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EDITORIAL

The next issue of the *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, vol.12, will be devoted to ethnomusicology. Contributions are welcome.

We are planning to devote issue n°13 to photography. Scholars who use this tool in their research are invited to send us a contribution explaining their methodology, in their field (geography, history, ethnology, technology, etc.). Papers should be sent before September 1997.

We also wish to remind our readers that recent PhD graduates from Europe are invited to send us an abstract of their dissertation.

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**WOMEN AND POLITICS IN NEPAL:
SMALL ACTORS, BIG ISSUE**

Stéphanie Tawa Lama

Nepal was represented at Beijing's 1995 International Conference on Women by two delegations, the official/government one, and the NGOs (Non-Government Organisations). The conference involved an entire year of preparation, including the elaboration of several concurring reports on the status of women in Nepal¹, and harsh negotiations as to who (individuals and institutions) would take part in this prestigious event².

What happened in view of the Beijing Conference actually summarises the ambiguous position of women towards politics in Nepal. On one hand, women are political actors: they are voters, political activists, electoral candidates, even, ministers. On the other hand, women are a political issue; their status and rights are debated in the elected assemblies and in the media, and a whole range of various programmes, both national and international, are specifically aimed at them.

I shall first try to assess the presence of women in the main political institutions of the country: where are women on the Nepalese political scene? Who are they? Do they have specific functions?

The women Members of Parliament (MPs), insofar as they are supposed to be experts on women's issues, thus appear as privileged targets for the feminist lobby. They constitute the very nexus where women as political actors and women as a political theme overlap. How

¹ Among these reports, see the *Country Report*, HMG Planning Commission Secretariat, and the report prepared by the leftist NGO INHURED.

² See Gururaj Luintel, "Women's Issues", *The Independent*, January 25, 1995. Regarding the impact of the Beijing conference on the Nepalese delegations, see *Beyond the Conference*, a bulletin published by the Royal Danish Embassy, Kathmandu, January 1996.

women's issues are dealt with by the non-government sector will be the focus of the last part of this paper.

A first question to ask about the political participation of women in Nepal could be: where are the women in the Nepalese political arena? Some figures about the proportion of women in various political parties and elected bodies since the 1990 Jana Andolan will help define our object.

In the popular uprising of early 1990, which put an end to three decades of the Panchayat system and established a parliamentary monarchy instead, women's participation at various levels was visible. They took part in demonstrations and rallies along with men in many cities where the "Movement for the Restoration of Democracy" was active, and they organised their own demonstrations too, as did for instance students and teachers at the female college of Padma Kanya (Acharya, 1991: 8; Yami, 1990: 30-31).

Moreover, the leader of the United Left Front, a coalition of seven leftist parties (along with the Nepali Congress, the main protagonist of the movement) was a woman, Sahana Pradhan, a prominent Communist activist and the widow of a Communist leader.

The movement aimed essentially at establishing a multiparty democracy, as opposed to the former regime, which defined itself as a "partyless democracy". The political parties that had so far been underground could then come out in the open.

How important is the presence of women to the different parties? Since no party in 1994 could provide any reliable information concerning its members at the grass-roots level, I shall here focus exclusively on the highest level of the organisations' hierarchies. The percentage of women in the respective central committees of the five largest parties represented in Parliament in 1994 was 11% for the Nepali Congress, 8% for the Communist Party (United Marxist Leninist), 5% for the United People Front, 2% for the Goodwill Party and 7% for the National Democratic Party. No woman is a party leader in any of these organisations.

However, since the 1950s when the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party (later subdivided into numerous factions) were founded, a number of affiliated or "sister" organisations, were also created. Among them were women's organisations, meant to deal specifically with "women's issues". One could therefore consider taking into account these women's organisations in an attempt to assess the position of women in Nepalese political parties. But these organisations are obviously auxiliary to the party to which they are affiliated; their role is mainly a supportive one.

Student associations are another kind of sister-organisation, that structure political life on the campuses. Seven out of the eleven women present in Parliament in 1994 began their political careers as student activists within the student organisation of the party to which they now belong, and only two women did it within the framework of the women's organisation of their party. This suggests that among the parties' sister-organisations, student organisations are more able than women's in providing effective political training.

When King Birendra announced in April 1990 that all Panchayat system institutions had been dissolved, an interim government was immediately formed under Prime Minister Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. In it Sahana Pradhan became the Minister of Commerce and Industry. It was the first time in Nepal that a woman minister was given a portfolio other than Education and/or Social Welfare. The tendency to confine women to these fields, implying that their political roles should be extensions of their traditional, social roles is not, however, specific to Nepal.

In May 1991, the first democratic elections in thirty years took place to elect members of the Lower House of Parliament, and in 1992 local elections were organised at the level of Village Development Committees (VDCs) and the level of District Development Committees (DDCs).

How did women fare in this new democratic exercise? Studies on Nepalese voters so far are extremely scarce. It is thus quite difficult to say anything about women voters³. My personal observations on a

³ See *Nepalese Voters, "Nepal National Election Survey, 1991", A Survey Report*, Political Science Association of Nepal (POLSAN), Kathmandu, 1991.

voting day⁴ in a remote village of Kathmandu Constituency Number One, however, indicate that voting is a prestigious and entertaining activity. Women and men were willing to walk several hours for that purpose, and women also wore their best clothes for the occasion.

As far as elections to Parliament are concerned, the 1990 constitution, drafted by a male-only constitutional committee, makes it compulsory for political parties to field at least 5% women among their candidates to the Lower House in order to be registered by the Election Commission. The constitution also rules that at least three women should be appointed to the Upper House of Parliament.

Do the figures on the participation of women in elections, small as they are, indicate that democracy has meant a fairer redistribution of power for women as well? Available data suggest that women have gained nothing with the new democracy in terms of access to political decision-making. In 1991 and 1994, the proportion of women among candidates was between 5% and 6%, and women parliamentarians accounted for barely 4% of members of the Lower House⁵. The number of women members in the Upper House of Parliament has never exceeded three. The constitutional provisions presented as measures intended to increase the political participation of women appear to define maximum rather than minimum figures. Moreover, women benefiting from these measures are not considered as genuine, valuable politicians. Parties are reluctant to field women candidates, as they are assumed to be weaker in political rivalries; they are usually sent to the most hostile constituencies⁶ where their chances of winning are very small. A view commonly expressed is that well-known political activists, like Sahana Pradhan of the Communist Party (UML) or Shailaja Acharya of the Nepali Congress, should not be counted among the 5% of women candidates. "They try to keep even the capable women within the 5%," the Nepali Congress MP Mina Pandey revealed to me.

⁴ Following the death of the former representative of the constituency, Madan Bhandari (CPN-UML), a by-election took place on February 7, 1994. The main opponents were the widow of Vidhya Bhandari and Krishna Prasad Bhattarai (NC). For further details, see Stéphanie Tawa-Lama (1995) "Political Participation of Women in Nepal", in Dhruba Kumar (Ed.), *State, Politics and Leadership in Nepal*, Kathmandu, CNAS, Tribhuvan University : 176-177.

⁵ Source : Election Commission.

⁶ Gita Wagley (Nepali Congress activist), personal communication, August 1994.

As we have seen, the interim government included one woman minister, as did the government formed after the Nepali Congress' victory in 1991. Shailaja Acharya, the niece of Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala, was then given the portfolio of Forest and Soil Conservation. Since she resigned in 1992 the Nepalese governments have been composed exclusively of men⁷.

How can the poor presence of women in the main Nepalese political institutions be explained? Anthropological studies of Nepalese society have shown that, as far as the status of women is concerned, most groups can be characterised as "dichotomic", i.e., with a clear distinction between the public and the private spheres (Acharya & Bennett, 1982). Women in this pattern belong to the private sphere and are largely excluded from the public sphere to which politics belong.

The majority of Nepalese women are largely deprived, due to their status⁸, of the primary political resources: money, physical mobility, contacts, information, education and time. "Going into the field is difficult," said one woman candidate of the Communist Party-United. "Women fear the violence, and above all, women involved in politics are poorly thought of"⁹. Their reputations are at stake: "character assassination is the main thing," said Durga Ghimire, explaining why she had given up politics. The Nepali Congress MP Chet Kumari Dahal was accused of neglecting her home and family because of political ambitions, a characteristic regarded as unsuitable for women.

Periods of crisis provide an exception in this regard. Many studies on the political participation of women world-wide have shown that women do participate in great numbers in critical political events, such as movements for independence or democracy, as was the case in Nepal in 1990. On these exceptional occasions, according to Pearson, women's participation makes the movement a universal one, because women symbolically bring the private sphere into the public one when they join

⁷ Mrs Lila Koirala, however, was appointed Minister of Women and Social Welfare in December 1995.

⁸ For insight into the lives of Nepalese women, see *The Status of Women in Nepal* (1979-1981), Kathmandu, CEDA, Tribhuvan University. For a more theoretical approach of the status of women in Hinduism, see Michael Allen, & S.N. Mukherjee (1990) *Women in India and Nepal*, New Delhi, Sterling Publishers.

⁹ Nina Kiran Sunwar, personal communication, November 1994.

the demonstrations, showing in this way that the entire society is concerned with the crisis (Pearson, 1981:175).

As soon as the crisis is defused, however, women usually go back to their former, distant position vis-à-vis politics. This was very conspicuous in Nepal, where no woman was appointed to the committee in charge of drafting the new constitution.

Who then are the few women able to resist this general trend? A closer look at the eleven women MPs interviewed in 1994 will help distinguish some favourable factors that suggest affinities with a South Asian pattern of women's access to political posts, as described by Richter. Three main characteristics may "explain why these women were able to transcend their gender" (Richter, 1990-1991: 530).

First, out of eleven MPs, eight were older than 40, an age when most Nepalese women are mothers-in-law and acquire with this status more power in the household, more freedom of expression and of action.

Secondly, as far as education is concerned, ten out of eleven women MPs had reached at least the level of the Intermediate of Arts degree, in comparison to 1.4% of Nepalese women at this level.

Lastly, only five of these women were presently married; two were single, and four were widows - among them, three of prominent political leaders. The status of widows is generally low in Nepalese society, but the political world provides an exception in this regard. Being the widow of a renowned politician is a most valuable asset in following a political career for several reasons. First, one of the main hindrances to female political activism is female seclusion. Women whose families have a tradition of political activism are more likely than others to be able to commit themselves politically, because they will then be in contact with people already known to the family circle. More importantly, in the case of widows, "women are perceived as behaving appropriately in politics when they are perceived as filling a political void created by the death [...] of a male family member" (Richter, 1990-1991: 526).

Does this small minority of women politicians have a special role to play in Nepalese politics? Are there political tasks allotted to women only?

Many of the women interviewed regretted the tokenism prevalent in the decision to include a woman in such or such a body. A basic function of women in Nepalese political life could actually be "decorative"¹⁰.

But some sexual division of political work emerges in the electoral campaigns. Women, whether members of the party or of its women's organisation, are in charge of most of the door-to-door campaigning. This could add fuel to the idea that women add a private dimension to politics, thus "universalising" the event. Going from one house to another in order to bring political propaganda into the very heart of the domestic world does indeed rupture the clear distinction between the private and public spheres.

At another level, women Members of Parliament are allowed one speciality, if any, women's issues. Being female, they are supposed to be experts and major advocates of this cause¹¹, which, by the way, further diminishes the prestige attached to the issue. Here, women Members of Parliament have to deal with the non-governmental sector. As women politicians they are indeed privileged targets for the feminist lobby, primarily composed of "women for women" NGOs (WNGOs).

Moreover, some of these women MPs are themselves members of the Women Security Pressure Group (WSPG) created in June 1992 to deal with increasing occurrences of sexual violence against female children. The WSPG is basically an association of associations, and the women's organisations affiliated with the main political parties, as well as most WNGOs, are its members. It actually seems that besides the political bodies, WNGOs compete as possible sites for representation, mobilisation and the collective action of women.

