<sup>13</sup>The complex process of creating these masks is discussed by J. H. Tailhet: *The Tradition of the Nava Durga in Bhaktapur, Nepal*. In: *Kailash* 6 (1978), pp. 81-98.

<sup>14</sup>On the Navadurga processions and the mother goddesses in Bhaktapur see M. Slusser Vol. I, pp. 344-48; and M. M. Anderson: *The Festivals of Nepal*. Calcutta: Rupa 1988, p. 145.

<sup>15</sup>The existence of 24 funeral routes, however, seems to suggest that the city of Bhaktapur does not consist of 21, but is actually made up of 24 quarters. Gutschow/ Basukala admit that the reason for this disparity remains unsolved (1987: 155).

<sup>16</sup>In his introduction (p. XIII), A. W. Macdonald reminds us that Miller's field research was done at a time when the phenomenon of spirit possession in Nepal was, unlike nowadays, still not widely recognized. Thus, Miller's vivid account based upon participant observation served to demonstrate that, despite the ongoing Hinduization and the rapid expansion of 'modern', i. e. Western medical services throughout the kingdom, this ancient tradition is still very much alive.

<sup>17</sup>On Hindu and Buddhist views of the holy mountains see A. Bharati: 'Actual and Ideal Himalayas: Hindu Views of Mountains.' In: J. F. Fisher (ed.): *Himalayan Anthropology. The Indo-Tibetan Interface*. Mouton: The Hague 1978, pp. 77-82; G. Toffin: 'Dieux du sol et démons dans les religions himalayennes.' In: *Etudes Rurales* No. 107-108 (1987): 85-106; G. Samuel: *Civilized Shamans. Buddhism in Tibetan Societies*. Washington/ London: Smithsonian Inst. Press 1993, pp. 182-191.

<sup>18</sup>In this ritual context the act of 'naming' can be considered as a deliberate effort to appropriate some of the divine powers unseen: "Naming it is a method of bringing the unseen somehow into the ambit of visible reality." (p. 17).

<sup>19</sup>According to B. N. Aziz it is due to these particular circumstances, that in its very essence a pilgrimage represents a 'subjective experience': 'Personal

Dimensions of the Sacred Journey: What Pilgrims Say.' In: *Religious Studies* 23 (1987), pp. 247-261, see p. 261.

<sup>20</sup>It is regrettable that these two 'priests' have never been given any closer scrutiny by the author. Due to this there is a complete lack of information as to the tradition they represent in the framework of this pilgrimage festival, to their social and/or ethnic standing, etc. Moreover, there is no indication as to what these stones stand for in local mythology.

<sup>21</sup>Miller observes that in this context the *jhākri* functions in an 'undifferentiated, unhierarchised communitas' (p. 186).

<sup>22</sup>The *jhākri*'s dependence on public opinion is summarized in the following: "He depends on his reputation, built upon cures or at least improvements in his patients' condition, as his validation." (p. 186). For the very few examples of specific performances indicated, see p. 23 and 28.

<sup>23</sup>The central characteristics of *jhakrim*, according to Miller, are the lack of any 'formal organizational unity among themselves' which they see as 'freedom'; and there is 'no fixed hierarchical relationship among masters' (p. 2; 186). The so-called 'magical battles' which among *jhākri* serve as the arena for contest could provide the necessary material to mirror the ways of interaction typical of this sort of religious specialist. But Miller witnessed only one incident which had been provoked by one of the opponents on purpose - who eventually lost (pp. 38-44).

<sup>24</sup>Notwithstanding these findings, the author does not lose hold of the manifold contradictions woven into the pilgrimage process - he also mentions instances of tensions and quarrels (see p. 21, 127-8, 135).

<sup>25</sup>It is remarkable that this pilgrimage occurs both seldom and irregularly. In this century it was held four times only. In 1987 it was witnessed by the ethnographer (p. 161).

<sup>26</sup>See her article 'Maiti-Ghar: The dual role of high caste women in Nepal', p. 126. In: James F. Fisher (ed.), op. cit., pp. 121-140.

<sup>27</sup>Sax discovers a 'thoroughgoing gynocentrism of Nandadevi's songs and rituals' (p. 94).

<sup>28</sup>M. E. Sallnow: *Pilgrims of the Andes. Regional Cults in Cusco*. Washington/London: Smithsonian Institution Press 1987, p. 8.

<sup>29</sup>On this topic see the contributions in J. F. Fisher (ed.) (see fn. 7); as to Nepal see I. & D. Baral: 'Cultural Pluralism in Nepal: Problems and Prospects of its Preservation.' In: G. Toffin (ed.): *The Anthropology of Nepal. From Tradition to Modernity*. Kathmandu: French Cultural Centre 1993, pp. 9-19.

<sup>30</sup>B. N. Aziz: 'Vitality at the Interface: Anthropological Explorations in the Eastern Himalayas.' In: *National Geographic Society Research Reports/ 1975 Projects*, pp. 67-83; on the current process of revitalization in this realm see M. Helffer: 'A Recent Phenomenon: The Emergence of Buddhist Monasteries around the Stupa of Bodnath.' In: G. Toffin (ed.) op. cit., pp. 114-131.

## BOOK REVIEWS

***Nepal's India Policy.* Dhruba Kumar (ed.),  
Kathmandu: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies,  
1992. 150 p. NRs 200.**

In November 1991, five months after the Nepali Congress's election victory and shortly before prime minister Girija Prasad Koirala's official visit to India, Tribhuvan University's Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies organized a seminar entitled "Continuity and Change in Nepalese Foreign Policy," focussing on Nepal's relations with her Southern neighbour. This volume comprises five major papers, together with discussants' comments, an inaugural address by the centre's director, Durga Bhandari, and an "Afterword" by the editor. Whilst all contributors are enthusiastic about the change to democracy in Nepal, three of them had ministerial experience under the panchayat regime: Rishikesh Shaha, though a fierce critic of the panchayat system from the late '60s onwards, served as King Mahendra's finance and then foreign minister shortly after the 1960 royal coup and was also a principal architect of the 1962 constitution; the late Ram Rajbahak was a former Minister of Industry; and Arjun Narsingh K.C., now an influential Congress M.P., was once Minister of State for Health. Another of the main participants, Lok Raj Baral, probably Nepal's best-known political scientist, remained a full-time academic throughout the panchayat era but has long-standing links with the Congress Party and in 1992 was asked by the government to conduct a one-man investigation into the Tanakpur agreement, the India-related issue currently causing the greatest controversy in Nepal. Thus, whilst the seminar proceedings do not strictly reflect Nepal government policy, they provide the reader with a useful picture of Nepalese establishment thinking.

The kingdom of Nepal, established at the same time that Clive was laying the foundations for British hegemony in India, was never brought under formal British control and therefore does not today form part of the Indian Union. Nevertheless, as a society dominated by caste Hindus whose language is closely related to Hindi, its cultural links to India are extremely strong. Economically, it is highly dependent on the more developed Indian economy, since the river valleys which facilitate the movement of people and goods run southwards towards the Indian plains rather than east-west through the hills, because military and civil employment in India has long been a vital source of additional income for hill farming communities. Finally, the country's geographical position along the Himalayas, the natural border between south and central Asia, makes it of vital strategic concern to New Delhi. Offsetting these factors binding Nepal to India is the strong sense of separation from, and distrust of the plains-dwellers which has long characterised the hill Nepali. Any government in Kathmandu is therefore caught in a dilemma: to accept a

degree of Indian tutelage or to seek countervailing support from outside South Asia, and in particular from China.

The problem is complicated by internal Nepalese politics. The presence of a powerful Indian state to the south, whether in its older incarnation as the British Raj or the present one of the Indian Republic, presents those holding or aspiring to power in Nepal with the conflicting temptations either to seek support from the south themselves or to accuse their opponents of doing so and thus boost their own nationalist credentials. Regime security was one reason for the policy of close collaboration with British India adopted by the Rana maharajas in the decades before 1947, in particular their facilitating of the recruitment of Gorkhas into the Indian army and committing Nepal's own army to the allied cause in the two World Wars. After Indian independence, the Ranas sought to continue this relationship with the new Indian government, hoping thus to win Indian acquiescence both to Nepalese independence and to the continuation of their own autocratic rule. The result was the 1950 Peace and Friendship Treaty and the secret letters exchanged at the same time: the latter committed the two governments to "consult together and devise effective countermeasures" in the event of threat to either from a foreign power. Nepal thus agreed to remain part of the Indian security system at a time when the Chinese Communists were moving into Tibet. Despite the fall of the Rana regime a few months later, the treaty is still technically in force, but Nepalese resentment against being locked into alliance and Indian determination to maintain that alliance have been a basic motive of the two countries' relationship ever since, impacting in particular on the periodic negotiations over trade and transit which are of vital concern to the Nepalese economy. No Nepalese government has ever directly repudiated the agreement, even though the document itself provides for termination upon one year's notice from either party. Official statements implying that the treaty is outmoded have been made from time to time, but as soon as the cold wind of New Delhi's displeasure was felt Kathmandu has generally changed tack. More concretely, Nepal has sought indirectly to neutralise the agreement by various ploys, most notably King Mahendra's playing of the "China card" in the 1960s and King Birendra's 1975 proposal for Nepal to be declared a "Zone of Peace" - a proposal which has, of course, itself been allowed to rest in peace since Nepal's return to multi-party democracy.

Unhindered by the government's need to maintain a working relationship with New Delhi, Nepalese intellectuals have been more than willing to take the bull by the horns. Unhappiness with the treaty is thus naturally a key theme running throughout *Nepal's India Policy*. Two of the main contributors make it their central focus. Rishikesh Shaha makes the same, balanced case for revision which he has presented elsewhere, a case which has already won the support of one of India's leading academic specialists in Indo-Nepalese relations, Shree Krishna Jha.<sup>1</sup> In his own paper, Dhruba Kumar argues rather more passionately against accepting Indian "strategic primacy," and also provides interesting detail on India's negotiating tactics in the final months of the panchayat government, when the latter's position had been weakened both by India's own semi-blockade of Nepal and by the ongoing pro-democracy

movement within the country. He rightly links India's original adoption of such a hardline stance on the trade and transit issue with her alarm over Nepalese arms purchases from China, and possibly also with Indian belief that Nepal had reached an intelligence sharing agreement with China in 1988. He reproduces India's March 1990 draft proposals which would have required Nepal to fully re-endorse, and even extend, the strategic aspects of the 1990 Agreement and plausibly suggests that, had the Nepalese democracy movement not achieved its victory in April, the royal regime would have had no alternative but to accept the Indian terms. As it was, the proposals were allowed to lapse and India granted the new Nepalese interim government a return to the *status quo ante*, though extracting a commitment to "prior consultations ... on defense matters which, in the view of either country, could pose a threat to its security."

Another controversial aspect of the 1950 agreement is the provision under clause 7 for each country to grant the others' citizens resident on their territory equal rights in the economic sphere as their own nationals. The letters exchanged with the treaty granted Nepal an infinite waiver of its obligation to extend such rights to Indian citizens and Nepal does in fact restrict their right to acquire property whereas India has until recently allowed full rights to Nepalese on her own territory. Clause 7 has nevertheless also created resentment both because it seems to limit Nepal's right to constitute herself as a separate society from India and because of the confusion it has created over the status of ethnic Nepalese who may have been residents for generations in India: the 1950 treaty has been a major target of the Darjeeling Nepalis' "Gorkhaland" agitation because they argue they are not distinguished from migrant workers from Nepal who are in India only on sufferance. Rishikesh Shaha makes this part of his case for renegotiation and for registration, and also suggests an identity card system to deal with the reverse problem in the Nepalese Terai, where it is recent Indian immigrants who have to be distinguished from Nepalese citizens belonging to cultural/linguistic communities which straddle the border. He nevertheless argues that it would be impractical to try to halt the present free movement of people across the border, and this is surely correct. Without hugely disproportionate diversion of resources, it is obviously unrealistic to expect the Nepalese government to be more effective in controlling their border with India than the USA is in controlling theirs with Mexico.