The popularity of NGOs after 1990 was one of the most dramatic consequences of the liberalisation of the regime. Nepalese NGOs are

¹⁰ *The Status of Women in Nepal (1979-1980)*, Kathmandu, CEDA, Tribhuvan University.

¹¹ "Women who already hold political positions need empowerment in order to effectively bring women's issues to the forefront and to facilitate the desired changes" (HMG, 1994: 41).

usually supported by foreign agencies, whether governmental or private. Nepal has been heavily dependent on foreign aid since the overthrow of the Rana rule and today this is very much apparent in the women's development sector.

Women were conceptualised from the 1970s on as an important resource of development worldwide, and development rhetoric has evolved from the "integration of women in development" theory to the present "gender and development" stand.

The impact of the Women's Decade (1976-1985) heralded by the United Nations was very conspicuous in Nepal. In 1975, International Women's Year, the Sixth Amendment to the Civil Code, improving women's rights in the fields of property and family law, was adopted. The Women's Decade also resulted in the publication of the most extensive research work on women in various communities of Nepal¹².

From then on, women's issues were dealt with at the governmental level. "In tune with the World Plan of Action adopted at Mexico World Conference in 1975, a Plan of Action for Women in Development in Nepal was compiled and edited by the then Women Services Co-ordination Committee under the Social Services National Co-ordination Council (headed by the Queen) and was significant for being the first comprehensive action plan of its kind in Nepal for women" (HMG, 1994: 3). Women's cells were also created in various ministries¹³.

As far as the non-governmental sector is concerned, among some 2000 NGOs registered today with the central Welfare and Social Council, numerous organisations devote themselves specifically to

¹² *The Status of Women in Nepal* (1979-1980), Kathmandu CEDA, Tribhuvan University.

¹³ "The Ministry of Panchayat and Local Development (now the Ministry of Local Development) established Women's Training Centres and a Women Development Division which is responsible for implementing the Production Credit for Rural Women (PCRW) and a number of other community development programmes for women. In 1987, a Women's Development Division was created in the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare, as a focal point for SAARC-related women's activities in Nepal. In 1988 it was upgraded to a Women's Development Division *per se*. In 1992, a Women Farmers' Development Division was established in the Ministry of Agriculture. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Social Welfare and the Ministry of Water Resources both have women's cells. In 1993, the National Planning Commission created a national focal point called the Children and Women's Development Section under the Population Division. It will also function as a secretariat for the recently established National Council for Children and Women's Development" (HMG, 1994: 41-42).

women's issues, or, more commonly, "women's development". The many reports elaborated in view of the Beijing Conference show that women's issues revolve around five main themes: the economic role of women, their access to education, health, legal status, political status and their role in government administration.

The WNGOs are highly visible. Most of them are Kathmandu-based, their leaders are highly educated, English-speaking, articulate people, used to dealing with the foreign donor agencies that provide them with funds, expertise and support. The most prominent of these WNGOs belong to international networks and benefit from the support of international feminism, whether through the networks of the largest international organisations, such as the World Bank, or from smaller national organisations. This great visibility of the Kathmandu-based, foreign-funded WNGOs is most conspicuous in the numerous papers they publish in the press, relating to women's issues such as inheritance rights, citizenship rights or sexual violence.

The most common criticism directed against these NGOs is that they devote more time to organising "national seminars" in luxury hotels than working in the remote, poorer areas of the country where their action is most needed. This symposia activity, however, might not prove that futile, since the very "national dimension" claimed by these meetings attracts the attention of the media who then discuss women's issues. In this way, WNGOs actually fulfil a function of identification and expression of the problems (Fatzenstein). Furthermore, they compete with women MPs as representatives of women and as experts on women's issues.

WNGOs, like other NGOs, usually define themselves as non-political organisations. Yet some of their activities suggest that they might constitute alternative sites of the political mobilisation of women. Activities such as "consciousness raising", "women's leadership training" or "gender sensitisation", whereby NGOs set up meetings with a whole village to discuss the traditional sexual division of labour, do encourage women to mobilise collectively in order to bring about change.

Some NGOs also seek to organise women in a more explicitly political way. One such instance was provided with the "Women in

Politics Programme" organised by Didi Bahini and supported by the American Asia Foundation/Nepal. The programme, convened by the American "international feminist" Ms. Robin Morgan, brought together women from various political and professional backgrounds to discuss the main problems women face in Nepal. One of the goals of this "Coalition Building and Advocacy Workshop" (June 21-23, 1994) programme was to establish a "Women's United Front" in Nepal. Another objective was to form a "Dalit Feminist Organisation".

Other WNGOs are openly linked to the political arena, as is SCOPE (Society for Constitutional and Parliamentary Exercise), whose main objective is to "strengthen the democratic process in Nepal". SCOPE has a women's cell that aims, among other things, at supporting women MPs through training sessions and through the creation of a women's caucus based on the American example.

Through the multiform action of WNGOs, women's issues are, therefore, highlighted on the social as well as the political agenda. Following the "Coalition Strategy and Advocacy Building" workshop organised by Didi Bahini, several meetings of the same group focused on the need to increase reservations for women candidates to the Lower House of Parliament to 25%, and on the need to establish reservations at the local level¹⁴. The Nepali Congress then announced, through its young woman leader Shailaja Acharya, that it would field 20% of women candidates for the next elections. The mid-term polls organised shortly after this announcement, however, did not see this measure implemented.

WNGOs do not only provide alternative forms of representation and mobilisation of women. They themselves constitute places of alternative female activism, "alternative" insofar as they have a different status and use strategies that differ from those used by women's political organisations. The most important example of this is the WSPG's lobbying; women thus constitute a special interest group. Another example of WNGO activism is the crisis centres that have been created to shelter different categories of needy women - battered wives, prostitutes returning from Indian brothels, or women with AIDS.

¹⁴ Pratibha Subedi, personal communication, November 1994.

The position of women vis-à-vis politics in Nepal thus appears paradoxical. On the one hand, women seem to vanish progressively from the mainstream political scene. They are less and less numerous within political bodies and in the government. The last two governments, headed respectively by Man Mohan Adhikari and by Sher Bahadur Deuba, until recently did not include any women. On the other hand, women's issues, as a political theme, have gained more importance. On the Nepalese political scene, women disappear as individuals only to gain strength as an issue, as a theme to be dealt with by government¹⁵ and non-government agencies.¹⁶ There are close links between the two sectors - of institutional, ideological and personal¹⁷. NGOs are conceived as full partners in the implementation of the country's development policies, and the same individuals belong to both political organisations (political parties or their sister-organisations) and WNGOs.

WNGOs doubtless provide women with an alternative arena where they can establish a public career and fight for their cause in an environment less hostile to them than the political scene. One may wonder, however, if the WNGOs' highlighting of women's issues does not actually result in further marginalisation of individuals. By joining WNGOs to do social work, women reinforce the traditional division between private and public, social and political, women's field and men's work realm.

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¹⁵ It might be significant in this regard that a Ministry for Women and Social Welfare was recently created.

¹⁶ National and foreign NGOs, including user groups, committees and associations, are covered by the three local government acts passed in March 1995 as full actors in Nepal's local development, along with DDCs, municipalities and VDCs, government line agencies, foreign donor agencies, and private sector enterprises. For further details, see Martinussen, 1993.

¹⁷ Individuals shift from one sector to another in both directions. A famous instance is the case of Durga Ghimire, who as a Nepali Congress activist during the Panchayat era was jailed three times. She described this experience in a recent published book, was then nominated by Her Majesty as a member secretary for one of the committees of the SSNCC, and later was one of the founder members and is currently president of the NGO "ABC/Nepal" that focuses on the problem of the exploitation of women.

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FLOODS IN BANGLADESH IN THE FRAMEWORK OF HIGHLAND-LOWLAND INTERACTIONS : SIX YEARS AFTER "THE HIMALAYAN DILEMMA

Thomas Hofer, Rolf Weingartner

1. Background: The theory of Himalayan degradation

Every year during the monsoon season catastrophic flooding in the plains of the Ganges and Brahmaputra rivers is reported as being the result of human activities in the Himalayan region. The chain of mechanisms seems to be very clear: population growth in the mountains; increasing demand for fuel wood, fodder and timber; uncontrolled and increasing forest removal in more and more marginal areas; intensified erosion and higher peak flows in the rivers, severe flooding in the densely populated and cultivated plains of the Ganges and the Brahmaputra. These conclusions sound convincing and have been subscribed to carelessly by some scientists and adopted by many politicians in order to point a finger at the culprit. They are laden with sensation and potential for conflict, but they are not based on scientific fundamentals.

In 1979 the UNU Highland-Lowland Interactive Systems Programme, later renamed Mountain Ecology and Sustainable Development, was initiated with the aim of promoting a more serious scientific analysis of these crucial problems. The project was coordinated by Bruno Messerli and Jack Ives. This project marked the beginning of a long tradition of research on the Indian subcontinent at the Department of Geography of the University of Berne. From 1979 to 1991 numerous studies were carried out in the framework of this programme, focusing mainly on processes in the Himalayas. These investigations concentrated on erosion processes in relation to land use, on discharge characteristics of Himalayan rivers, on forest history, etc. An attempt was always made to relate the findings to flood processes in the plains. The conclusions of all these activities are documented in *The Himalayan Dilemma* (Ives and Messerli, 1989). A similar compilation of

results, supplemented with some more recent findings, can be found in the volume *Himalayan Environment: Pressure-Problems-Processes; 12 Years of Research* (Messerli et al., 1993). The following key points summarise the state of knowledge after 12 years of research in the Himalayas:

- Human-induced ecological changes can be proven in some specific examples at the local level. The findings are not transferable to the scale of the Ganges-Brahmaputra basin.
- It has not yet been possible to find significant correlation between human activities in the mountains (e.g., forest removal) and catastrophes in the plains (e.g., floods). Thus the well-known theory which links forest cutting in the mountains with increased flooding in the plains has to be revised and differentiated.
- Due to restrictions in access to data, there is a serious lack of basic research, which is an absolute necessity for long-term, effective planning to enhance sustainable development in the overall Himalayan region.

2. Floods in Bangladesh, processes and impacts: A project brief

The project "Floods in Bangladesh - Processes and Impacts", which has been carried out since 1992, is a follow-up on research previously done by the Department of Geography at the University of Berne in the Himalaya-Ganges-Brahmaputra region. The focus of research activities has shifted from the highlands to the lowlands, with the primary aim of verifying the findings published in *The Himalayan Dilemma*. The project is financed by the Swiss Development Co-operation as well as by the United Nations University. It is being carried out in close collaboration with institutions in Bangladesh, mainly universities.

The project concentrates on the following basic questions:

- **Highland-lowland interactions:** Are the monsoon floods mainly produced by heavy rainfall over the flooded area itself, or do the

precipitation events outside the flood plains or even in the highlands have a more significant impact on flood processes?

- **Complexity:** Is each flood event an individual combination of factors, or is it possible to identify certain repeating configurations?
- **Frequency:** Have the frequency and dimensions of severe flooding really increased, as it is usually assumed, or has the sensitivity of the population to flooding and flood damage increased due to extension of settlement and cultivation into flood-prone areas?
- **People's perception and experiences:** How do affected people perceive floods, and what are their strategies for managing floods? What has been learned from experience with existing flood protection embankments?

These basic topics are approached in seven specific studies:

- a) Floods in Bengal before 1950 - case studies and analysis of long-term data series.
- b) Frequency and processes of floods in Bangladesh in the framework of highland lowland interactions: Case studies, 1950-1990.
- c) Cloud patterns and cloud movements before and during flood events in Bangladesh - an interpretation of NOAA imageries.
- d) Landscape, land use, settlement dynamics and flooding - a study carried out in the test areas of Bhuanpur, Sirajgonj and Nagarbari, Bangladesh.
- e) Soil fertility of river sediments.