The practicality, as against theoretical desirability of border control is also an important factor in the debate over economic relations with India. It seems to this reviewer that the contributions on trade and related issues do not give enough weight to this problem. Estimates of "unofficial trade" seem unduly low, whilst Ram Rajbahak tries to argue that the effectiveness of India's closure of border crossing points during the 1989-1990 stand-off "exploded the long held hypothesis that the tightening of the Nepal-India border through official measures of regulating and controlling the movement of goods from India could not be achieved" (p.100); in fact, all the embargo proves is the feasibility of the Indian authorities restricting the supply of bulk items.

Official trade has always been a bone of contention between the two sides, Nepal requiring easy access for its products to the Indian market and India concerned that Nepal might become a conduit for third country products re-exported after nominal reprocessing. This resulted in successive treaties stipulating the percentage of Nepali and/or Indian materials and labour content in manufactured goods required for them to qualify for tariff concessions. Narottam Banskota points out that the problem for Nepalese exporters has not been so much the limits themselves as the bureaucratic delays in obtaining certification from the Indian government. Here at least there has been some improvement, as India has since agreed to allow self-certification by the Nepalese government.

Banskota and his economist colleagues have differing views on what the ideal regime for Indo-Nepalese trade would be, with one discussant preferring an MFN basis without any preferential arrangements at all. There does seem to be agreement, however, that the pursuit of trade diversification under the panchayat regime has involved disproportionate economic cost. Reducing trade dependence on India has served to increase Nepal's dependence on the international community generally.

The contributors to *Nepal's India Policy* also have clearly divergent views on Nepal's appropriate overall stance towards India. Most would endorse Kumar's criticism of the panchayat regime for its oscillation between extreme assertiveness and extreme submissiveness, but some of his colleagues would clearly prefer a more accommodationist line than his; the clearest exposition of this viewpoint is by Nepali Congress youth leader Man Mohan Bhattarai, who argues that "Nepal-India security is not contradictory but complimentary" and "Nepal's economic future lies ... in the Indian peninsula rather than the trans-Himalayan region." (p.112) I myself think that this is correct, and also that the strategic and economic aspects of the relationship are inevitably intertwined, even though Kumar thinks it worthwhile calling on India to "end the linkage" between them. Kumar himself refers to Rajiv Gandhi's reportedly telling King Birendra that Nepal could not both renounce its commitments in the 1950 treaty and expect economic concessions from India. Whether or not it was put as bluntly as this, the message is likely to remain the "bottom line" for any Indian administration: if India is to be sensitive to Nepal's economic requirements, Nepal needs to be sensitive to India's strategic ones.

Quite apart from meeting India's needs, it is arguable that Nepal's inclusion in the Indian security system serves overall stability in the Himalaya, and therefore Nepal's own long-term interests. Renewed conflict between India and China is, fortunately, highly unlikely in present circumstances, but the question mark over Tibet's long-term future and the situation in Kashmir both suggest a possibility of renewed volatility in the region. Without prejudice to Nepal's present independence, or to any possible future arrangement for real autonomy in Tibet, the maintenance of the Himalayas as the boundary between two security systems is the course most likely to keep heads cool in both New Delhi and Beijing.

Acknowledging this does not, of course, logically entail keeping the 1950 formulas set in concrete. The exact terms of the 1950 agreement have not in

fact been observed by either side; as Nepalese prime minister Kirtinidhi Bista pointed out in 1969, India did not formally consult Nepal at the time of its clashes with China and Pakistan. The strategic cooperation which has taken place since 1951, including the concluding of the secret 1965 agreement in the aftermath of the Sino-Indian border war, would arguably have done so even without any agreement in 1950 since it reflected the bedrock of common interests. The Peace and Friendship Treaty would thus ideally be replaced by a new one which addressed the problems over citizenship and which spelt out the strategic relationship openly and directly rather than letting it rest on secret correspondence. The difficulty, of course, is that any such replacement would require ratification by a two-thirds majority in the Nepalese parliament and a Communist opposition which raised such a furore over the relatively trivial Tanakpur issue would certainly not swallow any re-endorsement of a defense relationship. A new treaty which left out defense altogether would have adverse effects on the economic relationship. It thus seems likely that, unsatisfactory as the present treaty is, it will be with us for some time to come.

John Whelpton

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>In his contribution to a 1990 Indo-Nepalese seminar: "*Indo-Nepalese Treaty of Peace and Friendship: A Plea for its Early Abrogation*", in Ramakant & B. C. Upreti (ed.), *Indo-Nepalese Relations*, New Delhi: South Asian Publishers, 1992, pp.77-92

***Nepal: Past and Present.* Gérard Toffin (ed.)  
Paris: CNRS Editions. 1993, 377 p. Price: FF 240.**

Lately, we have seen books on Nepal edited by Gérard Toffin, singly or in collaboration with someone else, come out in steady succession in the market. The present volume is the latest such work. It contains articles mainly by Franco-German scholars working on Nepal that were presented at the conference in Arc-et-Senans in June 1990, and jointly organized by the C.N.R.S. and the D.F.G. (German Research Council) under the auspices of the French-German Programme. The expanding community of foreign scholars of Nepal, perhaps, feels a greater need today than ever before to know about what another scholar in the field is doing to keep his own work on course. The growing circuit of seminars is a direct response devised to get them out of this situation by opening up an opportunity of travel and interaction.

From the title of the book one is led to think that the volume might be devoted to the subject of politics, history or development, rather than to anthropology. Finding an apt title for the proceedings of a seminar in which the papers presented have a diverse focus and preoccupations is always a

problem, unless a broad, thematic focus is aimed at right from the inception of the seminar. In the case of the present Franco-German Conference, the given theme on "History and Anthropology" had itself been vague and lacking in any specificity. However, the 24 articles in the collection have managed to cover all geographical areas of Nepal, from north to south, and from east to west. There are only two articles by scholars falling outside the Franco-German fraternity - one by a British (David Gellner), and another by a Nepali (Ram Niwas Pandey). The editor himself has made no contribution to the volume except for a brief preface explaining the background to the seminar, and acknowledgements. There is another minor, though, for us in Nepal, significant and welcome departure from the policy "only to publish in French" adopted by the C.N.R.S. scholars all of whom have published their papers in this volume in English. The Franco-German collaboration has had a welcome fall-out indeed.

The 24 articles are arranged in six sections, each section headed by a sub-theme. There are 4 articles under 'Law and Legitimation of Power.' The article by Jean Fezas is on Private Revenge for Adultery in accordance with Nepal's Old Legal Code (*Muluki Ain*), in which he examines the relationship between custom and the place accorded to it in written law since 1854. Such law provides a cuckolded husband with the right to kill the paramour of his wife with a sanction, which is called *jār hānne*. Such a way of avenging oneself was seen as the preserve of some high castes. Strangely, it coexisted in Nepal with the widespread social practice of elopement with someone else's wife (*jāri garne*), which was legitimised by paying marriage expenses to the former husband (*jāri kharca timne*). Such a law on *jār hānne* is unreported from any other Hindu society of South Asia, and the Hindu Law books are also silent about it. In Nepal, however, the burden of caste obligated the husband to appear to look for the seducer of his wife, and to keep the wife from dining with him, or, if not, render himself liable for negligence (*Muluki Ain*, 134/9). Although Jean Fezas does not say from where such a custom might have originated, one possible source could be the ancient customs of the Khasa people.

Axel Michaels' article on widow-burning in Nepal is probably the first detailed documentation of legal and historical records referring to *sati* (widow-burning). However, the framework within which he views it, paralleling it with Hindu ascetic values, sounds less convincing. More acceptably, *sati* may be said to be an extreme form of the ever-present Hindu concept of socio-religious and moral value in which a woman's position is always subordinated to that of man. The next article in this section by B. Kölver attempts to draw inductive inferences with reference to landholding rights by women in the late Newar Nepal. He thinks he has found a document of N.S. 81 of rather far-reaching importance in which one person seeks to transfer landholding rights to his three daughters, by taking resort to some ruse, and in contravention of prevailing custom as well as the injunctions of Hindu Law. Although the general import of the document seems to broadly suggest what he has interpreted, there are, however, some key words whose meaning do not become quite apparent to us. One such word in the document is *pim*. Kölver

believes the resort to a ruse is imposed by the need to keep the agreement secret. But, one asks, secret from whom? The three persons who have witnessed the document to render it valid are the legator's next-in-line legal inheritors in the lineage, in the absence of the legator's sons. With them made privy to the agreement, the need for secrecy hardly seems to be anybody's worry. This leaves such an interpretation open to doubt.

Philippe Ramirez's article is on power legitimation studied through the rituals of Dasain festival as observed in the old royal seat of Argha Rajasthal in the Argha Kingdom. Anthropologists delight in regarding the Dasain rituals as an instance of "state manipulation of religious symbols" to assert power and legitimation. So what passes at the time of the ritual between the Brahman priest, the Thakuri *jajamān* (patron) and the deity is an ideological religious drama in this direction. Ramirez's research in Argha Khanci goes a step beyond this, and examines the possible meaning of the erection of other temples belonging to the goddess of the old royal seat, as well as to another Hindu god by a second lineage of the same family of priests, who don't get the same share of the role as the family of the main lineage of Dasain priests. So, for Ramirez, this urge for creating an alternative religious focus signifies as "defying traditional ritual organization" centering on Dasain. However, one wonders whether such acts of temple multiplication in Hinduism are not an abiding part of Hinduism's polycentric nature.

In the section entitled 'Buddhism and Society' there are three articles. Horst Brinkhaus draws two interesting conclusions from his study of different textual versions of the *Swayambhūpurāna*. One is what he calls a trend in the "Nepalization" of the sacred geography, and the other is instilling them with "pilgrimage piety". That Nepalese annals endowed local places of Nepal with high prestige in the 14th-15th century can be gathered from the very titles of works composed during this period - *Nepāla Māhātmya*, *Himavatkhanda*, *Paśupatipurāna*, etc.

In an interesting sociological study of the neo-Buddhist Theravada *Samgha* (order) in Kathmandu, Jens-Uwe Hartmann shows how this supposedly caste-free religious order (in the context more narrowly of the Newars of Kathmandu Valley) has not been able to free itself of lingering caste feelings, and how monk novices from some low castes are denied ordination to full monkhood.

The third article by Petra Kieffer-Pülz is a short description of recently started festivities in Kathmandu and Patan to mark the Buddha's birth on the Baisakha Full-Moon day.

In the next section on 'Social Identity and Tribal Religions' there are good and interesting contributions from Anne de Sales, Michael Oppitz, Martin Gaenszle, Marie Lecomte-Tilouine, and David Gellner and Uttam Sagar Shrestha, touching on diverse and geographically dispersed ethnic groups of Nepal. Annes de Sales' study focuses on the Chantel's concern to forge a new social recognition and identity for themselves separate from their Magar neighbours in the Myagdi district, with whom in the recent past they shared a lot in common, including their occupation as copper-miners.