In the ongoing project, highland-lowland interactions are still a key issue. Within this overall framework, an attempt is being made to gain an understanding of the process of flooding in Bangladesh, from various perspectives at different geographical scales (whole basin and test area studies), and of the combination of physical and cultural aspects of flooding. Basic research (the main interest of the university) and applied research (main interest of Swiss Development Co-operation) are being combined in this approach.

3. Floods in Bangladesh: A highland lowland interaction?

For this project report, study b) has been selected for more detailed comments. This study concentrates on the period 1950 to 1990, and is particularly focused on highland-lowland interactions. The study, which is based on the investigation of monthly rainfall and monthly discharge data, addresses the following questions:

- Which years from 1950 to 1990, and which time periods, show particularly important anomalies in rainfall and discharge characteristics in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin?
- If we consider specific "flood years", "average years" and "dry years" in Bangladesh and India, in which part of the basin did the main positive or negative climatological anomalies occur?
- What is the hydrological contribution from different sub-catchments into the system, and what is the relevance of this contribution for flood processes in Bangladesh?
- What conclusions can we draw about our understanding of the hydrological processes in Bangladesh in the framework of highland-lowland interactions?

Methodology

To answer the above questions, a specific methodology had to be developed which is based on two premises:

1. Each sub-catchment of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin contributes a specific amount of potential runoff to the hydrological system per month, or per any other time period during a year. This potential runoff is a function of precipitation, of the sub-catchment area, and of a discharge factor (evaporation, infiltration, etc.).
2. The relevance of the potential runoff of a specific sub-catchment for the hydrological characteristics at a reference point in Bangladesh decreases as the distance of the respective sub-catchment from the reference point increases.

The methodology was developed in the following steps:

- 13 sub-catchments were delineated in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna catchment (figure 1), taking into account the catchment boundaries of the three main rivers, the political boundaries, the transition between highlands and lowlands, and the average patterns of precipitation. The eastern upper Meghna catchment (Tripura, Manipur, Mizoram), Arunachal Himalaya, and the whole Tibetan part of the Brahmaputra catchment had to be excluded due to a lack of climatic stations.
- 33 climatological stations were selected, for which a sufficiently long data record was available. These stations are more or less regularly spread over the 13 sub-catchments.
- Each year was sub-divided into 6 time periods: January-March (winter), April-May (pre-monsoon period), June, July, August, September (monsoon months). October, November and December were excluded from the analysis. For each time period and year the area rainfall per sub-catchment was calculated (average of the precipitation at the available stations).
- The potential runoff for a specific sub-catchment, time period and year was calculated with the formula:

$$PR = P * S * a$$

PR: Potential Runoff

P: Average precipitation of a sub-catchment

S: Surface of the sub-catchment

a: Discharge factor

The discharge factors range from 0.1 to 0.9. They were assessed for each sub-catchment on the basis of the location of the respective sub-catchment (highland or lowland; east or west in the basin) and they were differentiated for specific time periods within the year. For the sub-catchments in the Ganges system, the discharge factors were tested with the discharge data for the Ganges at Farakka.

- The multiplication of the potential runoff and a distance factor resulted in the relevance of this particular potential runoff for the hydrological processes at a reference point in Bangladesh. The reference point was located at the confluence of the Meghna with the combined Ganges-Jamuna (Brahmaputra) flow. The distance factor (d) of a specific sub-catchment was calculated with the formula

$$d = \frac{1/d_i^2}{\sum_{i=1}^{11} (1/d_i^2)}$$

di: Distance from a specific sub-catchment i to the reference point in Bangladesh.

In the analysis and interpretation of the case studies, for which this methodology was applied, the anomaly of potential runoff as well as of relevance, i.e. variation from the average situation, was a key issue. The main advantage of the methodology is that a large-scale analysis is possible, looking at almost the entire area of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin. The disadvantages of this approach are the low spatial coverage of the rainfall stations, and the fact that the investigation is almost purely based on one main parameter-monthly rainfall.

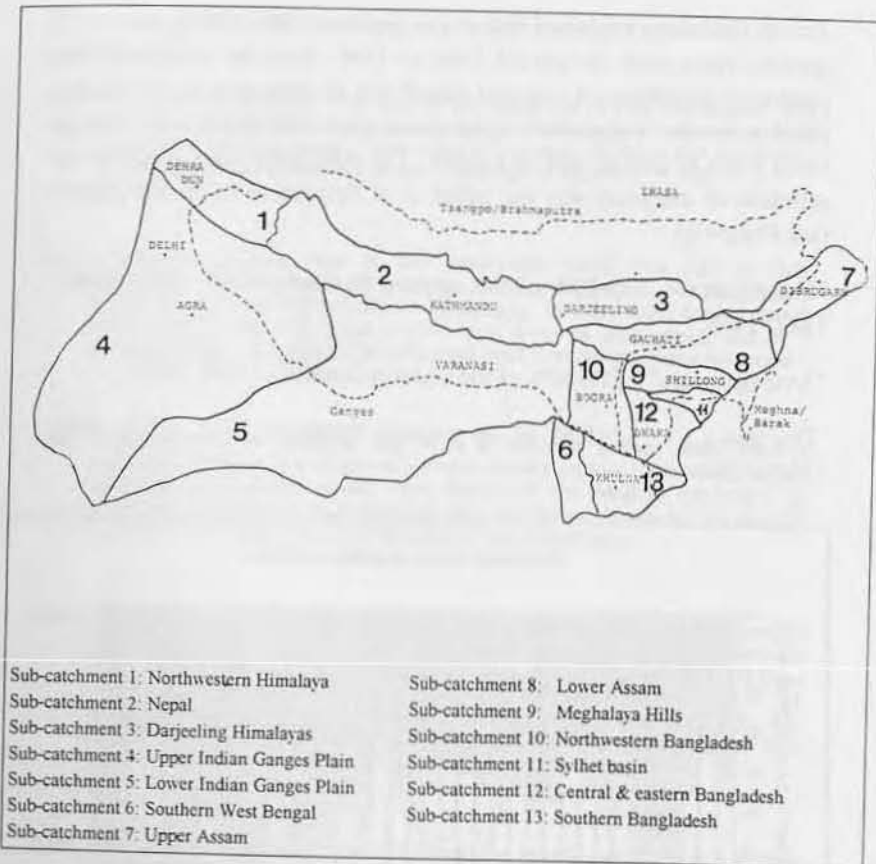


Figure 1: Sub-catchments of the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin

Case studies

The methodology explained above was applied to the investigation of 12 specific years over the period 1950 to 1990. In order to identify the particular conditions of potential runoff and of relevance in outstanding flood years for Bangladesh, these years were contrasted with average flood years as well as with dry years. The main parameter used for the selection of the years was the statistics of flooded areas in Bangladesh (see Figure 2):

"Flood years" (>30% of the country flooded): 1955, 1974, 1984¹, 1987, 1988.

"Average years" (10-30% of the country flooded): 1960, 1971.

"Dry years" (<10% of the country flooded): 1977, 1978, 1982, 1986, 1990.

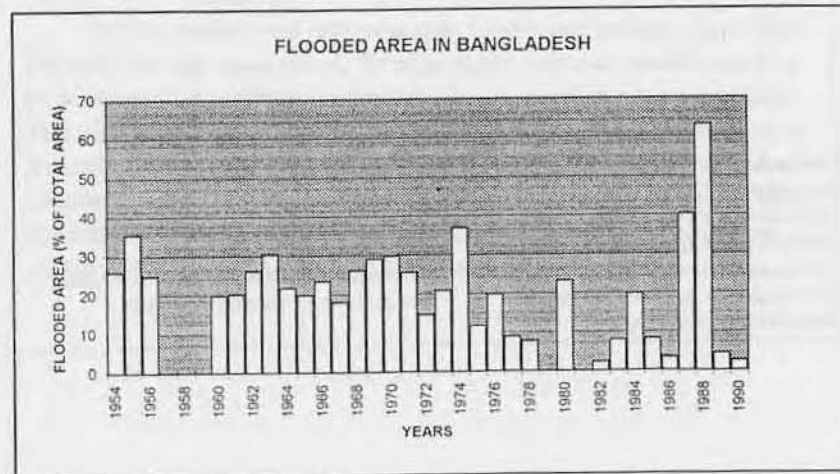


Figure 2: Flooded areas in Bangladesh, 1954 to 1990 (as % of the total area of the country; data were missing for 1957, 1958, 1959, 1979, and 1981). Source: BWDB, 1991.

¹1984 is not a "flood year" with regard to the inundated area, but with regard to the flood intensity and damage in certain areas of Bangladesh.

The analysis highlighted the following key issues for the 12 years:

"FLOOD YEARS"

1955: The flood most probably took place in the period end of July-mid August. The flood was strongly influenced by temporally and regionally widespread positive variations in potential runoff. The external influence on the flood was significant, as Bangladesh recorded above-average hydrological input only in July.

1974: Flooding took place more or less permanently from early July to early September. The anomalies of potential runoff concentrated on the Meghna catchment, and more specifically on Meghalaya. In July, these driving forces were supported by widespread surplus input from the other areas, and by a potentially high soil saturation in the coastal areas from the pre-monsoon period.

1984: Different types of flooding took place in different periods from May to September, producing a pattern of isolated affected regions. The main positive anomalies of potential runoff were located in the Meghna catchment, in Meghalaya in particular, in Bangladesh and, to a lesser extent, in Assam. The base flow of the main rivers into Bangladesh was rather high.

1987: Different types of flooding took place in different periods from June to September. North-western, western and south-western Bangladesh were the most seriously affected areas in terms of duration. The floods were triggered primarily in Bangladesh, more specifically in the north-western part of the country. The base flow of the main rivers into Bangladesh was rather high. It is possible that there was a connection between the floods in Assam, Bihar, West Bengal and Bangladesh in August.

1988: The "flood of the century" took place from the second part of August to early September and was preceded by a Meghna flood in July. Apart from parameters mentioned in the literature (synchronisation of peak discharges, tides, back-water effects etc.), the floods were strongly influenced by above-average potential runoff in Bangladesh, Meghalaya and Assam over a long period of time. The base flow, mainly of the Brahmaputra and the Meghna, into Bangladesh was high. There was a connection between the floods in Assam and Bangladesh at the end of August.

"AVERAGE YEARS"

1960: The widespread above-average potential runoff in July was similar to 1974. The external input from July to September was high. Widespread dry conditions from winter to June, and the alternation of humid July and September with dry June

and August in the Meghna catchment and north-western Bangladesh, moderated the dimension of flooding.

1971: In the three states of the Indian Ganges Plain, the dimensions of flooding were great. In Assam, inundation was below average. In Bangladesh, a new combination of factors produced the specific flood conditions in the delta.

"DRY YEARS"

1977: Widespread humid pre-monsoon and early monsoon conditions, and high external input during the monsoon season, mainly from Assam, are not sufficient to create large-scale flooding in Bangladesh if no triggering factors are present in Bangladesh during the main monsoon months. The lower Meghna catchment seemed to have played a key role in moderating floods.

1978: In the Indian Ganges plain considerable flooding was recorded from July to September. The downstream effect on Bangladesh of large floods in the Ganges Plain is almost nil if no corresponding triggering factors are present in Bangladesh. In Bangladesh we find a new combination of factors producing the specific flood conditions in the delta. In this new combination the patterns in Bangladesh itself and Meghalaya, supported by Assam, dominate. The potential runoff in the Himalayas would have provided favourable conditions for large-scale downstream flooding.

1982: Below-average input of potential runoff dominated in Bangladesh and Assam. The very high hydrological input in the Ganges catchment during certain periods did not have any significant effect on the hydrology in Bangladesh.

1986: The conditions outside Bangladesh, especially in Assam and Meghalaya, were drier than inside the country. The potential flood triggers in Bangladesh were moderated by the low external input. In Bangladesh humid July and September were preceded by dry June and August.

1990: Our investigation and the literature question the reduced dimensions of flooding as recorded in the flood statistics for 1990. The conditions in winter and spring were humid. The external input during the monsoon months was rather high. In Bangladesh humid July and September were preceded by dry June and August.

Floods in Bangladesh: Five theses

These theses result from comparisons of the 12 years analysed. An attempt was made to identify basic patterns which provide insight

into the flood processes in the framework of highland-lowland interactive systems:

a. The rainfall patterns in the Ganges-Brahmaputra-Meghna basin must be differentiated for each monsoon season.

This statement is based on analysis of long-term data series. Dry years in the west may be humid years in the east and vice versa. The climatological conditions in the Himalayas do not necessarily correlate with those in the Ganges or Brahmaputra plains. Therefore, the floods in Bangladesh are produced by a combination of regionally differentiated characteristics, for which the patterns in the east seem to be more important than those in the west.

b. The rainfall in the Meghalaya Hills and Bangladesh itself has the highest relevance for the flood processes.

During spring and June in the Meghalaya Hills, an average of 20-25% of the total potential runoff for the 13 sub-catchments was recorded, although this area represents barely 2% of the surface! Moreover, the positive and negative anomalies of potential runoff for specific years in Meghalaya and Bangladesh showed the greatest correlation with the dimensions of flooding.

c. A combination of a high external "base flow" with short-term, "home-made" discharge peaks is important in Bangladesh.

The potential for flooding can be assessed by the level of the "base flow", but the floods are triggered by the short-term discharge peaks due to local rainfall. Therefore, the external hydrological input into Bangladesh is important as a basic contribution to the floods, but most probably not as a flood trigger.

d. The rainfall patterns in the Himalayas have almost no impact on flood processes in Bangladesh due to their distance from the Bangladeshi floodplains.

A heavy rainfall event in the first Himalayan ranges and in the foothills may be the decisive factor for flooding in the adjacent plains, owing to a very sharp rise of the hydrographs of the rivers in the affected areas.

As the catchment areas of the rivers are comparably small, the system reacts very quickly to heavy rainfall events. As distance from the Himalayan foothills increases, the short-term discharge peaks are levelled, lose their flood triggering effect, and are transformed into "base flow", the flooding disappears.

The catchment area of the rivers in Bangladesh and the amounts of water involved in flood processes are huge. The basic conditions for large-scale flooding build up gradually due to the accumulation of water over a longer period of time. Consequently, the above-mentioned heavy rainfall event in the Himalayan foothills is not important; it is just one of many other contributing puzzle pieces responsible for the pattern of flooding in Bangladesh. Only local heavy rainfall events in Bangladesh itself are important as triggering factors, as they may result in an overflow of the rivers and the groundwater table.

e. Flooding in Bangladesh may have a connection to flooding in Assam, but not with flooding in the Indian Ganges Plain.

Large-scale flooding which originates upstream in the plains does not move downstream with increasing dimensions: In 1978, all three Indian states of the Ganges plain (UP, Bihar and West Bengal) faced severe flooding problems, but in different periods of the monsoon season. The flooding processes were therefore regionally limited phenomena, linked together by the high "base flow" of the Ganges, but triggered by local or regional rainfall events. The high "base flow" entering Bangladesh had no flooding effect, because heavy local rainfall was absent as a triggering factor. However, Assam seems to play a more important role.

Conclusion and outlook

The five theses presented in the previous section are based on an investigation of monthly rainfall, and partly on monthly discharge information. Monthly data is the only information available for more or less the whole basin; discharge data in general are highly restricted for political reasons. In the next steps of this particular study, the theses will be further verified by analysing daily discharge data for the main rivers in Bangladesh, daily rainfall data, and groundwater information within Bangladesh.

The research activities resulting in *The Himalayan Dilemma* focused on processes in the Himalayas and on their downstream effects. The findings raise serious questions about the theory of Himalayan degradation. Current activities focus on the processes in Bangladesh and on upstream contributing factors. The preliminary findings greatly support and differentiate the various theses formulated in *The Himalayan Dilemma*. The climatological and hydrological processes in the Himalayas are important for flooding in the foothills, and they may have some impact on flooding in the Indian Ganges plain or Assam, but they are unimportant, perhaps even negligible for flood processes in Bangladesh. Regarding rainfall, the patterns in Bangladesh itself or in its north-eastern neighbourhood, the Meghalaya Hills, or perhaps even Assam, decisively influence the dimensions of flooding in Bangladesh. The areas outside Bangladesh are important as contributors to "base flow", but the flood triggers are located in the flood plains of Bangladesh or in areas nearby. Backwater effects due to tidal movements, the synchronisation of peak discharge of the big rivers, the groundwater table in Bangladesh, etc. seem to be very important, but have not yet been investigated in the framework of our project. Based on all these statements, there is absolutely no reason to assign responsibility for the floods in Bangladesh to the people living in the Himalayas. Much more important for the flood processes are the anthropogenic interventions in the floodplains, such as the embanking of large rivers, and the drying out of swamps which are natural water storage areas, etc. This ongoing project again very clearly documents the need for an in-depth understanding of the processes of highland-lowland interactions to promote sustainable watershed management.

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THE UPS AND DOWNS OF AN INTELLECTUAL PURSUIT

Towards a History of the Historical Journal Pūrṇimā

Maheś Raj Pant

There are at present two issues, namely numbers 89 and 90, of the quarterly *Pūrṇimā* in press. Neither of them will be ready for release before the first two months of 1996 are over. The journal's first number was published in the first quarter of Vikramasambat 2021, which is equivalent to the second quarter of 1964. Thus by the end of 1995 the 127th number ought to have been on the market. This means that the journal is nine years and nine months behind schedule. Why so ?

Pūrṇimā was founded by ten people, one teacher and nine of his students, whom he trained collectively as well as individually, for the kind of research published in it. Articles from outside have never been solicited and all the papers published in it are written by its founding members. By 1970, however, five members had left the journal, one by one, and another died in 1983. Now four people remain to carry on. The journal is thus seriously undermanned, and it is not surprising that its publication should have fallen so much behind schedule.

The *Pūrṇimā* group, functioning formally as the *Samśodhana-maṇḍala*, has never sought institutional support and has always performed its job with missionary zeal. Members have contributed their own money, earned by working elsewhere, not only for their research, but also for the publication of *Pūrṇimā*. The monetary support from its own members, both for research and publication, continues to be vital for the survival of *Pūrṇimā*, as the only other source of income, revenue from the journal sales, has never been sufficient. Gradually this voluntary spirit has ebbed, as reflected in the alarming diminution of the number of *Samśodhana-maṇḍala* members.

The *Maṇḍala* may be said to have germinated in 1938, when Naya Raj Pant returned to Kathmandu from Varanasi, not only with a first-class Master's degree in *jyautiṣa* (astronomy), but also with an

increasing disenchantment with the knowledge he had been able to receive in the famous college, which was probably without equal in the field of Sanskrit learning.

The British rulers in India, clearly seeing the advantage of ruling the Hindus according to their own laws and customs, encouraged a number of Englishmen to study Sanskrit, the main vehicle of Indian thinking for thousands of years. The British government in India needed a continuous flow of native Sanskritists to assist English scholars in acquiring their knowledge. In addition, it wanted to conciliate its Hindu subjects by patronising their learning and giving them an opportunity to study their own *śāstra*-s at public expense. To fulfil these goals, it established Sanskrit colleges in different parts of India. The Banaras college, where Naya Raj Pant was educated, was the first of its kind, having been established in 1791 through the efforts of Jonathan Duncan, then British resident in the court of Banaras, with the same intention of patronising and institutionalising Sanskrit learning towards furthering political aims.

Considering that Banaras College was founded for the reasons stated, it is not surprising that it made little effort to promote Sanskrit in the way with which Sanskrit-educated intellectuals were traditionally familiar. A serious departure from the traditional standards of scholarship was the introduction of regular examinations in the college, in order primarily to determine whether or not a student had attained a certain minimum level of academic achievement. Traditional scholarship required one to maintain high level of knowledge acquired as a student throughout one's active life. Following the new system, however, the student, having once been conferred a degree of permanent value, felt no need to maintain the standards of scholarship so very vital for the growth of knowledge and higher pursuits.

Naya Raj Pant's disenchantment led him to the realisation that traditional scholarship, if properly combined with a critical approach, would offer a better chance of success in Sanskrit studies. And thus he took up the task of teaching young students in his own way, which aimed at a revival of the ancient practice of thoroughly mastering texts as a basis for research along modern lines. He did not encourage his students to earn an academic degree, and engaged them year after year

in an unparalleled pursuit of knowledge. Some of them, however, abandoned their studies with him and opted for a career.

Research in any field by anyone in Nepal was ruthlessly discouraged by the Rana government. At best, a Nepalese scholar might confine his research to a safely guarded hobby or act as an assistant or informant to a foreign scholar. Strict censorship was enforced, and to publish a work with a critical approach was virtually impossible. Such being the case, Naya Raj Pant could not publish much of either his creative writings or his scientific works, both of which he produced prolifically. However, the advent of democracy in 1951 provided a favourable opportunity to publish what he wanted.

Prudent plans were made to exploit this opportunity. In 1939, he had submitted a longish paper on the dynastic history of the Mallas of the Kathmandu Valley to the only literary magazine in Nepal. The paper, based on the Malla inscriptions scattered throughout the cities of the Kathmandu Valley (most of them as yet unpublished), revealed many an error in the famous 19th-century *Vaṃśāvalī*, edited by Daniel Wright and circulated under the title *History of Nepal*, and several succeeding publications more or less based on the same *Vaṃśāvalī*. The paper criticised the work of an Englishman, and the editor of the magazine did not have enough courage to publish it.

In 1947, Naya Raj Pant simply incorporated all essential points of his research conducted thus far - without substantiating or criticising earlier writers - into a small textbook which he wrote for students appearing for the graduation examination. This text was published jointly with a brother of one of the right-hand men of the Rana prime minister. He thus did not go beyond presenting his new findings in an unassuming way. At the same time, he was diligently searching for an appropriate medium through which he could authenticate his findings by disproving earlier writings. As he was established already as a versatile scholar in several fields of Sanskrit studies and was earning his livelihood by teaching in a college, it was perhaps not imperative for him to add a new accolade through new publications as there were his students, who were assiduously mastering several branches of Sanskrit studies under his strict supervision. Naya Raj Pant thus encouraged his students to publish the new findings, reasoning that it would in the long

run bring them deserved recognition. Since there were no finances for printing, he decided to publish in instalments in the form of pamphlets, the cost of which would not be too difficult for the students to bear.

Thus the first pamphlet, put out by three students and selling for six *paisā*, was released on 5 *Āśvina* 2009, i.e. 20 September 1952. In it a refutation with proof was made of an error which confused a son with his father and vice versa within the dynasty of the Kathmandu Mallas, as contained in Nepali-language history books that blindly followed Wright.

This was followed by another pamphlet, which was released exactly twelve days later and sold for the same price. It attempted to make the abstruse contents of Kauṭalya's *Arthaśāstra* more comprehensible by applying them to examples occurring in history. It was published by a group of three advanced students.

The first issue was entitled *Itihāsa-saṃśodhana*, and the second *Kauṭaliya arthaśāstrako aītihāsika vyākhyā*. These may be translated as "Correction of [Errors in] Historical Writings" and "A Historical Gloss on the *Kauṭaliya Arthaśāstra*" respectively. As both bore a number and subtitle, it was clear that they were meant to inaugurate a series of many more such publications.

Fourteen weeks passed between the publication of the second pamphlet and a thicker pamphlet of a similar nature by the same group that published the earlier one. No other publication appeared for thirteen months. The fourth one was also by the same advanced group which had already published two issues on the *Arthaśāstra*. This time they issued a second *Itihāsa-saṃśodhana*, in which they refuted some factual errors in a textbook written by one of the two well-known teachers of history who was permitted to lecture at the college level (Nepal did not have a university at that time).