Michael Oppitz's study of Northern Magars is very ably presented through

a study of their sacrificial practices. He shows the usual disregard of a field anthropologist for textual theoreticians propounding their theories on sacrifice. His suggestion that a universal framework to explain sacrifice among diverse societies should be rejected seems valid. Notwithstanding what he says, the five broad points on sacrifice he draws from his case study of the Northern Magars ring quite true regarding sacrificial practices among Nepal's multiple ethnic groups, with only point no. 4 characterising them in detail. Martin Gaenszle's contribution is on the oral tradition of the Mewahang Rai, epitomized by their *muddum*, and is a careful examination of the *muddum* in the light of changes occurring from interaction with kindred Rai groups and extraneous Hindus living in the area. Gaenszle is conscious not to emphasize the idea of cultural borrowings too much, especially from the "Great Tradition", for the Mewahang Rai. His is the anthropologists' basic concern to view the ethnic group of one's study, endowing it with all its cultural integrity. All borrowing, he believes, is muted and internalized within the Mewahang socio-cultural milieu, being their knowledge transformed in myths, rituals and symbolism. Therefore, their oral *muddum* is constantly "recreated" and always "in flux".

Marie Lecomte-Tilouine's short study is on a minor cult of Bhume in Gulmi district in which she contrasts the approach taken by the Magars, on the one hand, and by the Brahmans-Chetris, on the other. For the Magars, she says, it assumes the form of a larger community celebration.

The article by Gellner and Uttam Sagar Shrestha is about the treatment methods used by a local Tantric Newar healer in Kathmandu. This consists of a free mix of psychic or spiritual powers, rites, the medicinal blowing of *mantras*, and the like. The authors do not agree with calling the healing methods of this particular healer as being "modern" or "popular", in contrast to the more "traditional rural" healers, and establish him well within the class of traditional healers.

Under the section 'Nepal and Tibet,' the article by Christoph Cüppers is an excerpt from the autobiography of an intrepid Lama, Zhabs-dkar, from Amdo (1781-1851), who travelled all the way to Kathmandu and had the Bodhnath stupa renovated there. The gilded copper rings over the finial of the stupa replace what earlier had probably been the yellow-painted stepped finial of bricks such as one can still see in the Chabahil stupa on the way to Bodhnath. The other article in this section is by Corneille Jest giving a sketch of Newar traders in Kyirung and Nyanang (N. Kuti) in the more immediate past.

There are three articles in the next section - 'Art and Music.' Ram Niwas Pandey gives an art historian's survey of the medieval stone temples from the hills of western Nepal, dating from the history of the Western Mallas and post-Malla. The half-tone illustrations serve the article well.

Anne Vergati's article takes up the subject of scroll paintings (New. *yilampu*) from Nepal that have their provenance between the 16th and 19th centuries. The Rajasthani influence in their style of execution is unmistakable. Such paintings in Rajasthan, according to Anne Vergati, are used as aids for story-telling by professional raconteurs on special days. In Nepal, however, scroll paintings are not reported to have been put to such a use, and their

purpose seems merely to have been to unroll them and put them up on display around a *vihāra* (monastery) or a pre-ordained venue, so that the general public may be able to enjoy the story in graphics frame by frame.

Mireille Helffer's article is about Tibetan musical traditions preserved in the newly built monasteries in Kathmandu.

The last section, on 'Ethnoecology and Geography' contains seven articles. The majority are concerned with action research with developmental aspects. I only briefly comment on three of them. In what is perhaps one of the most stimulating articles, at least for this reviewer, for its novelty of theme and for a vast new field for research it seems to open up in future for the philologist, Michael Witzel takes up the subject of Nepali toponyms - actually hydronyms or names connected with water or water sources. With the help of this tool he proceeds to map out the pattern of settlement by some of the early tribes and cultural/linguistic groups in the early proto-historic period in the middle hills of Nepal. Meagre data and the overlay of later cultural deposits make assertions purely on this basis look bold and sweeping. In one or two instances, Witzel has proposed unsettling revisions regarding people's movement and settlement which differ from the current and prevailing beliefs. But his arguments seem impeccable, and the copious footnotes embellishing the article show the meticulousness with which he has approached the subject.

Richard Burghart's article deals squarely with the subject of development. It makes an anthropological analysis of electoral politics based on popular voting, affecting public policies relating to the installation of pumpsets and private latrines, and to the distribution of piped water and the maintenance of municipal sewerage systems in Janakpur in the south of Nepal. The new politics of the vote has brought the realisation to people that this can be manipulated to bring them some benefits and increase amenities in their day-to-day living. The enquiry, however, is much too brief and fails to crystallize the issue sharply.

Ulrike Müller-Böker's brief article deals with the question of multiethnicity in Citawan district. The outlook on multiethnic living in what is termed the "meltingpot" district of Nepal is presented through the eyes of the indigenous Tharus. The conclusion one may draw from this study seems to indicate that, despite all the interactions and the predominance of one group over another, certain questions of ethnic/cultural identity never completely disappear, and are irreducible.

Four other articles in this last section are by Joelle Smadja on field terracing, by Willibald Haffner on low soil fertility, by Perdita Pohle on the socio-economic activity of the Manangis, and by Denis Blamont on remote sensing and space analysis in the mountains of central Nepal. All said and done, the volume makes for interesting reading, covering a number of aspects of social science research in Nepal.

Prayag Raj Sharma

## TOPICAL REPORT

### Economic development and human resources in the Kingdom of Bhutan

Volker A. Hauck

During the last three years, Bhutan has received growing attention from the international community. Ethnic conflict in the southern parts of the country between the predominantly Nepali-speaking part of the population and the central government, has resulted in a huge stream of Southerners leaving the country - estimates speak of around 100,000 refugees being in camps within and outside Nepal.<sup>1</sup> This has disturbed the picture of a peaceful Himalayan paradise. Discussions on the resulting human tragedies - however important they are - have not paid attention to the development process within Bhutan, i.e. to the influence of the departure of a substantial part of the population on the national economy. This article aims to shed some light on this issue, highlighting subsequently the main themes of the new Five-Year-Plan, the assistance received from multi- and bi-lateral donors, the impact of the demographic changes on the Plan and the likely consequences for future national and cultural identity of the nation.

The formulation of Bhutan's Seventh Five-Year-Plan (7FYP), covering the years 1993 to 1997, started in mid-1990 and was inspired by the desire to learn as much as possible from development planning mistakes which had occurred in surrounding Asian countries. In this regard, progressive concepts on environment and development, as stimulated through the Paro workshop on Environment and Sustainable Development<sup>2</sup>, stood at the very beginning of the planning exercise. In what was widely described as a very good Five-Year-Plan, a number of other strategies were conceived, i.e. the stress on self-reliance, the wish to accomplish decentralization and the participation of the population, the need to realize regionally-balanced development, the need for an effective government and a strong private sector and, as a continuation of the previous Plan, renewed concentration on the development of human resources.

In view of Bhutan's heavy dependence on India and the lack of opportunities to counterbalance this relationship through a close cooperation with China, the Plan's strategy for **self-reliance** reflects a good deal of pragmatism. Dependence on external assistance is to be reduced to the extent possible, by increasing domestic revenues, achieving higher food production - complete self-sufficiency in food production is not considered feasible - and through the export production of cash crops and industrial goods to earn sufficient to pay for imported goods and food. The guiding principle for **decentralization and participation** is to let all regions and groups in the country benefit from development. This strategy was already made visible

during the formulation of the Plan. The head of state, King Jigme Singye Wangchuk, visited all districts several times, and so-called Plan talks with representatives of the population were held. The strategy for a **regionally balanced development** has to be seen in the light of tremendous differences between the various districts in terms of population, resources and accessibility. Previous Five-Year-Plans had allocated considerable funds to the fertile and populous southern regions, whereas the eastern and very poor districts received comparatively little attention. In view of the unrest, unpredictability and consequent limited prospects for the South, attention is drawn to the hitherto neglected parts of the country, with a view to achieve regional equity by establishing basic government services and infrastructures. The wish for an **effective administration** coupled with a program of **privatization** is nurtured by the fear of exploding government expenditure and an unproductive bureaucracy, as can be observed in program countries. Moreover, the privatization program reflects the government's opinion that in a large number of areas a puissant private sector should be able to provide better services. Only the organization of preconditions which are necessary for the effective functioning of the market, like the provision of good communications or well qualified human resources, should be of concern to the administration. The Plan's stress on intensified **human resources development** builds on the conviction that people are Bhutan's most important resource. Therefore, the Plan aims to ensure the widest possible access to basic health and education, but also to undertake costly investment in the development of skilled manpower. Increased demands for project implementation and the departure of professionals due to ethnic tension explain the heavy focus on this development strategy. An estimated 30% of the total development plan will go to social services, education and the Human Resources Development Program. **Sustainable development**, the final Plan strategy, is defined in terms of raising the material well-being of all citizens and meeting their spiritual aspirations, without impoverishing the children and grandchildren (Paro Declaration). A central element to achieve this goal is to reduce the growth rate of the population, which is considered one of the main determinants of pressure on natural resources.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout the formulation phase of the 7FYP, the Bhutanese government undertook considerable efforts to assure the financing of its ambitious plans. According to the 2 January 1993 issue of *Kuensel*, the only Bhutanese newspaper, the total budget of the Five-Year-Plan will add up to around Ngultrum 22,681 million, which equals about US\$ 710 million. India, Bhutan's closest ally, will contribute approximately US\$ 204 million to this plan, or 28.7%. Other bi-lateral and multilateral donors pledged grants and loans of around US\$ 160 million during the Round Table Meeting, which was held in Geneva in March 1992. With a generally accepted total population of 600,000 - this figure was also announced by the King in an interview with the Indian Sunday (28 Oct.-3 Nov., 1990) - foreign assistance per capita adds up to US\$ 121.6 annually and is considered among the highest in the world. The latest Statistical Yearbook of Bhutan, as well as the World Bank's World Development Report, talks of 1.4 million inhabitants which explains the

statistically low per capita foreign assistance. This calculation excludes the (unpublished) annual estimated US\$ 60 million additional Indian payment for strategic roads (financed by DANTAK, the Indian Border Roads Company) and for security forces (financed by the Indian Ministry of Defence). Looking at Bhutan's dependence on foreign assistance, equally surprising figures can be analyzed. According to the Main Plan Document of the 7FYP, dependence on aid has been reduced during the previous plan from 59.9% in 1983 to 20.4% in 1990 (aid as percentage of the country's Gross domestic product [GDP]). However, taking the GDP projections for the period 1993 to 1997, an estimated total of US\$ 940 million, and comparing it with the above mentioned US\$ 364 million total foreign assistance, a 38.7%-dependence on aid during the 7FYP will be reached. Keeping in mind the Plan's objective for an increased self-reliance and independence, the figures on aid-dependence show a mounting discrepancy between theory and practice.