For two years and one month pamphlets, of all sizes, or even leaflets, were released, thirty-six in number, in order to correct errors in historical publications. During this period, the job of publication was not only shared by the advanced students, but also by younger ones, each of whom was a direct student not of Naya Raj Pant but of his three advanced students. Altogether there were twenty-one persons involved

in these issues of *Itihāsa-saṃśodhana*.

In addition, Naya Raj Pant's direct and indirect students issued many other pamphlets that deal with Nepalese history, Sanskrit grammar, the Nepalese calendar, Sanskrit textbooks and the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Meanwhile, two of the most advanced students were appointed co-editors of a short-lived Sanskrit monthly devoted to the epigraphy, diplomacy and manuscriptology of Nepal. In its previous issues it had mainly carried papers either by Naya Raj Pant and his group or by a scholarly yogi of the Kanphatta order who initiated the journal. Moreover, two more substantial works, containing source materials for a history of eighteenth and early nineteenth century Nepal, were accepted for publication during this period by a well-endowed institution patronised by a Rana.

However, there was a profound change, at least quantitatively, during this period in the school of Naya Raj Pant. One of the three advanced students, who hailed from outside the Kathmandu Valley, left for home for good following the completion of his studies, and twelve other students of intermediate level, who had already started publishing, discontinued theirs. Now there were only eight of the original 21 *Itihāsa-saṃśodhana* members left, together with a few minors uncertain of their future prospects.

All these pamphlets with criticism were based on sound documentary evidence, and were pieces of high scholarship. However, the language employed in them might often offend the person toward whose work was criticised, and at the same time the general public might misread them as sensational pieces of writing. In truth, they were intended neither to offend nor to create a sensation. On the contrary, they were inspired by the Indic mode of criticism, with which in general not even the educated class was familiar. Nevertheless, this movement attracted a lot of popular attention and became instrumental in calling into serious question the reputation of the established names in Nepalese historiography. At the same time, it indirectly exposed the ineptitude of the governmentally approved education system.

The work of the group helped to highlight various aspects of Nepalese history and gave fresh impetus to the reconstruction of a correct and complete history of Nepal. The greatest contribution of this

group was that it inspired its countrymen with the idea that, given proper education, they could carry out research competently enough on their own; gone were the days of history books that were mere summaries of foreign writings of long ago.

Because this rectification campaign dented the prestige of facile scholars, the latter were from the start wary, and eventually became implacable foes of the group. Being entrenched in high positions, they exerted their utmost to thwart its advancement. The result was that most of the students felt harassed and abandoned their work, thus reducing the group to a bare minimum.

The change in situation led Naya Raj Pant to adopt a new strategy. Most of the publications which had appeared up until then were the results of his own research that had been accumulating for decades. Now it was decided that it was the job of the students themselves to collect documents. Accordingly the *Itihāsa-saṃśodhana* members started a weekly tour around the Kathmandu Valley and its periphery in order to discover inscriptions which had gone unnoticed by their teacher. As stated earlier, the undergraduate-level students also took part in the rectification of factual errors in history books, but most of them left the school when harsh measures were initiated by antagonists. Thus Naya Raj Pant was forced to relieve his less mature students of their former responsibility, and instead develop a course so as to enable them to handle them to handle documents with greater ease. The *Itihāsa-saṃśodhana* members busied themselves with collecting new materials and picking up the diverse skills necessary to interpret them. They passed almost one year in their endeavours, and then a new pamphlet appeared, followed by then others published during a period spanning 37 months. The newer issues of *Itihāsa-saṃśodhana* concentrate more on opening up new vistas than merely correcting errors in popular books.

On the first day of Vikramasamvat 2018 (13 April 1961) the *Itihāsa-saṃśodhana* members formed themselves into the *Saṃśodhana-maṇḍala* and started an epigraphical quarterly named *Abhilekhasaṃgraha* for bringing out hitherto unpublished inscriptions, most of which were discovered by them during the weekly tours they had been conducted for some years. Though they originally planned to

furnish all texts with a translation and historical commentary, they were forced to publish the bare text so as to ensure that all new findings would be in their own name, since the prospect of their findings being linked was great. Once the first issue was out, it served as a precedent for the succeeding ones. *Abhilekhasaṃgraha* continued for three consecutive years, with each issue containing the texts of twelve inscriptions and accompanied by a preface of varying length by Naya Raj Pant. During these three years, the group also produced many more pamphlets, as well as three books concerning Nepalese history and culture.

In 1964 *Abhilekhasaṃgraha* was replaced by the quarterly *Pūrṇimā*, in which eight *Itihāsa-saṃśodhana* members joined with a newly trained student and their teacher to publish periodic results of their research. The starting up of *Pūrṇimā* enabled them to disseminate this research on a much more regular basis and in the case of Naya Raj Pant, his ideas and methodology as well. In addition, the period witnessed the publication of many more independent works, running to thousands of pages.

In summary, everything published during the past 43 years by the *Itihāsa-saṃśodhana* and its successors amounts to a storehouse of knowledge that sheds light not only on Nepalese history, but also on the history of Indic mathematics and astronomy.

In order to be convinced of the great strides Nepalese historiography has made, one may simply choose any popular book on Nepalese history published during the 1950's and compare it with a similar book published later. Much of the credit for this progress doubtlessly goes to the *Itihāsa-saṃśodhana* group, if a fair appraisal is made.

Although many of the hard facts derived from the group's historical research have passed into the common fund of knowledge, their original writings continue to deserve careful study, as those who quote their findings, with or without acknowledgement, are more interested in mere facts, and resultantly pass over many things which they may find irrelevant. As far as the contribution towards the history of Indic mathematics and astronomy is concerned, it hardly has attracted anyone's attention.

This still ongoing research goes practically unnoticed outside Nepal, mainly owing to the language barrier, the research having been published in the Nepali language. It has been more than two years since a supplement to *Pūrṇimā* appeared in English, entitled *Ādarśa*, as a first step taken toward the dissemination of research of the *Samśodhana-maṇḍala* to a wider audience. As *Ādarśa* is a completely voluntary endeavour of one of the remaining members of the same group, its prospects are much bleaker than *Pūrṇimā*s.

Before closing, I would like to say something about the last five issues. These issues, comprising more than three hundred pages, were published over a span of two and a half years.

The earliest, number 84, contains three articles. One of them is devoted to a portion of the seventh century historical romance *Harṣacarita*, here presented in the original, but with the figures of speech dropped, which are interesting for philologists and rhetoricians but not for historians.

The second, occupying a greater part of this number, is the last instalment of a hitherto unpublished history of Nepal by the pioneer historian Baburam Acharya (1888-1972), which he wrote over two years from 1949 to 1951, its serialisation having started in *Pūrṇimā*, n^o.31, published in 1974.

A new serial was started in the same issue, namely the publication of a mass of Newar deeds, hitherto unnoticed, in which reference is made to Brahmins. In the second issue of *Pūrṇimā*, which was published in the third quarter of 1964, Naya Raj Pant wrote a paper in which he convincingly demonstrated that the caste system was not introduced by the fourteenth century king Sthitirāja Malla, as the nineteenth century *Vamśāvali*-s have credited him with, but had existed long before, to which fact even the earliest documents bear witness. In the succeeding years, one of the *Itihāsa-samśodhana* members became more involved in the history of the caste system in Nepal and started scribbling notes whenever he came across references to it. With the passage of time, those notes grew into two independent papers, one about the Nepali-speaking community in the Newar kingdoms, and the other about the Newari-speaking Brahmins known formally as Rājopādhyāya and, in common parlance, as Dyaubhājū. Later on he became associated with

the German Research council, and this opportunity enabled him to go through thousands of Newar-period deeds executed on narrow strips of palm leaves. This untapped source has necessitated a revision of both papers, and this he is currently doing. Thinking that it would be prudent to publish these hitherto unpublished documents independently rather than including them in his footnotes, he started serialising, in *Pūrṇimā*, all unpublished deeds concerning Brahmins, exactly 240 in number and covering a period of nearly four and a quarter centuries. He has presented them in chronological order, and also referred to those deeds which have already been published. Those documents when studied revealed that in the Newar kingdoms there were, besides the local Dyaubhājū, not only the Brahmins from Tirhut and South India, but also the Gayāwār and Bengalese from the plains and the Nepali-speaking Purbiyā, Kumāi and Jaisī as well.

The serialisation of documents concerning Brahmins in the Newar kingdoms coincides with a movement away from the received view in Nepal that largely blames the Brahmins for being instrumental in the suppression of ethnic communities. These days two words, *bāhundbād* and *janajāti*-s, are frequently used to denote the traditional structure and the ethnic communities respectively, and those Newars who view themselves as one of the ethnic communities are no less vocal than others in opposing *bāhundbād*.

Here I do not wish to enter into the question whether the Brahmins were significantly engaged in suppressing *janajāti*-s or not, but I cannot help pointing out that Newars have, since the beginning of their recorded history, been a community divided into many castes and identifiable as a linguistic community to the same degree as Nepali-speaking Parbates, whom Newars call Khay, which means Khas.

Number 85 of *Pūrṇimā* contains ten articles. One is the continuation of the deeds concerning Brahmins and occupies the larger part of the issue. Two others present the colophons of two hitherto unnoticed Sanskrit manuscripts, copied in Nepālasamvat 175 and 536, which are useful for the reconstruction of dynastic history, and the manuscript themselves for the history of the transmission of the texts involved. Another two are directed toward the identification of two Buddhist temples in Kathmandu and rectify errors by John K. Locke

and Mary Slusser. In another paper are presented the texts of two previously unpublished lāl mohar-s of Prithvinarayan Shah.

There are five articles in number 86, a considerable portion of which is devoted to the deeds concerning Brahmins. One of the papers contains the text together with a translation of and comments on a deed, dated Nepālasamvat 485, that is the first document discovered executed by a king following the ones issued by the Licchavi Jayadeva II more than six centuries earlier.

Number 87 has twelve articles. One of them analyses the strategy of loyalty adopted by Jung Bahadur, the de facto ruler, towards his overlord, the de jure Shah king. Another demonstrates that the Newar festivals Pāsā Cahre and Goḍe jātrā were in earlier times pan-Indian ones, even as Indra Jātrā is recognised to have been.

These two articles occupy the major part of the issue. There is an interesting extract in the same issue from the manuscript of a text attributed to the Shah king Surendra. This text deals with the traditional Hindu polity called *rājanīti* but, unlike its numerous predecessors, is written in very bad Sanskrit.

Number 88 opens with the deeds concerning Brahmins and, as usual, these constitute the major part of the issue. In addition, several documents are presented which shed light in one way or another on the Rana period in Nepal.



**FROM LITERATURE TO LINGUISTICS TO CULTURE:
AN INTERVIEW WITH K.P. MALLA**

David N. Gellner

K.P. Malla was Rector of Tribhuvan University from 1977 to 1979 and has been Professor of English Literature since 1975. He is the author of *T.S. Eliot: An Essay in the Structure of Meaning* (Kathmandu, 1961), *The Road to Nowhere* (Kathmandu, 1979), and *The Newari Language: Working Outline* (Tokyo, 1985). He has written many essays on old Newari and on Nepali history, and edited and translated, with Dhanavajra Vajracharya, the *Gopālarājavamsāvalī*. The following interview took place in his home in Maiti Devi, Kathmandu, on 11th January 1996. It began with a discussion of the position of Thaku Juju (literally 'Thakuri King') for the northern half of Kathmandu which is traditionally held by a member of his family.

DNG: Did this position of Thaku Juju give your family a certain role in relationship to the general populace?

KPM: Yes, I think we had certain roles to play, particularly for example, there is a ceremony called *phu bare chuyegu* when a Jyapu is initiated as a Buddhist monk and the ritually presiding 'King' is still a Thaku Juju. Also in the Indrayani festival during Bala Caturdasi when the serpent sacrifice takes place, the chief of the main Guthi is the Thaku Juju. Just as in the southern part of town the most important deity is Pacali Bhairav, similarly in the northern part of town it is Luti Ajima/Indrayani. And in all the rituals associated with Indrayani it is the Thaku Juju who is the ritual king.

DNG: Is one of your relatives still filling this role?

KPM: Yes, he is still the chief. And also we have 'feeding the virgins', the young virgins of the locality, mostly Jyapus. It is the Thaku Juju's family who have to organise that.

DNG: As a young child growing up in that sort of family, what was the atmosphere like?

KPM: Well, educationally, the socialisation was largely a matter of schooling. But as a child, I remember the cycle of rituals, the cycle of feasts, in which the family was associated. But there was also another, let us say, secular education, in schools, which is a completely different process altogether. It has nothing to do with social life as a member of a particular caste or community. These two kinds of education were going on side by side, one which you might call Western education, another which is purely exposure to the cycle of family rituals, festivals, feasts, and so on.

DNG: What did your parents expect of you at that time? What did they hope for you?

KPM: Well, actually, my grandfather was an accountant in the Rana government's Accounts Division called Kumari Chok, which was very important, something like the Ministry of Finance. And my father was a judge in the Rana Prime Minister's Private Council, which was called Bhardari, the Appeal Court of the Rana Prime Minister. Neither my father nor my grandfather had a very high formal education. It was a purely traditional training.

DNG: Would they have been taught Sanskrit?

KPM: They didn't know Sanskrit very much. Some Sanskrit, yes, but they knew Nepali. They had to have administrative training, which used to be called in those days *cār.pās. Cār.pās.* is 'four exams': accounting, drafting, law, and administration. Once you got through that exam you were qualified to serve in the Rana administration. But my father was relieved in the annual civil service scrutiny, the annual *pajāni* or civil service purgation, in 1928. Since then he was out of service up to 1951-52. For the whole of his youthful career he was completely out of any job. But he did take part in the First World War and he also he got a medal.

DNG: You mean he was in the Nepalese Army?

KPM: Yes, he was at the Afghan Front actually. In the army also you have civilians: a pandit, an accountant, a cook, a clerk, and positions like

that. My father was also associated in some such capacity, I don't know exactly what, but he was in the army in 1918.

DNG: But then he lost his job in one of these annual reviews.

KPM: He lost his job in 1928. My grandfather was also sacked by Chandra Shamsheer because he refused to drop the name 'Malla'. Unlike some Mallas, who in order to hide their identity and links with earlier dynasties, preferred to write '*Pradhānānga*' or '*Rājvamsī*'.

DNG: But in fact the tradition of being Thaku Jujus means that they were descended from the *pre*-Malla kings, does it not?

KPM: Yes, that is true. But you must remember that the Mallas were descended from Jaya Sthiti Malla. Before that Kathmandu was ruled by different Thakuri dynasties. They may have been descended from Amsuvarman who was also a Thakuri. If you look at the history of Nepal, you have the Licchavis, who married the Thakuris. Manadeva's wife was a Thakuri, for example. This Licchavi-Thakuri relationship and the Malla-Thakuri relationship, such parallel relationships went on for quite some time. In fact the section of Newars called Thaku Jujus were not Mallas, they were the *pre*-Malla ruling dynasty, and their roots may have gone back much further.

DNG: Clearly it was an important point of principle for your grandfather.

KPM: My grandfather was asked to drop 'Malla' from his surname, but he refused to do that. He in fact continued to write 'Malla Varman'. 'Varman' is a Sanskrit word for Thakuri, just as 'Sharma' is a Sanskrit word for 'Brahman'. All the time he continued to write 'Purna Malla Varman'.

DNG: Was it Chandra Shamsheer himself or was it somebody in the court who was against this?

KPM: I don't know exactly. I have done a little research in the *Kitāb Khānā* documents in the National Archives, and I know the exact date when he was sacked. This was on the Phulpati day. Phulpati is the day when all the civil servants had to assemble before the Prime Minister. They had to come wearing their civil and military head-dresses with

gold and silver crests. The moment their name was dropped, they had to take it off and put it before the Prime Minister's feet. That meant they were dismissed then and there. So they had to return without their head-dress. This happened to my grandfather a long time before I was born.

DNG: Did this mean that your family experienced hardship?

KPM: My grandfather had been out of a job from 1905, and then in 1928 my father was also relieved. As you know, what was called *pajanī* was completely arbitrary. Somebody may have just complained to the Prime Minister that Yogendra Prakash Malla was a very tough man, he didn't compromise on principles. My father worked in the judicial council, settling legal cases. It was a very important position with direct access to the Prime Minister.

DNG: So there was a lot of pressure on him?

KPM: He may not have given in to the pressures of some high people. After being relieved in 1928, from that day onwards he decided never again to take any service under the Ranas.

DNG: Was he involved in the anti-Rana movement?

KPM: No, he was not involved in any political activity, but he never served any Rana from that day on. He was offered many jobs, by Babar Shamsher, for example, but he refused to do that. Only in 1951, after the fall of the Ranas, did he join government service as the Deputy Secretary to the Minister of Health. He served only two years and then retired.

DNG: In your schooling you obviously developed a love of English. Were there any people who were particular influences on you at that stage?

KPM: During our school days English was extremely important. Accomplishment in English was regarded as *the* accomplishment, *the* acme of educational accomplishment. In our locality, Bangemudha or Thayamadu (in Newari), there was a school called the Mahabir Institute. This was the place where Shukra Raj Shastri also taught. Just opposite Mahadev Raj Joshi's house, which was the centre of the anti-Rana movement was the Mahabir Institute, the first private school in Nepal.

In those days I was certainly influenced by Bhuvan Lal Joshi, the author of *Democratic Innovations in Nepal*. In 1950, when I was in Grade VII, I was given a copy of Jawaharlal Nehru's *Glimpses of World History*. In those days it was published in two big volumes, not in one volume. Once I met him [Bhuvan Lal] and he gave me a copy, and he told me, "If you read it, every page, from cover to cover, you will be a very good writer. You will have a good command over English." That was one book I enjoyed and read thoroughly, with a red pencil in hand. Bhuvan Lal Joshi was a man of scholarly temperament, a very brilliant scholar. He was influenced by Shivapuri Baba whom you may have heard of. He used to talk a great deal about Vedanta philosophy, religion, history, and so on. We used to frequent him very much. He was one of the persons who deeply influenced me. He was also very attractive personally, a very handsome man. In my school days he was one of the very few persons whom I really admired a great deal.

DNG: Later you went to India to study, is that right?

KPM: I studied in Trichandra College up to my Bachelor's. Actually in Trichandra my favourite subject was economics. I was the top student in Economics.

DNG: Which year was that?

KPM: 1957. From 1953 to 1957 I always dreamt of specialising in Economics, believe it or not. Somehow, by fluke, I got a government scholarship both to study Economics and to study English. But in those days, because the University had just started, the government said, we need more teachers of English. Also I had a very tough competition with Mr. Bhekh Bahadur Thapa, who was later the Finance Minister and is now the Royal Ambassador to the USA. I was an alternative candidate. He was selected. I was on the waiting list. I kept waiting. There was only one scholarship for economics to Delhi University. Bhekh Bahadur didn't want to go to Delhi. He didn't want to go and he wouldn't give it up. He was behaving like a dog in the manger! In the end I gave up, and decided to go. Also I was under great pressure from the then Education Secretary that I should go and study English, so I went to study English in India.

DNG: So that was three years you spent in India?

KPM: Two years.

DNG: And when you came back?

KPM: I started teaching in Padma Kanya College, a girls' college. For three years. It was very difficult. The first day, I was too young and unimpressive maybe, they thought I had come to look for an elder sister of mine! "*Kaslāi bhctna āunu bhayo?*" ("Who have you come to meet?") That was the question, when I started lecturing! That was December 1959.

DNG: You obviously succeeded in teaching them something.

KPM: I tried. Then I moved to the University and started teaching in the graduate department there in 1962.

DNG: Once you had a secure job was that the point when your family decided you should get married?

KPM: Of course there is always the pressure to get married, the moment I completed my master's degree, from the family and relatives. I got married very late, unusually late. I completed my PhD in 1974 and got married in 1975.

DNG: Did you know at that stage that you wanted to do a PhD?

KPM: Actually I could have done a PhD much earlier. I was offered scholarships in 1963 already, by the U.S Educational Foundation. They wanted me to do a PhD in American literature or American studies. I didn't feel that a PhD was all that important, so I didn't go in the 1960s. Instead I preferred to go to Britain to do further studies in English literature. I went to the School of English in the University of Leeds. At that time Leeds had a very good department. Very well-known professors of English were there, such as Prof. Wilson Knight, a Shakespearean authority, Prof. Arnold Kettle, Norman Jeffers and Douglas Jefferson. Many leading names in English studies were there in the early 1960s and so I decided to go there and do a B.A. Honours degree.

DNG: What led you to work on T.S. Eliot?

KPM: Actually T.S. Eliot was very influential in our university days in the 1950s. In India he was a very big name. That was the reason why we devoted a lot of time to the study of his poetry, drama, criticism, his prose works and so on; and for quite a few years I taught modern poetry in the university department: Yeats and Eliot. Actually I taught everything except Chaucer, Langland and Middle English. After my PhD, or rather after 1969, I got interested in linguistics. In 1969 I met Dr Alan Davies, who was an applied linguist from the University of Edinburgh who came to chair the Department of English [here] for two years under a British Council scheme. He persuaded me to do linguistics. I also came into contact at that time with the SIL, the Summer Institute of Linguistics. I thought literature was so much language, so I got interested in linguistics. In 1970 I went to Edinburgh. When I went I knew very little linguistics, but after three years I got a PhD in the Dept of Linguistics. So my academic career lurched a great deal from economics to literature to linguistics. And now, more and more, I am drawn to cultural studies, history, and so on.

DNG: Was that PhD ever published?

KPM: No, it was not published. It was essentially a theoretical work analysing contemporary models of stylistic analysis. That was the topic of my thesis. It was examined by John Sinclair who is the author of a Cobuild Dictionary, and Professor of linguistics in Birmingham University.

DNG: When you came back from the PhD what did you teach?

KPM: I was the only one in the department who could do both. So I taught linguistics as well as literature, whatever the department wanted me to do. I was Head of Department from November 1975 to December 1977. I was Rector of the university from 1977 to 1979, and I resigned the job in 1979.

DNG: Was it a particularly difficult period, politically?

KPM: There was the student movement in 1979 leading to the national referendum. It all started with the university actually.

DNG: Did that mean you were in the firing line, as it were?

KPM: Of course, I was in the firing line. The first person to resign was the Minister of Education, then the whole cabinet resigned, then we also resigned. The whole cabinet resigned in May, then we, the University Establishment, the vice-chancellor, Rector, Registrar, resigned in August 1979. Since then I have been back to teaching. Except for one year, in 1980, when I was in the University of California, Berkeley, with Prof. James Matisoff, working on Tibeto-Burman linguistics as well as on a Newari Grammar, which was published in Japan. From 1980 onward I became more and more interested in culture, history, Newari studies, and so on. Whatever I have written since 1980 is on history and culture, and very little either on English literature and English language, or on my PhD area. For the last 15 years I have basically done what may be called Nepalese studies, Nepalese history, cultural studies.

DNG: I remember in the 1980s you had a fierce controversy with Mahesh Raj Pant about the Nepala Samvat. Do you still consider that issue important or has it become less important since 1990?

KPM: My controversy with the Samsodhan Mandal still continues.

DNG: What do think are the real issues at stake?

KPM: They think that the most important Samvat for the history of Nepal is the Vikrama Samvat and they convert everything into the Vikrama Samvat. They interpret the whole history in terms of the Vikrama Samvat, whereas I think the Vikrama Samvat is simply marginal. It was given official status only by Chandra Shamsher in 1901. Before that it was not officially used, though sparingly you do find it being used in a few inscriptions, but it certainly wasn't official. There is nothing in any official document or chronology: it just doesn't exist. Whereas Nepala Samvat was the official calendar for nine centuries. And what is Nepala Samvat? It is simply a local adaptation of the Saka Samvat. Saka Samvat is there in all astrological works, classical astrological works in the Indian tradition. All calculations were done in terms of the Saka Samvat. So what I am saying is that the Saka Samvat is more important, and Nepala Samvat and Manadeva Samvat are local adaptations of it. Manadeva Samvat started 498 years after Saka Samvat,

and Nepala Samvat started 802 years after Saka Samvat. Every important life-cycle ritual, every important ritual in Nepal is based on the lunar calendar, not on the solar calendar. The whole culture of Nepal is based on the lunar calendar.