The wish for self-reliance and independence is further obstructed by the forced departure of a substantial part of the population. A rigorous application of the Bhutan Citizenship Act of 1985 followed by tensions and clashes in the South caused rural and urban families who were living in these areas to leave. Many also left because they couldn't stand being without defence against threats and attacks from security forces on one side and Southern terrorists on the other.<sup>4</sup> This considerable body of (uneducated) manpower was followed by its trained and sometimes highly qualified relatives who worked in the public and private sector all over the country. Here also, a substantial part was forced to resign and to leave because of the 1985 Citizenship Act; others absconded to Nepal - in some cases following the alleged embezzlement of substantial amounts of money. Thus, the lack of manpower is evident and is felt in all sectors of the economy. Wage costs are increasing, harvests can't be brought in as envisaged and Indian laborers from across the boarder - often organized in unions, causing a substantial headache for the government - have to be hired for tasks ranging from road construction to industrial production. But also for higher qualified positions in government services, development projects or the private sector, empty places or replacements with only minimally trained Northern Bhutanese personnel are the consequence. The effect on the implementation of the ambitious new Five-Year-Plan cannot be anything than devastating unless considerable numbers of professionals, presumably Indians, are brought into the county.<sup>5</sup>

Decentralization and regionally balanced development, two further strategies of the 7FYP, are expected to take place mainly in the Northern districts. The unstable situation in the South leads development agencies to be very selective about the support of planned projects. In addition, the government has declared that it is unable to fully guarantee the safety of expatriate personnel in those areas. So funds will be mainly channeled to the northern and the so-far neglected eastern parts of the country. In the South, the government tries to keep basic services running, regional hospitals are open as well as a limited number of schools, but a general set-back of this region might become reality. Whether the government will succeed in decentralizing substantial parts of its services into the districts is also doubtful.

Missing infrastructure in remote district capitals, like office space and apartments, paired with insufficient planning and executive manpower at the national level are the main bottlenecks.

New ideas on lean management in public administration and the regulating force of the private hand stood at the beginning of the 7FYP effective government/privatization strategy. The Royal Civil Service Commission started to implement this policy by offering only 15 government positions on an annual basis, and related plans are implemented at a high pace. In particular, the privatization of certain business highlights, like tourism and manufacturing, but also the introduction of a Bhutanese stock exchange market, indicate this trend. It should be noted, however, that due to the North-South problem southerners hardly benefitted from this privatization process. The former imbalance in favor of northern families is further aggravated. Furthermore, it is unpredictable what effects tourism and industrialization, including the timber industry, will have on the environment and on the concept of sustainable development. Awareness in Bhutan is very high and many people are determined to avoid "Nepalese developments". But internal and external pressures on finding ways to balance a rising hard currency debt are growing. As an additional and more cynical point concerning the environment, one could add that it is very likely that the human tragedies in the South will have a positive side-effect on the environment, since pressure on land has been reduced by the departure of a big population group. Thus it is probable that the 7FYP goal to reduce pressure on natural resources will be achieved in the southern districts.

Reviewing the above, it becomes evident that the impact of the departure of a substantial part of the population on the national economy is bound to be a negative one. With an ambitious development plan on the one hand and a qualitative and quantitative manpower-gap on the other the choice before the government is twofold: either to adapt plans to existing Bhutanese capacities, or to seek outside assistance in order to meet the objectives. The formulation phase of the Five-Year-Plan has already shown that the latter choice had been taken. The above-mentioned approximately US\$ 364 million development assistance, which the Bhutanese government could mobilize, is self-explanatory. But for a successful implementation of this amount of money more foreign labor and expertise will be required. India, with its 28.7% share in the total national development budget, and with sufficient numbers of highly qualified technicians and other professionals, is likely to supply the major part. In particular, the construction of big infrastructure projects like new hydro-power plants and roads will require a work force the Bhutanese could never supply. The same will apply to the enlargement of Paro airport, the construction of schools, hospitals, factories, etc. Similar to the Chuka hydropower project, completed in 1988 with vast Indian assistance, these examples show that additional high numbers of Indians will be needed not only to construct but also to operate and maintain what has been built. So this policy not only frustrates the government's strategy for self-reliance: with a further increase of Bhutan's dependence on external assistance the threat to its cultural identity will equally rise. Squeezed in between the two giants, India

and China, without diplomatic relations with its northern neighbour, and confronted by Nepalese culture spreading throughout the Himalayan region, it seems that only one option was left to the Bhutanese leadership: to seek harmony and close cooperation with India, the country which is just as interested to restrain the emerging Nepali block and which benefits from a buffer towards the North. On the other hand, Bhutan has to accept the price that through the assistance of the big neighbour, the Indian material as well as cultural presence will be enlarged.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>This was announced to Parliament by the Nepalese Minister of Interior, early March 1993.

<sup>2</sup>This workshop culminated in the adoption of the Paro Resolution of 5 May 1990 and was supported by all senior government officials in the kingdom.

<sup>3</sup>In later announcements this point has been reformulated into the "security and well-being of the Nation" (*Kuensel* 2 Jan., 1993).

<sup>4</sup>*Kuensel* also announced "violation of laws" and the "misuse of authority" by Bhutanese civil administration and security forces (25 Jan. 1992).

<sup>5</sup>Bhutanese negotiations with the Nepalese government about the return of "displaced" Bhutanese must be seen in the light of the tremendous shortages of manpower. In July 1993, an agreement has been signed which aims to allow the return of certain "categories" of refugees to Bhutan.

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## Basic Problems of Economic Development in Nepal\*

Wolf Donner

In this circle of knowledgeable and learned colleagues I see my task in laying a foundation on which you, the specialists, can construct your intellectual edifices. If the foundation is weak, the upper stories can easily collapse even if they are beautifully conceived or - intellectually speaking - are conclusive in themselves.

The promotion of the economic development of tropical and subtropical countries during the last forty years did, right from the beginning, aim at integrating these countries into our economic world system. This model, generally known as the market economy, unmasked itself quite early with the slogan "Developing countries - markets of tomorrow". For instance, very often young technicians were invited for training with the ulterior motive that later on, when they were in a good position in their home countries, they may remember German machines and German working methods and prefer German products. Thus, closely examined, so-called development "aid" turned out to a large extent to be export promotion.

Now, of course, export promotion is nothing less than defamatory. But for the sake of honesty we should avoid decorating it with a gloriole of "help", pretending that we think primarily of public welfare in those countries. Nowadays, this discrepancy becomes clearly visible when we even vociferously proclaim our principle that countries asking for our aid have to declare themselves to be for the market economy, to introduce multiparty-democracy and to respect (our!) human rights. All this becomes void as soon as it refers to a potential market like China. "Business as usual", I think, is one of the hard-hearted slogans in our economic system.

Self-development, the very fate of these peoples and countries, has often gone out of sight. And, thinking in an Euro-centric way we did not ask whether these people whom we wanted to "develop" wished to do so and if so, whether they wanted to be developed according to our example. And I am talking about the human masses of these countries, the farmers, the fishermen, the craftsmen, the porters and small shopkeepers. I am not talking about the élites who already studied in our countries and who send their sons to Harvard, those who are ashamed of the "poor cousins" whom they often scorn as "savages" and about whom they do not like to talk at all.

Right from the beginning there was the false reasoning that we had to develop these people and not that they had to develop themselves - in case they want to. We often explain this with the statement that we have - or ought to have - a responsibility towards them.

With this, we furthered in these countries a fatalist attitude, namely that development will come from above or outside and will cost them nothing.

Speaking of the wish to "develop", I do in no way close my eyes to the fact that the attractive power of the American way of life - advertised by

worldwide propaganda and demonstrated by the behaviour of foreign visitors, by foreign television programmes, illustrated papers and so forth - is enormous. But does the availability of Coca-Cola, MacDonald's and jeans already mean "development"? Certainly not; they are, in fact, symbols of export promotion.

The greed for our goods - the "want-to-have" - is, however, by no means always accompanied by the corresponding attitude - the "want-to-be" or the "want-to-do". In other words: during the last 40 years we have shown these people what we have and thus roused their greed. But we have failed to show them the price for all this which we are paying day by day: learning, disciplined working, risking our health and environment.

The power of the American way of life has also found its way to Nepal, and the result is not only the pagoda plastered with cement, an environment spoiled with plastic bags and a city clogged with motor vehicles - the decay of the religious monuments also belongs to that, and the theft of and trade with sacral images. Money, formerly of little importance, dictates the behaviour of people. Apart from a few committed groups in Nepal it is we who deplore the cultural decay, who repair the roofs of the temples and who intensely demand the preservation of autochthonous values. In fact, we were those who rattled the Nepalis with our aggressive style of living and made them doubt their own values. Our lamentations are in vain, it is useless to try to check this development, especially not with the tools of democracy and market economy.

Let us become concrete. The economic development of a country is based on a natural and social component, the potential of the natural space and the potential of the society.

All of you who know Nepal from your own experience may know the natural component. Nepal is a particularly difficult and multifarious living space. To a large extent it is covered by young instable mountains, situated on the trans-Asian earthquake belt. The relief reaches from 60 to more than 8.000 m a.m.s.l.; 64 % of the country lies higher than 1.000 m, more than a quarter higher than 3.000 m. Only 13 % of the surface can be regarded as lowland or flat land which can easily be cultivated and used. With this diversity of geographical structures, soils, climatic zones etc., Nepal offers itself for the production of nearly all cultures, apart from those requiring tropical rainforest.

Due to the prevailing mountainous structure, the cultivated soil is highly prone to erosion, a complex which deserves special observation. The utilization of the forests - partly we may speak of destruction - has caused the area under wood to shrink to a mere 23 %. The expansion of the area under cultivation, nowadays given as 2.6 million hectares, was possible only by using unsuitable areas, disregarding soil quality, slope, soil stability and so forth. The reasons are obvious: in an agrarian society a growing population produces a growing demand for cultivable soil.

The natural resources of Nepal may be summarized as follows:

- an enormous natural hydropower potential estimated to amount to 80,000 MW, only 0.3 % of which however has been used, contributing only 0.7 % to

the national energy consumption; a potential, however, which requires enormous investment for its mobilization;

- known mineral deposits of which about a dozen are exploited at present in a rather moderate way; the future outlook is bleak;
- a limited potential of cultivable soils; Nepal, 20 years ago a rice-exporting country, depends more and more on food imports;
- the potential of forestry is highly degraded, it could, however, be re-established in the long run;
- an enormous touristic potential which reached its climax in 1992 with 335,000 visitors; there are, however, many reasons to doubt its general blessing for the country.

A country can also have a "negative potential" - a deficit. Nepal, regarded from the viewpoint of "western style" development, has quite a lot of such deficits:

- the relief is hostile to (modern) transport;
- it is easier to reach the hills and mountains from the south, i.e. from India, than from Kathmandu; that means that East-West connections are difficult and, therefore, lacking;
- the southern border of Nepal is "open" - also geographically as part of the Gangetic plain - and can hardly be controlled so that a proper economic policy is nearly impossible; in addition, Nepal is a landlocked country;
- the climatic factors are those of a monsoon country and this means that Nepal depends highly on the whims of nature; countermeasures, such as irrigation, require technical, financial and organizational investments.

Regarding social or socio-economic aspects - the socio-potential - we see that the population grows annually by more than 2 %, probably 2,5 % and has reached nearly 20 million. This happened despite a high infant and mother mortality rate compared with the rest of the region, scarce access to clean water and sanitation, as well as a moderate daily calorie supply. Thus an increasing number of people need to be fed, clothed, housed and productively employed.

And this is, if I may say so, the proper task of development aid, namely to help such countries to satisfy their basic needs out of their own potentials and to step forward from misery to poverty in human dignity.

What socio-potential do we find in Nepal?

- quantitatively, as mentioned earlier, it has a population growing by 400,000 per year;
- a population whose life expectation at birth, it is true, has meanwhile grown to 52 years, but those below 15 years amount to 42 % (Germany 16 %), whereas only 55 % (Germany 69 %) belong to the economically active age-range between 15 and 64 years;
- a population, finally, that shows a strong tendency to urbanization. Whereas in 1965 only 4 % were town-dwellers, they now amount to 10 %, and of these 20 % live in Kathmandu.

The socio-potential further comprises public education. Despite all campaigns, the literacy rate is still low in Nepal. In 1990, 86 % of boys and 57 % of girls of the appropriate age attended primary schools, but only 26 %

of Nepalis of 15 and over were considered literate, that is 38 % of men and 13 % of women.

If we bear in mind that - apart from the old Tri-Chandra College and the Tribhuvan University - there are today some 130 colleges, we ask automatically what the favourite studies of young Nepalis and their professional chances are. Actually, no subjects that are needed to reach the planning targets, namely engineering, agriculture, forestry and sciences are preferred; on the contrary: nearly three quarters of the students are interested in commerce and law, languages, literature and social sciences. In former times graduation with a "multipurpose diploma" mainly served to find a job free of manual work, possibly as a government employee, which to a certain extent is still the case, but in addition the modern graduate who is now fascinated by his profession has but a small chance to find an appropriate occupation, because there is no money in the budget and no vacancies either. Thus, university graduates can nowadays be found e.g. as trekking agents in Nepal. Foreign and Nepalese NGOs and other organizations may offer jobs for them, so that these professionals, whose training we often have furthered, can take over responsibility.

The question of public health was already touched upon briefly. Today, there is one physician per 30,000 inhabitants, but this average figure is misleading since most work in towns, whereas they are often missing in the rural health posts: either there is no budget for them or they prefer to practise elsewhere. 37 % of the people have access to clean drinking water, 6 % to sanitation, i.e. toilets, but though the daily caloric intake meets the UNO-norms, the figure is again misleading since, in 1991, there were some 12.2 million Nepalis officially regarded as "living in absolute poverty".

The socio-potential also embraces the legal and constitutional situation of the country in which trade and commerce and of course development takes place. Most of us have had the experience that we cannot introduce innovations unless the autochthonous population is ready to accept and to develop them. Again and again we have to accept the fact that the people do not develop relationships to mere gifts, and that projects, once the foreign advisors and paymasters withdraw, collapse quickly and everything becomes as it was before their arrival. Here you may quote Dr. Faust: "what you inherited from your forefathers: earn it to possess it", and change it into: "what the foreign advisors put into your village, accept it to possess it".

Experience has shown that projects launched from outside are very often not regarded by the local people as something of their own. This led to the strategy of participation, i.e. the collaboration of the persons concerned right from the beginning. For instance: if a group of farmers wants to change its living conditions, wants to develop its technology, the foreign adviser can counsel them from his own experience. However: to fix ways and ends and, to a large extent, also to mobilize the financial means is a matter for the people concerned. Their project, their contribution to the work and their money will probably make them stick to it even after the foreign adviser departed.

A last word on the political constitution. It is a general habit to lay the blame of all present problems on the politics of the past. This can be seen in

our country, where the term "Erblast" (inherited burden) was introduced into the political vocabulary, just as well as in Nepal. For everything that does not function properly in Nepal, for all shortcomings and hindrances in development, the Panchayat System is blamed. But in fact, problems have remained the same and people as well - apart from the politicians who are now in power or are still fighting for power. Likewise, the vested interests - first of all land property - are vehemently defended today no less than before by those who enjoy them. When I worked in Nepal during the Panchayat era, I happened to see during the village elections how poor, small farmers elected the big landowner or the moneylender, not only because he was the only one who knew reading and writing and was at home on the political scene, but also because as a tenant or debtor they were dependent on him. This may not have changed very much and often project proposals fail to consider land tenure as an important datum.

We shall see whether the multiparty-democracy can handle the basic problems of economic development in Nepal, with the same people, the same civil servants and the same advisers, better than its predecessors: population increase, devastation of resources, the open border to India, transport problems and - as a consequence - the generally spread misery of a substantial part of the population.

\*This article is based on a lecture given on the 4th Heidelberg Symposium on South Asia "Nepal and the countries of the Himalaya region", 1993.

## INTERVIEWS

### **Kathmandu - Present and Future: An Interview with Mr. P.L. Singh, Mayor of Kathmandu**

**Susanne von der Heide**

The interview was taken by Susanne von der Heide on the 25th of April 1993 in Chetrapati, Kathmandu. Mr. Singh has now been Mayor of Kathmandu for nearly one year. He is a leading member of the ruling Nepali Congress Party.

Excerpts from the interview:

**Q:** People have long since expressed concern for the future of Kathmandu City. What are your immediate plans and what are your experiences so far?

**A:** Well, the experience for Kathmandu is primarily that prior to the election, I thought that Kathmandu City was suffering from 'cancer' - but, what I found out, is that the city is suffering from an 'overflow of Aid'.

**Q:** What exactly do you mean by that?

**A:** Well, as you may well be aware, Nepal is considered one of the poorest countries in the world. This has had the effect that Nepal in recent years has had no problem with donor-countries being willing to implement a large range of aid-projects in various fields. Let me make one point clear: the Nepalese people are grateful for this. However, what I soon realized as mayor is that the city doesn't have any infrastructure and planning, even to deal with this flow of projects being steadily offered us. And moreover, this has been totally neglected in former times. For instance, there are already a number of projects concerning water supply, but we do not up till now have any overall planning in respect to the basic organisation of this supply, a crucial thing for the functioning of any city. So first we need to have a manageable infrastructure.

**Q:** What have you achieved so far?

**A:** Let me say something first. Another problem has long been pressing. I have to clean the city of junk. Previously, some foreign projects have been targeting this problem, not unsuccessfully, but we have only seen the beginning. Even before I could start doing anything about the problems, my primary task was to gain a fair overview of the extent of the scrapes facing my administration. It would have been far too easy just to initiate a number of projects in the most problematic areas such as solving water need, electricity, garbage, pollution, town-settlement problems, road-building etc. without having any previously conceived basic planning. This is what has taken most of my time in the last nine months, simply fact-finding and organisation. So far I tried to clean several places in Kathmandu successfully. But that can be seen only as a beginning.

**Q:** As a frequent guest to Nepal, this is something which always strikes the visitor, the lack of infrastructure. Since this has now become a top priority for you, what are your visions for the city beyond that?

**A:** I want the Kathmandu Valley to become green and pure again. To achieve that objective, I must start, even on a small scale, to implement ecologically sensible initiatives. But more generally, my visions for the city include a number of considerations. Firstly, the cultural perspective, that is to preserve my culture. Secondly, to safeguard the environment and the natural beauty of this valley. These factors are also decisive for our foreign friends. Thirdly, I especially want to put an emphasis on agriculture and horticulture, since, in keeping with my pre-electionary statements, Kathmandu must again become clean, green and healthy. At the moment, Kathmandu is exactly the opposite. It is not green, not clean and therefore not healthy.

This must now be done, because unless we make it clean, no one will come and visit us. You know that tourism is our "golden goose". If the tourists don't come anymore, I don't think we shall be able to survive in the future. Proper actions must therefore be taken within three to four months. I have to say this, not only to the locals and nationals, but also to the international community, that Kathmandu is otherwise dying.

**Q:** What are the perspectives within this short period; to do action-planning in view of the necessary cooperation with the central government?

**A:** Although it is a city problem, that is, a municipal matter, it has not yet become the municipal matter it should. In other words, although we are talking about decentralization, there is still centralization. Naturally, the necessary executive power has to be transferred to the municipal level within the next three or four months. Power has to be shared.

**Q:** In what condition did you find Kathmandu when you became mayor?

**A:** The whole city was in a big mess, just like a fish-market! To start cleaning up is not easy, where shall you begin?

Problems are everywhere. Just to get an overview, I regularly meet with colleagues and experts on global and urban planning in order to exchange views and to learn. Through these meetings I hopefully get some lessons from more "mature" cities and at the same time they get to know my situation. I am convinced that the exchange of views will be useful for my city.

**Q:** How do you face the discrepancies in your administration?

**A:** There is a task-force, and the UDLE (Urban Development through Local Efforts, a German project) is there to assist me. They have just started and within the next weeks I shall hear more about the results.

**Q:** Do you plan to form administrative committees where people will have responsibility for certain sections and areas of the city?

**A:** Certainly. I believe in decentralization. I believe in action-oriented programmes, because in the last thirty years there were so many seminars and workshops and if you collect all the published documents, it will fill more than a library. But that's it. I am not going to make the same mistake and for me time is precious.

**Q:** How is the reaction in the population so far?

**A:** There is a good response and my visions are well received. But what does a good response mean, considering the fact that people here for the last thirty years have been treated like politically immature children, not knowing what responsibility, awareness and consciousness actually mean. I therefore regard it as one of my major objectives to create a sense of awareness and engagement among the population, an awareness which simply hasn't existed before.

**Q:** It is generally known that mental changes demand hard work. This must be a huge challenge. How will you cope with that?

**A:** Aside from getting the overview concerning the problems and initiating investigations for building an infrastructure, I have in the last five to six months tried to convince people with arguments, but these are not enough, therefore I attempt to increase their awareness in different fields, such as family-awakening, - for hygienic and sanitary reasons, group-awakening, which means that people themselves take initiatives, establish organisations concerning their own problems. An increasing awareness of the individual versus the group and vice versa. This, in the long run, will conduce to a heightened awareness of nature. People's participation is crucial.

**Q:** This, I presume, is grassroots policy - Nepalese way?

**A:** Exactly! I want decentralization and people's participation so I must encourage people to shape their own future. That means grassroots in the most common sense.

**Q:** Have your personal feelings changed from when you took over the chair and up to now?

**A:** Before my election as mayor I thought that the population problems needed priority, but after having been in the chair for some months now, I tend to give poverty problems the highest priority. But a foreigner who comes to Kathmandu thinks immediately about our pollution problems. It seems all problems start with 'p', poverty, population, pollution, parking concerning traffic, but 'p' can also stand for prime minister, political parties, and police, and can also be people's participation which I am emphasizing, and my name starts also with 'p' so I don't know if there is going to be a problem with me. More than ever, I wish that we could show more discipline, then it wouldn't be so difficult for me to work - it would be easier to implement things. Being a mayor, I don't want to be like a Pradhan Panch before. My job is to plan and devise strategies, and not to take it as an ordinary routine job.

**Q:** You mentioned the traffic problems here in Kathmandu. What are you going to do in the future?

**A:** For the moment I can tell you that with the help of the Japanese government, a new bus-terminal is going to be established outside the valley, so the location of the old bus-stand was wrongly situated and has contributed seriously to the pollution in the area. To regulate traffic, there will moreover be a link-road to the bus-stand so that people have easy access. I plan a shuttle bus-service for 24 hours to secure cheap travelling for the common people. People in the bus-service will be trained and right now I am getting experts from India to start with that.

**Q:** What about the pollution from the three-wheel rikshaws?

**A:** I want to get rid of them in the long run and new licences have already stopped being issued. Once I give better service to the people by, for example, having a better infrastructure, there shall be new jobs, also for the unemployed scooter-drivers.

**Q:** Nepal's largest exporting industry, carpet production, has become environmentally unbearable, because a part of the production includes the chemical washing of the carpet. I know that certain factories have been urged to shift out of Kathmandu, but many are still situated in the city. What do you want to do about that?

**A:** The prime minister is committed to that and I endorse it. Instead of forcing them to leave, we should try to persuade them - public pressure is already there.