DNG: Are you saying then that the present government ought to adopt the Nepala Samvat?

KPM: When the Marxist-Leninists were in power we met the Prime Minister, a delegation of 18 persons representing 18 different Newar organisations, and put before him a list of 26 demands, among which was the demand for recognition of the Nepala Samvat. He assured us that they would attend to our demands. But nothing happened. Then, just before the government resigned, they suddenly announced one fine morning that they would call our language Nepala Bhasa, not Newari, but nothing happened. And within one week they resigned. So, although in their official manifesto they talk of cultural equality, the equality of all languages, equality among all ethnic groups, and so on, in fact it is the same old policy. They didn't do anything, although in the Kathmandu Valley overwhelmingly Marxist-Leninist candidates were elected, because the Leftists championed the cause of the Janajatis. The Leftists had the slogan of Equality of all Castes, Communities, Languages, Religions, and so on.

DNG: Clearly there has been a great growth of these ethnic movements, whatever you want to call them. How important do you think they really are? It is obviously very important to the activists that the Communist government didn't fulfil its promises on this point, but do you think this has led to a decline in Communist support in the country as a whole?

KPM: It has certainly eroded the credibility of the Marxist-Leninists among the ethnic groups. Recently there was a seminar on ethnicity and nation-building organised jointly by the University of Heidelberg and the Department of Sociology and Anthropology in Tribhuvan University. And it clearly came out in the seminar that there is not much to choose between the Rightists and the Leftists as far as the ethnicity question is concerned. They are each as complacent as the other.

DNG: Do you think that ethnicity is the most important question facing Nepal today, or are there are other more pressing issues?

KPM: There are other more pressing issues, certainly, but ethnicity cannot be ignored, because Nepal is a multi-ethnic country. In Nepal ethnic minorities have been suppressed, not for two hundred years, but for two thousand years. There have been Untouchables, disadvantaged social groups, ethnic minorities: they have been suppressed for ages. The attitude of the prominent political parties is nothing less than complacent. They think the problem doesn't exist. Like an ostrich they bury their head in the sand. This came up: you remember the Cow Controversy over Padma Ratna Tuladhar's speech. That episode showed how strong is the likelihood of ethnic conflict.

DNG: During that conflict, did Hindu Newars, of whom you are one obviously, side with Padma Ratna? They didn't feel that he had offended their Hindu sentiments in any way?

KPM: I actually signed a joint statement which was issued in defence of Padma Ratna. There were many others, particularly Leftists, who signed in defence of Padma Ratna, such as Narayan Man Bijukche and Rishikesh Shaha. Many persons who belong to the Hindu fold in the Newar community thought that Padma Ratna was more sinned against than sinning. Actually, Padma Ratna just mentioned the holy cow as an example; the main subject was human rights. Our constitution clearly says that Nepal is a Hindu kingdom and that the cow is the national animal, whereas there are many populations in Nepal who need to eat beef in their ritual feasts. So where are their human rights? He raised this issue. I think it is a valid issue. Many sensible Hindu Newars sided with Padma Ratna, though there were others also who were offended and said that it would have been better if he hadn't raised this issue, it wasn't an important issue but a marginal issue, and so on. But at that time when the whole media was attacking Padma Ratna, we saw how strong Brahmanism is in Nepal, and how well organised they were in the media, in the political sector, in the administration.

DNG: You mean there were no Brahman-run newspapers that defended Padma Ratna at all?

KPM: No, certainly not. The whole media, from top to bottom, launched a massive attack on him. Surprisingly, even the Left, even supposedly progressive writers like Mohan Nath Prashrit, who was Education Minister then, a Marxist, said Padma Ratna spoke too much. It was quite surprising to see Rishikesh Shaha in defence of Padma Ratna. Actually, he mobilised all the politicians, intellectuals, and journalists to defend Padma Ratna. Had it not been for him there could have been violent confrontation. There was going to be a strike in Kathmandu, but we organised a statement that this should not be done. It could lead to ethnic violence. The Janajatis were planning to counteract the strike. Anything could have happened on that day, had the strike taken place.

DNG: Which day was this?

KPM: This was Jyestha 2, 2052 (16th May 1995).

DNG: Where was this statement published?

KPM: In *Samakalin*, a weekly, dated May 18th, 1995. We all signed, including several Brahmans, e.g. Kanak Mani Dixit.

DNG: This managed to defuse the situation?

KPM: Yes. We sat together, in the Hotel Orchid. We invited Yogi Naraharinath, the Congress President, Left, Right, all the intellectuals, everybody. We said, "Let's get together and discuss." We all signed a statement saying we should not fight over this cow issue. Once this takes place there will be no possibility of preventing it again. Wisdom prevailed.

DNG: Do you think such ethnic conflict can be avoided in the future?

KPM: I don't know. It is very difficult to predict. The Janajatis are very well organised now. They have very articulate young people who think that they have been wronged in history: Tamang, Gurung, Magar, Rai, Limbu. Gurungs had their National Convention recently. The Newars also had their National Convention. Similarly, the Magars, the Tharus. There are about 22 ethnic groups who are organised into a Federation of Nationalities: the Nepal Janajati Mahasangha. They are raising many issues, very important issues, like employment, education,

reservations, representation, selection of candidates by political parties. For example, if a big party such as the Nepali Congress or Marxists-Leninists select their candidates: what should be their criteria? In the Tarai should they select all Madheshis? In Limbuan should a Limbu or a Brahman contest? These issues, which were never aired in the past, are coming up. The Janajatis are saying that if an area is basically a Janajati area, a Janajati must be selected, whichever party it is.

DNG: So basically they are in favour of quotas in elections?

KPM: Yes, more or less quotas on ethnic basis. Also there are other demands for autonomy or federation instead of the present unitary structure of governance.

DNG: Is this really practical or is this a pipe dream?

KPM: That is a different question altogether. Practicality alone doesn't dictate the aspirations of a community. Whether it is practical to have education in the mother tongue in sixty different languages, that's a different issue. But the Constitution of Nepal says that every child has the right to education in the mother tongue at primary level. Is that practical? But the Constitution says so. Practicality doesn't come into it when a group gets organising and starts making demands. It's not practical for a poor country like Nepal to have primary education in the mother tongue, but the Constitution clearly says that every community is entitled to have education for its children in their mother tongue up to the primary level.

DNG: The fact that it has the right, does that mean that the state is obliged to provide it?

KPM: This is the critical question. Can the state finance primary education in the mother tongue? If not, what is the sense of putting so many words in the Constitution? Then it is just for show, it is just window-dressing. That's all. But in practice the government is spending everything in education just for Nepali.

DNG: You have just completed a long report for the government on education. Is it part of your recommendations in that report that the

government ought to spend resources on mother-tongue primary education?

KPM: My report didn't look into primary or secondary education, only into higher education. It looks into issues relating to financing, restructuring, quality, efficiency, and so on.

DNG: One of the issues that people raise is the question of qualification for government jobs: you get a certain number of points for particular subjects. Did you address that issue?

KPM: Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that we looked at the government advertisements in the newspapers for the last two years. They set the number of points for specific jobs, I.A., B.A., M.A., and so on, without showing the relationship between the future role and subject studied. You might have studied archaeology and might end up being an accountant! So there is no relationship whatsoever between the government stipulations that such and such qualifications are required for such and such jobs, between courses and role required of the incumbent.

DNG: So have you recommended more vocational courses?

KPM: No, we have recommended that the government should not put these kind of obligations. For a gazetted-level job, you don't necessarily have to have a B.A., for a non-gazetted First Class job, you don't necessarily have to have an intermediate (I.A.) in arts or science. What is necessary is the skill or the knowledge of the area in which he or she is going to be employed. Some training or tailored course is more necessary than a university degree. A university degree is a different kind of thing. So why does the government require a candidate to have a B.A.? A B.A. is neither a qualification nor a disqualification for a particular job.

DNG: They have to screen out candidates somehow.

KPM: There are other means of screening out: entrance tests, interviews. If a bank wants to employ certain kinds of candidates, it can conduct an examination of the candidates, and filter out the ones without the training, professional background, or professional aptitude. This can

be done. Unfortunately the university degree is being used as a criterion.

DNG: You once wrote a famous essay about Nepalese intellectuals. Things have changed a lot since then...

KPM: In *Himal* they reproduced that article of mine 25 years later. I wrote that article in March 1969 for a group we had in CEDA. Surprisingly *Himal* reproduced that article and said it was just as relevant now as it was then.

DNG: Would you say that Nepalese intellectuals have moved from an older dependence on a Brahman, Vedic point of view you described there to a dependence on foreign aid?

KPM: A lot of changes have come since then. I would certainly say that there are now a lot of highly specialised, highly professional young people, many more in different branches than in the 1960s. That is one major change since the late 1960s. This is even more true in the social sciences than in the natural sciences. There is certainly a greater degree of specialisation and professionalism in very many fields. You name it and there are very many bright young people working and publishing actively. That's a major source of satisfaction for someone like me. But on the other hand, you also have this dependency syndrome still, either on the state or on seem-state institutions, like enterprises. What is new to me is the rise of the constancy business. Many young people in the social sciences have gone into constancy and have done a roaring business in so many development activities. In that sense, there is greater dependency not upon the state, but upon the donors. Whatever the donors prescribe: it is donor-driven. There are fields where there are a lot of donors, and there is a lot of money, and a lot of people go into them. Take, for example, a field like culture, there is hardly any money: only the Japanese and Germans or a few other institutions are interested. There are a lot of people working on environment, gender, literacy, power, irrigation, transport, and many other such fields. In every project there is a social scientist, a sociologist or an anthropologist. So there is a brain drain from the university or academia to constancy, from constancy to other areas, and some have also migrated to international agencies. I think this is a sad phenomenon, because priorities are mixed up: you don't know your priorities. Your

priorities are defined by outsiders. They plan, they frame the policies, they implement, because they fund. So you are dependent on them. But the helplessness that I described in my essay in 1969 is still there.

If you want to be truly independent, you have to have a source of income. Your monthly salary won't support your family, if you want to give a good education to your children. What can a university teacher do? He can do two or three things. He has to take up tuition, or private coaching. He has to write bazaar notes, 'Golden Guides' to passing exams. The third source of income is marking exam scripts, being a manual substitute for a computer. They can give you a good income, but all these activities will destroy you. Fortunately or unfortunately, I never did any one of these things: I never did coaching, I never wrote bazaar notes, and I never ever marked exam scripts for money. So you have to have other sources of income if you want to buy books or journals, if you want to buy the sources which will support you intellectually. What do you do? International agencies are not interested in supporting projects like the Classical Newari Dictionary. There won't be any Ford money, or World Bank money, or IMF money, no international development agency will fund you.

DNG: But Toyota has...

KPM: Fortunately for us, there is still some good will. The Germans are interested in culture, the Japanese are interested in indigenous culture. To some extent some American agencies like the National Endowment for Humanities are interested in culture, but very little money trickles down into this area. Imagine, for example, if you want to work on Buddhism, who will fund it?

DNG: Some Japanese foundation may fund it...

KPM: Yes, they may. But these problems continue even now, as I foresaw, as it were.

DNG: I have certainly been struck by the number of Newari intellectuals who in their private lives pursue these cultural activities and support themselves by working for NGOs or foreign aid agencies.

KPM: This is a compulsion because people can't support themselves with a regular government income. If you are a special class officer or

university professor you draw about RS. 6,000 a month. That's the highest scale. You can't survive anywhere in Kathmandu on that income. It's hardly US \$90. If you have to educate your children, you can't pay for it. If you have to buy books, particularly books like Gellner's *Contested Hierarchies* for £40, you have to make a lot of sacrifices!