We should give a sort of initiative on a district level: the plans are, for example, to shift the carpet industry to places in the Tarai. There is enough space and water, so new commercial zones could be established there; and if carpet washing is necessary in the Tarai it should be done as in Kakani where ecologically safe carpet washing takes place! Until now the German-Swiss carpet washing project is the only environmentally clean one. I want the Kathmandu Valley to have pollution-free industries. Like I said in the beginning we plan to concentrate on agriculture and horticulture: I see a good future for herbal and seed production as well as for tissue culture. With our Japanese friends we have discussed these matters and they have shown great

interest in cottage industries producing computer spare parts in the valley. Considerations are so serious that we are negotiating on having a direct flight from Osaka to Kathmandu in 1994.

**Q:** My last question leads back to the problems you are facing with the carpet industry and factories. What will you do about child labour and prostitution in these factories?

**A:** At the moment I try to get more facts and figures in order to take immediate action as soon as possible. UNICEF, for example will soon start up a project which will bring children into SOS children's villages. But this can only be seen as a beginning.

Thank you very much for this interview.

## **On Political Culture in Contemporary Nepal: An Interview with Professor Lok Raj Baral**

**Martin Gaenzle**

Lok Raj Baral is Professor of Political Science at Tribhuvan University, Kathmandu, where he was head of the Political Science Department from 1976 to 1988. As a critical observer of political developments during the Panchayat period he first published *Oppositional Politics in Nepal* in 1977 - after which his position as a professor was temporarily endangered - and then *Nepal's Politics of Referendum: A Study of Groups, Personalities and Trends* (1983). A later study, published in 1990, dealt with *Regional Migrations, Ethnicity and Security: The South Asian Case*. His latest book titled *Nepal: Problems of Governance* (1993) came out recently: this he had prepared before the democracy movement in 1990, but he revised the entire manuscript after the fundamental political changes which were brought about during that year. Being the president of the newly-established Political Science Association of Nepal (POLSAN), he convened the first South Asian Political Science Conference in June 1992, the proceedings of which he edited under the title *South Asia: Democracy and the Road Ahead*. (1992). He is also the president of an NGO called "Society for Constitutional and Parliamentary Exercise" (SCOPE) which aims at strengthening the process of democratization. Professor Baral hit the headlines early 1993 when he was asked to chair the advisory committee on the controversial Tanakpur issue in January. As the Supreme Court had ruled in December 1992 that the agreement between Prime Minister Koirala and his Indian counterpart on the Tanakpur barrage was in fact a treaty requiring ratification, the government was under pressure to decide on the exact status of the treaty, and therefore the mode of ratification, i.e. either by a simple or a two third majority in parliament. As this question had been left open by the Supreme Court, the government sought advice from the "Baral Committee" which eventually

suggested that the agreement is of an ordinary nature, i.e. requiring only a simple majority. This was one of the issues we discussed at Prof. Baral's house on August 26, 1993.

**Q:** Prof. Baral, let me first ask you a personal question. What has changed for you as a political scientist since the restoration of multi-party democracy? Or to put it more generally; how has the role of intellectuals changed?

**A:** I was one of the victims of the former regime, the partyless panchayat regime. Not directly a victim, but we were harassed by the former regime several times. Now I think as an intellectual, as an academic, I have a liberation of mind. I am free, I can express my ideas freely. Even if I want to criticize the King I can do that. Nobody is going to obstruct my academic thinking and writing. That way I feel that I have been liberated.

**Q:** Just recently you have been heading this advisory committee on the Tanakpur issue. Does this mean that the role of intellectuals is being upgraded, that they are more included in public decisions? Or was it rather exceptional? How did you feel about the role you were playing in this hot issue of Tanakpur?

**A:** Yes, very conflicting interpretations were there when I was appointed as chairman of the Tanakpur committee. Some of my colleagues also advised me not to take that kind of responsibility since I would be involved in this controversy. Then I thought that as an intellectual, and since the elected government wants our services, why not? They wanted a neutral man who was supposed to balance all kinds of people in the committee. The former foreign minister Mr. (Shailendra Kumar) Upadhyaya was there as a member of the committee, three or four water resource engineers were there, very eminent lawyers were there, and other people from the government's side were also there. And perhaps they thought that a man like me could balance all these people, and they could work under the chairmanship of a professor who is basically neutral in his political thinking. ... They recognized my independence and my status. That way I'm happy.

**Q:** Do you think this will happen more often now - that the Government or the parliament will seek the advice of intellectuals?

**A:** I was the head of the department for one decade, 12 years. But then I didn't like to continue as head, because of more administrative problems, many problems. But I am also these days the president of SCOPE, the Society for Constitutional and Parliamentary Exercise.. that is an NGO, which is concerned very much with strengthening the democratic process. We have a lot of interaction with members of parliament, and we have a forum. For example, last Saturday, we had a very big meeting on the Upper House, the National Council, we were discussing the role of the Upper House in our context. We were all intellectuals, professors, lawyers, politicians, MPs, ministers, chairmen, they all came and it was a very good exercise.... In that way we are also now concerned with the practical aspects of politics, not only with the theoretical side. And we help the government, we help the MPs, we help the women members, for example we have a women's cell. We want to know how to upgrade the level of the MPs. That way intellectuals are very

much in interaction with the democratic process.

**Q:** This brings me to my next question: how has the political culture changed with the "return to competitive politics", as you have called it? For example, how has the opposition found its place in the parliamentary process? This is a topical question, as just recently the agreement between Nepali Congress (NC) and Nepal Communist Party United Marxist-Leninist (NCP-UML)<sup>1</sup>, has raised the question whether this has challenged the supremacy of the parliament. As they have made an agreement on Tanakpur just between the two parties...

**A:** If we start thinking in that line, I think it leads nowhere, because the movement was launched by two parties. Basically it was initiated by the Nepali Congress, then later on the communists joined the movement. These two, Congress and UML, are the movement parties. And they were the agents of change, they transformed the former absolute monarchical system into a multi-party democratic system. This is the background. And also they were very much instrumental in framing the constitution.... That means the whole show was run and is being run by these two parties. And even some things which are taken to the parliament just for formality will be decided by these two parties. If they decide to amend the constitution, they can do that. They will have a two thirds majority. It is up to them. They were the real agents of change. That's why Prakash Chandra Lohani, my friend, who belongs to NDP, says they have bypassed the parliament. Of course, as an opposition, he is right in what he is saying. Everybody should raise that kind of voice, I admire this. That voice should be there. It is good for democracy, it will alert them. Otherwise I think it is O.K. (to have such an agreement.) The basic thing is to have stability.

**Q:** To come back to the role of the opposition. Now just recently there was still a lot of political agitation on the streets, and you said that, the UML especially, still considers itself as a movement party, because it often takes decisions back to the street and creates a movement. Now it has just been called off, but it can come back any time.

**A:** Now if I say movement parties, I also call Nepali Congress a movement party. For the last 30 years they have had one program: abolition of the Panchayat system!

**Q:** But now they are in power...

**A:** Now they are a constitutional party, but they are still continuing their movement psychology. The UML does not think it is a constitutional party, a responsible opposition.

**Q:** But the Congress has changed. They have transformed from a movement party into the party in power.

**A:** And I expected that UML would also do the same, but UML is wavering. Sometimes it behaves like a movement party, all the time guided by the psychology of the movement. (Saying:) "I can change the prime minister!" Who is UML to change the prime minister on the basis of street politics? They are not taking a vote of no-confidence. They could have registered a vote of no confidence, as a parliamentary party. That's why I say they are still guided by the same old movement psychology. They think that they can dictate to the ruling party, to make it change its leader, Prime Minister Koirala. But

ultimately they had to give in. They dropped that idea, that demand. ....That's why I have been saying in my books, these people, the UML leaders, are not showing their parliamentary democratic political culture. They are still thinking they can determine everything by street politics. That is not going to help the democratic process. Of course, everybody can go to the streets, can stage demonstrations, can have a peaceful assembly without arms. The constitution has given them all freedoms. They can go on strike, they can stage a peaceful demonstration. . . .But now after the agreement they are very categorical, they are supporting very categorically the multi-party system. And they say they are equally concerned with the stability of the system. If that kind of commitment continues, it will be good for the system, but if they change the strategy again, and if they don't like something and go back to the street and start doing the same old business, that is not going to help us. It is still unclear.

**Q:** I was surprised by this agreement because they suddenly dropped the main demand that the Prime Minister step back.

**A:** And they did so much for that demand. "We cannot reach an agreement without the P.M.'s resignation." They were so categorical. But ultimately (they gave in). That's why I say they have a brinkmanship policy. They always go too far. And now they have the problem of retreat.

**Q:** Saving their face..

**A:** This is the third time they are doing this. Sometimes I don't know about their future strategy. But I always tell them when I meet them, "You are an independent variable for the left movement in Nepal, why are you being guided or swayed by other elements, by very minor parties? You are an independent factor for the Nepalese left movement. You should decide your own action, your own strategy. Why are you guided by others? .. Ideologically they are still wavering. It was very interesting during the coup against Gorbachev in 1991, when he was ousted these people welcomed the coup. The Nepali Congress took a very correct decision, it denounced the coup, it appreciated Gorbachev's reforms. And these people (UML) were caught on the wrong side. And they had to accept Nepali Congress in the parliament and they had to change their previous stand. Such is their problem.

**Q:** How can the problems of institutionalizing a culture of debate be solved? How do you see this process? I have the impression that the parliamentary debates are not well covered in the media, they are only summarized. For example, there are no televised parliamentary debates.

**A:** We should understand that this is only a two-year-old democracy. The people are completely new in the whole process. Even the Prime Minister Koirala, Bhattarai etc. are new to the whole process... And as compared to many other South Asian countries, there is a criticism recently, and the Speaker gave a directive to the government that the things that are expressed in the parliament should be broadcast to the maximum. But as far as TV is concerned, TV is also just a beginning, it is too early. More or less I think they are trying to cover as much as possible.

**Q:** But the speeches themselves are not broadcasted....

**A:** Not exactly...But major things, major points are covered. We have a

special programme, commentary, in TV and radio, parliamentary proceedings, they call *Samsad bhitra*, In Parliament Today. They have that programme in addition to the news item. ... Of course, it is a government-controlled media.

Q: That's what I was wondering. How do you see the role of the media in general? Is it a healthy role?

A: There are two sides. If you look at the local press, it is muddy, full of all these stories, wild allegations, very negative..

Q: Is that what you called the psychology of conspiracy, this lack of confidence?

A: Yes, because what happens, even the leaders are not immune to such a crisis of confidence. Because some of these media are run by the former regime's supporters. And most of them also get assistance from different quarters who want to create confusion, chaos, to show that multi-party democracy cannot function in this country, that we need an authoritarian regime. In that way some of the papers don't see the positive side of the process, they only expose the negative, all the time wild allegations, wild rumours. Now people are becoming very selective. Gradually people try to know which paper is good, which paper is not, which is more responsible. But still we lack professional journalism.

Q: For example investigative journalism?

A: Yes, but still, a lot of stories are exposed by the press, by the weeklies. For example stories about the RNAC, whether they are right or wrong, the government has to come out with a statement.

Q: So is this a beginning of investigative journalism then?

A: Yes, but sometimes they go after the personalities. But sometimes they are correct, they just publish cheque number scandals, bribery, so many stories. This is democracy, and they can easily pick up the story in the parliament and expose the government. I think we have just started. That way I see things changing. Actually it started ten years ago, after the referendum. But now, newspapers, new dailies are coming, now we have Kathmandu Post, Kantipur, and they are challenging The Rising Nepal and Gorkhapatra, the Government newspapers. People are moving towards these private papers. That way we are gradually developing our own ways of thinking, and analysing events. That is going to shape our political culture also.

Q: And how about the internal party structures? There too I think there is much left to be done in the way of democratization.

A: That part is lacking in our party system. And moreover, the old leaders, ageing leaders are there in the NC. Internal party democracy is lacking in major parties.

Q: Also in the UML?

A: In the UML, compared to the NC, most leaders are young, Bhandari was young, in the forties, Madhav Nepal is young, C.P. Mainali is young. Mostly these people are young, in their forties. And moreover compared to the NC, in the UML the internal party democracy (is better)... I could see this in the UML, when they were discussing the ideological positions of the leaders: Madan Bhandari had one school of thought, People's Multi-party Democracy,

*bahudaliya janabad*. And another *naulo janabad*, New Democracy, of C.P. Mainali. These ideas were floated, they were published in the papers, and we were also invited to discuss them. And they could elect their leaders on the basis of their internal debates and elections. Now there is a pressure even these days on the NC leadership, but the pressure is not enough. We hope that the time will come, and the younger elements will act. We have to put pressure on the leadership to democratize. Because according to the constitution of Nepal, these parties are supposed to hold their organisational meetings, and they should be democratically managed. This has just been started, I don't think we can make a sweeping statement that they are doing nothing.

Q: So as this is prescribed in the constitution, could anybody take this to court?

A: Yes, that is a precondition. Within five years, before the elections, each party should have completed its internal democratic structural arrangement. That is a condition. Most of the parties say they have already elected their leaders, working committee, general committee, district committee. They have to go that way. And the NC is these days trying to find a new constitution for the party. The leaders don't like to give up their posts. There are certain contradictions. The NC manifesto has no position of 'supreme leader', but Ganesh Man is considered as a supreme leader. What is a supreme leader? It happened when the parliamentary party, the working committee said, we support Girija Prasad Koirala as a prime minister, he should continue, and whatever the Government decides on the Tanakpur issue that will be accepted by all the members. That was the official position. Suddenly Ganesh Man sent a letter: "If you pass the Tanakpur agreement by a simple majority it will be suicidal for the party, for democracy. You should get a two-thirds majority."

.. And, according to the general secretary of the party, Mahendra Narayan Nidhi, Ganesh Man is not even a member officially. But he just vetoed. And people could not ignore him. So the party and the government could not push that agreement for a simple majority. It is still there in parliament, it is still not decided by the parliament. Now, according to the NC-UML agreement, one of the points is on Tanakpur. Now they have decided to settle this not in this session, but in the coming session on the basis of understanding. They didn't say two thirds or simple, but on the basis of a national consensus.

Q: So it's still not decided... And how do you see the role of the judiciary, the Supreme Court, for example, now plays a more crucial role.

A: Two points. If you look at the constitution making committee, most of these people were lawyers. Including the present chief justice who was the chairman, Bishwanath Upadhyaya. Bharat Mohan Adhikari, Daman Dhungana, all these were lawyers. The position of the judiciary was very much focused on the constitution. If you read the constitution, there is a long list of functions, powers, privileges, and status of the judiciary, because all these lawyers were there. Not a single political scientist was a member of the committee. It is very much a lawyer-biased constitution. But the role of the judiciary is prominent, and on the Tanakpur issue the judiciary established that now the right to transparency is very much there. Everything should be transparent; even if some agreement is concluded by the government, it cannot

be kept in secrecy. They should be very open to the people. The right to information has been established by the Supreme Court. That was a crucial decision given by the Supreme Court. And the Supreme Court also said, if there are agreements, even minor documents between two governments, they are considered as treaties, not understandings. All the time the government had said (in the case of the Tanakpur agreement), that it did not need ratification, but the Supreme Court said: No, you need ratification, but it is up to the government to ratify either by a simple majority or by a two-thirds majority. ... That's why these things have been vindicated and the Supreme Court is very crucial. Now most of the dismissed Civil Servants have gone to the Supreme Court for redress, (saying:) "We have been victimized by the government, we want justice." So people are looking to the Supreme Court as an independent institution in the present setup.

**Q:** Now another question concerns the present role of the army.

**A:** It varies from person to person, but I don't see any role for the army at the moment.

**Q:** Except clearing roads and building bridges....

**A:** ...the leaders are still haunted by the King's ghost, (saying:) "The King can stage a coup against the system like his father did in 1960, because the army is still loyal to the King, and the police are still loyal to the King." But the King has already committed himself to the constitution, saying that he is a constitutional monarch and accepts this position. That was the position accepted by the leaders when they terminated the movement in April 1990. And the constitution has said clearly that sovereignty lies with the people of Nepal. The King has also accepted the role of the movement. But if the army could become a decisive force, why did the King not use it in 1990? He could have used the army to resist the movement, and could have suppressed the movement. But he did not do that. It is the weaknesses of our leaders, either in opposition or in the government, or in the parties, they have their own imaginary enemy. ...But if these people are united as in the present agreement (between the NC and the UML) I don't think there is any possibility of using the army against the established system. The King has a very limited role to play. Where will he go by dismissing the government? Can he manage his show? That's why I don't see the political role of the army.

**Q:** One crucial point is that the constitution still defines the kingdom as a Hindu kingdom. Many people are not very happy about this definition. Do you think that this may bring a constitutional crisis at some stage?

**A:** This is also the weakness of our leaders, a weakness of the movement parties, the NC and the UML. According to the 1959 constitution Nepal was a secular state. But now they have compromised on this issue. They should not have done it. These leaders thought: "in our country Hinduism is not so fanatical. It is more or less tolerant and a very liberal type. It doesn't make a difference, let us compromise." That was the position taken by our leaders. Actually, personally I said they could have retained the 1959 situation as far as this issue was concerned. And B.P. Koirala said in 1980 when the issue was raised during the referendum, that if somebody says that Nepal is a Hindu state it is a fraud. He was very confident, he was a charismatic leader. But the

present leaders are not confident. That's why they compromised on that issue. Otherwise, after 30 years we should not have gone back to the pre-1959 situation. We could have gone ahead. Practically, it does not make much difference. But here a strong lobby was there to include "Hindu", so indirectly the word has been used in the constitution... Democracy must be secular.

**Q:** Considering the older political structures which still influence present politics, where do you see the greatest problems for democracy? For example social structures, like what has been termed the patrimonial system, or personality orientation, or other social hierarchies.

**A:** This is not only the situation in Nepal, such a situation exists in South Asia in general. Hierarchical society, caste-ridden society, and class-oriented society are common.... But if you give the opportunity to express opinions freely, that will also create some kind of impact on the nature of the system. For example, now that the ethnic groups, the deprived people, have freedoms, they have opportunities to express their views. That's why you cannot become all the time dominant. But we have an elitist system, the poor people in the villages do not have the opportunity to send their children to school. They cannot compete with the elite's children. After all, there is a circulation of elites, the same families, the same people are in circulation. But this is not only a phenomenon of this country, that is a phenomenon of other countries as well. ... I am very worried about the performance of the system, because this system should not be a procedural democracy, democracy by legal constitutional method only, but it should also be a democracy by performance. If it cannot be a performance-oriented democracy, it cannot accept egalitarian principles. If our government cannot become radical in providing some kind of respite, some kind of opportunities to the people, then these people will become very dissatisfied with it.

**Q:** This is probably only possible through certain legal measures. For example some ethnic organisations have demanded a kind of reservation policy like in India. Is this a solution?

**A:** Our people are now scared of the Indian situation. We have learned a lesson from India, that there should be no reservation policy, that is very categorically said here. We should try to provide opportunities for them, but how to do it is very difficult. All these elitist children are sent for higher study in India. And all these people are coming back as new elites, and they will be continuing.

**Q:** So you don't see that at the moment ethnic problems are becoming serious? What about the future?

**A:** We should always be on our guard. Now the trends are there in South Asia. A number of influences are there. We are importing a number of bad influences. We cannot be assured of the present situation, we have to foresee the future and accordingly plan and try to find new strategies to tackle or to avert such ethnic problems in the future. Possibilities are there, because people are just raising their voice against the Brahmans, Chetris, and Newars who are perceived as exploiters. We should try to accommodate their feelings. That way we can rectify the situation.

**Q:** The present government is often accused of being very Brahman-oriented.

A: That is not the design, that is purely accidental.... If you look at the table in my book, (*Problems of Governance*), the Brahmins are represented in large numbers. In the previous system the Chetris were dominant. The Panchayat-system was a Chetri-dominated system. ...It takes some time to correct.

Q: One last question concerning your own interests as a political scientist. What are your main research interests at the moment? What do you focus on?

A: Did you read my book on *Migration, Ethnicity and Security*? It was published in 1990 by Sterling, in New Delhi. I visited all six SAARC countries, except Maldives. I studied refugee movements, migrations, and their links with national security. After that, *Problems of Governance* just came out in 1993. But my basic interest now is in migration, refugees, security of South Asian countries, particularly smaller countries, Bhutan, Nepal, Bangladesh. Right now, I am interested in doing work on South Asian refugees, particularly Bhutanese refugees, and on the danger of the disintegration of nations, including India, to the south of the Himalayas. People are talking about Gorkhaland, Greater Nepal. You might have heard that. And the Bhutanese are always playing that card. ... You know that this whole belt, the southern Himalayas, is a Nepali speaking belt? Starting from Assam, Meghalaya, Bhutan, Darjeeling, Sikkim, Nepal, if you cross the border in the western sector, western Nepal-India border, Kumaon, Garhwal have also language links because of migration. In Assam Nepalese constitute a huge population. Now Darjeeling is a Nepali speaking area. 80 % of Sikkimese are Nepalese. Also in Bhutan, about 55-60 % are Nepalese. If the refugees go back, altogether it will be about 55-60 % in Bhutan. But the government says only 25-30%, that is the official figure. Thus the whole belt is a Nepali-speaking area which gives rise to doubt for the authorities.

Q: Is there a strong separatist movement?

A: ...That is a kind of fear psychology created by some people and the government in Bhutan. The Nepalese are accused of expansionist designs. We cannot afford to do such things. We cannot become an expansionist power. ... We cannot go against the will of India. We are India-locked, and are dependent on India in many respects. It is very difficult for us to think beyond India. ... We are having some problems with the Bhutanese because of the refugees. The Bhutanese government wants to arouse the sensitivity of India, pointing out that the Nepalese will be a threat to Indian security and Indian territorial integrity. The Bhutanese want to impress on India that now the Nepalese are interested not in democracy in Bhutan but in expanding their territories, Sikkim, Darjeeling and other areas....

Q: Did it work out that way?

A: ... India cannot put pressure on Bhutan to democratize the system or to take all these refugees back home. It may try to persuade quietly but India cannot help Nepal at the cost of Bhutanese friendship. Both Bhutan and Nepal are India's good neighbours.

Q: Are you also involved in teaching at TU?

A: Yes.

Q: How big is your department? Is it a very popular subject to study? For

example I know that in anthropology there are quite a lot of students...

A: Now we don't have that problem. Our department was one of the biggest. Since the department of Sociology and Anthropology started, many young students joined it. But still Political Science is one of the popular departments.

Q: Being a political scientist, have you ever been tempted to enter politics yourself?

A: No. Now I have come to the conclusion that I will not join politics on my own initiative. If my government wants my service, if tomorrow the government nominates me and gives me some role to play, perhaps I may do that. But I will not go and fight elections, join a party, I don't like that. My freedom will be totally curtailed if I become the member of a party.

#### Notes:

<sup>1</sup>On 17.8.93 the two parties agreed on ten points (mainly by establishing a number of committees and task forces to look into the disputed problems, e.g. the circumstances of fatal accident of UML leader Bhandari, treatment of recent movement victims, inflation etc., and by extending the time limit for solving the Tanakpur issue, s. The Independent 25.-31.8.1993). With this the movement, which was going on since spring, was called off, but the most crucial point, the demand for the Prime Minister's resignation was not mentioned.

## NEWS

### Symposia

#### Adapted Technologies and Environmental Education as Possibilities of Inter-Cultural Communication in the Himalayan Region Ittenbach, August 13-14, 1993

On the occasion of the exhibition in honour of Toni Hagen (see EBHR No. 5) the German committee of the King Mahendra Trust of Nature Conservation (Nepal) organised a symposium on the problems relating to the introduction and sustainability of environmental projects in the Himalayan region. Papers related to the following topics:

-New strategies in nature conservation projects in Nepal

(C.P. Gurung, Bikash Pandey, Dibya Gurung, Manjushree Thapa)

-Urban Planning (P.L. Singh, Christian v. Hatzfeld)

-Income generating projects (biogas, microhydropower, medical plants) (Toni Hagen, Klaus Rudolph, Klaus Duerbeck)

-Solid waste (management, hygienic education) and waste water (Eckhard Spreen, Verena v. Hatzfeld, Oskar Werner Pawel)

- Joint ventures in the transfer of know-how and technologies (Klaus Dieter Schütte)
- Water-management (Wolf Donner)
- Traditional forest use (Dietrich Schmidt-Vogt)

The symposium was convened by Susanne von der Heide.

### Oral Tradition Study Group-Himalaya

As a follow-up of the French-German Conference on the History and Anthropology of Nepal held in Arc-et-Senans, June 1990, a study group on "Comparative Study of Oral Tradition in Nepal" was constituted.<sup>1</sup>

Researchers interested in oral traditions met in Heidelberg on January 30th 1993 at the invitation of the Seminar für Ethnologie, South Asian Institute of the University of Heidelberg.

Reports about ongoing research were presented as follows:

C.P. Zoller: "A regional version of the *Mahābhārata*." Field research was done in the upper Tons Valley, H.P., India, among Dewal singers (language: West Pahari). It is urgent to collect such epic songs as the tradition seems to be vanishing.

A. de Sales: "The grotesque in a shamanic song". Anne de Sales is currently studying Magar shamanism in Nepal and analyses the different poetic styles which are expressed.

A. Malik: "The oral epic of *Devanārayān*." The study deals with oral narratives associated with the Gujars, a semi-pastoral group of Rajasthan. The itinerant bards (*Bhopa*) use visual representations for their performances.

A. Höfer: "Hyperpragmatic patterns in Tamang shamanic texts." His contribution discussed the phonic-prosodic richness of these recitations.

M. Gaenzle: "The ritual of 'Raising the Vital Soul' - a ritual text of the Mewahang Rai in East Nepal." The paper discussed the problems of translation and interpretation of such texts.

The next meeting of the study group is planned for 25 February 1994 in Meudon Venue: CNRS UPR 299, 1 Place Aristide Briand, 92195 MEUDON, France.

Topics suggested for presentation and discussion:

- the interrelationship between myths and rituals (performance, text/context etc.)
- the methodological problems of presentation, translation and interpretation of oral texts (e.g. systems of transcription, poetics, comparative analysis etc.)
- the interpenetration of oral and written traditions (the process of "textualization", cultural hegemony etc.)

We plan to invite two or three French colleagues interested in oral tradition to exchange views and share our experiences in oral tradition.

### Note:

<sup>1</sup>The papers presented during the Arc et Senans Conference have been published:

*Nepal Past and Present. Proceedings of the French-German Conference. Arc et Senans, June 1990.* (Editor: Gérard Toffin), Paris, CNRS/New Delhi, Sterling Publishers, 1993, I-VIII, 377 p., illus.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Publications

Toffin, Gérard (ed.): *The Anthropology of Nepal: From Tradition to Modernity. Proceedings of the Franco-Nepalese Seminar held in the French Cultural Centre, Kathmandu 18-20 March 1992.* Kathmandu: French Cultural Centre 1993. (Price: NRs. 250).

The book includes contributions on "religion and society", "change and development," and "documentation": 1. Introduction by G. Toffin who stresses, among other things, that the main aim of the Seminar was to present to Nepalese counterparts the results of some recent research by French scientists. 2. Cultural pluralism in Nepal, by I. and D. Baral. 3. The 32 Maharjan tols of Kathmandu City, by A. Hollé, G. Toffin and K.P. Rimal. 4. Religious traditions and beliefs of the people of Western Nepal, by R.N. Pandey. 5. A ritual king: The Dasain Festival in Argha Rajasthal, by P. Ramirez. 6. A Sherpa pilgrimage, by K. Buffetrille. 7. The emergence of Buddhist monasteries around the stupa of Bodhnath, by M. Helffer. 8. Continuity and change in the Gurung culture of Nepal, by J. Gurung. 9. Socio-economic determinants of women's work in the service sector, by N. Mercier. 10. French anthropological studies and development issues in Nepal, by C. Jest. 11. French research on the anthropology of Nepal 1954-1993, by L. Boulnois, P. Massonet, G. Toffin and F. Vigny.

Ramble, Charles & Martin Brauen (eds.) *Anthropology of Tibet and the Himalayas.* Zürich: Ethnological Museum of the University of Zurich 1993. (Price: SFr. 28)

The book contains the proceedings of the international conference with the same title which was held September 21-28, 1990 in Zürich. It includes altogether 39 contributions concerning aspects of Tibetan culture and its context in the Himalayan region. A wide range of topics is dealt with, such as kinship and caste, material culture, myth, ritual, and the performing arts.

## Conferences

### Second International Conference on Vedas

The International Foundation For Vedic Education, U.S.A., and its affiliate Sri Sarvaraya Veda Pathasala, Kapileswarapuram, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh, India, in collaboration with the Department of Sanskrit & Indian Studies, Harvard University, U.S.A., and the Department of Asian & African Studies, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland, will be holding the Foundation's **Second International Conference on Vedas** (Sama Vedam), and its Upavedam, Gandharva Vedam, during the week of December 11 through December 18, 1994, in the Harvard University Campus, Cambridge, Mass., U.S.A. Contemporary scholars and specialists in Sama Vedam and Gandharva Vedam from around the world, and traditional vedic scholars from India and Nepal, are being invited to participate in this 5-day conference. Please contact the Foundation for further details at:

International Foundation for Vedic Education, U.S.A.  
Post Office Box 318  
Rahway, New Jersey 07065, U.S.A.  
Telephone: 908-396-VEDA  
Fax: 908-396-0574

### "Towards a Definition of Style: The Arts of Tibet" 13th - 17th June 1994

#### A SOAS Conference in Association with the Victoria and Albert Museum

The Department of Art and Archaeology at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, is to host an international conference on Tibetan art. Over thirty of the world's leading scholars of Tibetan art are gathering at the Victoria and Albert Museum during the week of 13th - 17th June 1994 to discuss and illustrate the complex issues of styles, sub-styles, schools, workshops, individual artists, textual sources for styles and related issues. The aim is to deepen our understanding of styles in Tibetan art and to clarify the language by which these styles are described.

All forms of the visual arts (painting, sculpture, textiles and architecture) from Tibet, the Tibetan speaking regions of the Himalayas, and the exile community fall within the parameters of the conference. It is hoped that this occasion will become a benchmark in the field, enabling the sharing of recent research and consolidation of earlier studies. Lectures will be organised according to major themes e.g. "Architecture", "Painting, Sculpture and Textiles", "Textual Sources for Style", "Sites: Central and Western Tibet" and "Style and Taxonomy" and there will be an opportunity to see exhibitions of rare examples of Tibetan art, specially conceived to coincide with "Towards a

Definition of Style" in galleries and museums in and around London.

There are 180 seats available to the public for this event and we invite you to join us for what promises to be an exciting week for the study of Tibetan art. The fee for the week's conference is £180 (with concessionary rate of £50 for students and Senior Citizens) and includes lunch and refreshments.

Please send cheques or banker's drafts payable to The School of Oriental and African Studies, to:

Ms. Clare Harris, Department of Art and Archaeology  
School of Oriental and African Studies  
Thornhaugh Street  
Russell Square  
London WC1H 0XG  
Tel.: 071 637 6192 or fax. 071 436 3844

If seats are still available, registration will also be possible at the door.

Conference Committee:

Dr. Michael Aris  
Mr. John Guy  
Dr. Jane Casey Singer  
Prof. Roderick Whitfield

Mr. Philip Denwood  
Ms. Clare Harris  
Mr. Tashi Tsering

### The 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies

The 7th Seminar of the International Association for Tibetan Studies will be held at Schloss Seggau (near Graz, Austria) from June 18th-24th 1995. The conference fee is ATS 1,200 (approx. US\$ 100). The cost of the whole week (including meals and accomodation) will be approximately ATS 3,500 (US\$ 290). Accompanying spouses will not be charged the conference fee.

Arrangements for this conference are already underway. If you would like to attend or participate please contact:

Prof. Dr. Ernst Steinkellner,  
Institut für Kultur und Geistesgeschichte Asiens,  
Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften,  
Postgasse 7/4,  
A-1010 Wien (Vienna),  
Austria.

## CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE

**Eberhard Berg** was until 1991 "wissenschaftlicher Assistent" at the Ethnologisches Seminar at the University of Zurich. Since December 1991 he has been engaged in a research project in Nepal on Sherpa Buddhist pilgrimage, sponsored by the Swiss National Fund for Scientific Research.

**Wolf Donner** is geographer and economist with field experience in Nepal, Thailand, Brasil and Haiti. His book *Lebensraum Nepal. Eine Entwicklungsgeographie* has come out recently. Donner is chairman of the German-Nepal Friendship Association and editor of the bulletin *Nepal Information*.

**Martin Gaenzle** is "wissenschaftlicher Assistent" at the South Asia Institute, University of Heidelberg and teaches at its Seminar für Ethnologie. His research work deals with ritual texts and oral tradition among the Mewahang Rai.

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## 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. Anything submitted in English by a non-native speaker will be copy-edited in Heidelberg or London.

Contributors are invited to submit their articles as hard copy and possibly on disk. (If your article is sent on disk, please also send hard copy.) All formats are acceptable. If your article is not on disk, please type it boldly, in a large font, and avoid hand-written additions to facilitate scanning.

Please submit your articles with notes attached at the end of your contribution, don't use footnotes at the end of the page. Non-English words should be underlined or written in italics throughout the text. The titles of books etc. cited should be either underlined or written in italics. Titles of articles should be in plain text within quotation marks, together with the title of their source (book or journal) underlined or in italics, e.g.

Bista, Dor Bahadur. 1991. *Fatalism and Development. Nepal's struggle for Modernization*. Calcutta: Orient Longman.

Quigley, Declan. 1987. 'Ethnicity Without Nationalism: The Newars of Nepal' in: *European Journal of Sociology* XXVIII, pp. 152-70.

The deadline for submissions for our seventh issue is May 30, 1994. Anything received after that date will go into the eighth issue, expected in autumn, 1994.

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