DNG: Well, I hope that won't be so for too long now. Thank you very much for your time and insights.*

*Special thanks are due to Greg Sharkey who transmitted queries and corrections to the first transcript by e-mail.



Notes on Some Studies of Himalayan Households.

Review Article by Ben Campbell

The new edition of Thomas Fricke's *Himalayan Households*, and the recent appearance of John Gray's *The Householder's World* offer a timely opportunity for reflecting on studies of households in the Himalayan region. I shall concentrate to start with on Fricke's work, and raise questions about his conceptual approach in relation to a substantial body of research, including my own, on households in the Tamang hinterland of Central Nepal. I shall then discuss some of these issues in relation to Gray's approach to Bahun-Chetri households in the Kathmandu Valley.

Fricke's new edition of *Himalayan Households* is published with an epilogue containing some reflections on the author's research subsequent to the original publication in 1984. His work on Tamang demography amounts to a very considerable body of data and analysis, in which studies of population growth among Tamangs living in a remote corner of Nepal's Dhading district have now been comparatively contextualised by additional studies of Tamangs living on the edge of the Kathmandu Valley.

Tamang speakers are the majority population of the mostly dry-crop producing slopes and ridges of central Nepal. The argument of the book relies on a dual focus on population and adaptive process. Natural fertility conditions combine with a relatively late age of marriage, and a valuation of children that stems from the contemporary concern for diversification of the household economy beyond traditional agro-pastoral subsistence into wage labour. Fricke's study shows the village of Timling's demographic growth rate to be 1.2% per annum rather than 2.1% for Nepal as a whole. The substantive contribution of *Himalayan Households* lies in its core of data on the reproductive histories of 152 women, and reveals the highest recorded rate of infant mortality for Nepal, of 204 deaths in the first year per thousand.

Now, I claim no expertise in the specialisation of demography, but having worked myself among Tamang speakers of an adjacent district on the topic of 'households', and given his stress on the linkages

between population and organisation of economy, I am obliged to register some major points of disagreement with Fricke. His stated aim is to offer a processual approach, and to link population dynamics with changing environmental and economic conditions. His theoretical underpinning is a version of Marshall Sahlins' Domestic Mode of Production which posits autonomous households as the primary units of production and consumption. The applicability of Sahlins' model is not demonstrated but assumed. The facts are merely ordered as convenient into the conceptual mould of discrete domestic facades.

Phrases such as "the logic of the domestic economy" pepper this book. We are told that "Each household can be thought of as an economic unit defined by the need to produce food for the hearth" (1994:73), and that "work is for the common good of those who share the hearth" (ibid:130). The problem is that if you take the trouble to observe, over a whole year, a Tamang household in its social composition and productive activities, rather than infer social behaviour from survey responses, a different picture emerges. Tamang households are very fluid as to who they are composed of. Close relatives come, stay a while, and make substantial contributions to domestic life. Adolescents, even young married couples, and unmarried older people are formally adopted as co-resident *gothalo* ('herder'). Widowed people spend time with different children, and first-born children often live separately with their grandparents. If the task of the anthropologist is to understand a people in terms of "the processes that have meaning to them" (ibid. :129), allowance must be made for the fact that the Tamang word for 'house' (*tim*) is also a way of talking about 'lineage'. This greater-domestic reality needs to be given its place in conceptualising 'the household', as people indeed depend significantly on this and other more inclusive versions of domestic incorporation.

The particular relations by which Tamang households interact, and reproduce themselves in marriage and exchange, are virtually ignored by the restricted focus of the household survey approach. The irony is that if one looks closely at Sahlins' work which Fricke relies on so much, it becomes clear that the Tamang correspond more or less to a type of society Sahlins identifies as characterised by intense inter-domestic labour exchanges of balanced reciprocity, representing departures in economy and social structure from the main run of those

societies he generalises as being conditioned by the Domestic Mode of Production (Sahlins 1974: 224).

It is unfortunate that Fricke's vast array of data was not re-thought in theoretically more challenging ways than his original offering of a few modifications of Chayanov's model of peasant economy. The material is certainly there in his more recent publications for an historically and culturally grounded theory of Tamang domestic life that would make far more sense than the framework of a decade ago.

Tamang Households Revisited

Fricke comments that "[h]ardly an anthropologist who has worked in Nepal has failed to notice the special place of the household in village life" (1994:129). But what is this "special place"? In my view the two anthropologists whose works are most insightful to the processes that define the sociological realities of Tamang households are Kathryn March and Graham Clarke. The regrettable fact is that in both cases their original research has not been published. Their theses do not appear in Fricke's bibliography. Both studies discuss the complex social terrains of identity, gender, exchange, ritual, and property in which idioms of house and kinship find expression. March focuses on the social intensity of Nuwakot Tamang community life which she compares to the solitary nature of Solu-Khumbu Sherpas' atomistic households. While Clarke contrasts the 'tribal' Dravidian kinship of Tamang communities with the ordered ritual hierarchies of Lama households organised around the Tibetan Buddhist temple in Helambu.

Both these works identify distinctive processes and forms of Tamang domestic organisation that are recognisably different from those encountered in Bahun-Chetri society on one hand and in more Tibetan communities on the other. March's concentration on women's marriage and residence strategies aptly demonstrates the dense overlays of kinship and affinity relatedness which produce Tamang households, such that people spend almost as much time visiting other houses as they spend in their own. She says women see the danger in marrying into another house, and so maintain particularly close ties with brothers. They perpetuate these links by marrying daughters into brothers' households. This means women frequently have an affectionate maternal

uncle as father-in-law, and their mother-in-law will be of their same moiety if not the same clan. Thus, a husband may even be in a weaker position than his wife until a new household is established (March 1979: 200 ff). How altogether different this is from the quality of relationships reported for Bahun-Chetri households, especially the "dangerous wives" syndrome. Holmberg, whose work complements March's, states that "Women after marriage are far from subsumed in the household of their husbands" (Holmberg 1989: 81).

March suggests that the ritual corollary of Tamang communities' dense sociality is the shaman's particularistic attention to interactional tensions in the management of relations within households, lineage segments and residential clusters. "Both the cosmology and ritual strategies of the shaman confront the interpersonal difficulties which individuals face as members of small social groupings" (ibid: 123). This she contrasts with Sherpas' rationalising Buddhism that focuses on individuals within distinctly autonomous households, without the Tamangs' intervening webs of kinship and residence.

It is precisely the effects of a more propertied and literate Tibetan Buddhist organisation on kinship and household structures, that lies at the heart of Clarke's study of the Tamang-Lama interface in Helambu. Clarke demonstrates dynamic shifts in forms of association, hierarchical tendencies, and their relation to economic processes of *guthi*-landowning and trade. The Tibetan idiom of indivisible household (*trongba*) entails a metamorphosis of relationships in the ascendancy of concepts of non-partible village citizenship (*talpa*, tax-payer) mediated by the temple, over the familiar Tamang principles of agnatic filiation and affinity. "Here kinship is a secondary institution that is subsidiary to the household and village" (1980: 265). Clarke analyses, in effect, how the principles of kinship and affinity which structure enduring relationships and exchange between Tamang villagers can become superseded by the redistributive institution of the temple as an alternative mode of interaction. He ingeniously describes as "religious capitalism" the integrative mechanism of exchange whereby the circulation of goods between households via the temple adds value to them in the form of merit and blessing (ibid:156ff). The household becomes the principle reference for kinship terminology, emphasising the household obligations to the village collective via the temple, rather

than the genealogical relationships between the people who live in the household. In this way servants or affines can be sons or daughters of the house. Supplementing this house-based logic is the flexible category of consanguineal family (*memi*): "its use can best be understood by pointing out that those who habitually refer to each other as 'family', are also those who regularly and informally help each other and exchange hospitality". It is "a flexible category to group with, rather than a group" (ibid:279).

Clarke's regional understanding of inflections of terminologies according to context illustrates how fluid category meanings are. Thus, whereas in Helambu *talpa* refers to a supporter of the temple in contradistinction to *dagare* (a person without a land grant, or who carries a basket¹ he notes that in the Tamang village of Yangri *talpa* simply means a person with a house in the village who gives some rice once a year to the temple. In Melemchi on the other hand there are three kinds of *talpa*, that include *dagare*. These variations can be linked to Clarke's overall paradigm, whereby in times of economic stress communities have moved downhill to cultivate productive land, and in the process become more 'Tamang', but with wealth they move uphill to produce a differentiation of priests and clients marked by more Tibetan forms of household and association (321ff).

The major implication for the study of the Tamang household that I want to take up from Clarke's work is that there is a dynamism to categories of domestic association. Different models for mutual inter-household relationships can co-exist, that are all too often over-looked in generalising theories of the household. The categories are inherently unstable as evidenced by their variable meaning over space, and by their use over time as tactics for social mobility in alliances of power and status.

Tamang Households at Work

It was to test models of household economy such as Fricke's that I went to Tengu village, Rasuwa District in 1989 for two years fieldwork. I wanted to see to what extent the household could indeed be spoken of as the primary unity of production, and to examine what effects increasing

¹ I have discussed the association of Tamangs with portering in Campbell (forthcoming)

market integration were having on the social organisation of agricultural labour. March (1979), Hall (1982), Toffin (1986), Holmberg (1989) had all reported on the phenomenon of large cooperative groups (*nang* or *nangba*) undertaking much of the substantial agricultural workload at the busiest times of year in Tamang communities. Were these groups based on the mobilisation of kin with social relations of lineage solidarity to the fore, or were they possibly of a different order of exchange calculation? Did they represent merely an extension of domestic productive organisation, or a transformation of it?

It became clear before too long that any idea of households being empirically identifiable with a certain set of members, was not going to do justice to the multiple allegiances people had to a number of residential and property owning groupings in which they could claim to be "of one house" (*tim ghi la*) with others. Rather it was in particular activity contexts and relational discourses that different versions of house belonging became highlighted. Sometimes interests in common productive enterprise would present an image of effective, practical, domestic collectivity. Livestock, land and labour would be managed by a group of people as a combined cross-generational day to day unity, and yet the image of domestic substantiality would not last long. The people would reform in differently configured collectivities. This was in part because of the demands of residential nomadism in the agro-pastoral economy, but also because the same people might be separated out as of distinct "houses" for labour tribute, or for donations of money at funerary ceremonials. It was impossible to isolate out a 'genuine' household from metaphorical extensions.

Obviously the Tamangs' classificatory kinship terminology and their practice of divorce and remarriage contributes to their sense of multiple domestic allegiances. Any one person has numerous "fathers" and "mothers". Step-fathers are simply "father's younger brother" (*ahu*). At the same time, how these categories can translate into residential belonging depends on further conditions of domestic labour contribution. The flexible use of kinship and house terminology is such that all manner of relationships may be represented in the language of legitimate domestic belonging if productive labour contributions can be thereby **accommodated**. It is the labour value of domestic relations

which figure prominently in the Tamangs' own discourse of rightful claim to share in the life of a household. I heard a man speak to his son from a previous marriage saying that the boy could live with his half-siblings as long as he earned his right to do so, "Work and you shall eat" (*ghet sojim ken tsau*).

The constitutive processes which give Tamang households their form and content consist in the interplay of several factors: nucleated village architecture, dispersed agro-pastoral enterprise, classificatory kinship, cross-cousin marriage, and considerable village endogamy. All these dimensions generate particular contextual understandings of household. The architectural reference gives the roof ridge-pole (*thuri*, Nep. *dhuri*) synechdochically as the unit of corvée labour tribute. The mobile animal shelters (*god* Nep. *goth*) constitute the effective domestic units of agro-pastoralism. The equivalence of "house" (*tim*) and "hearth tripod" (*godap*) with "lineage" provides apical unitary identities of common domestic origin. Marriage with cross-cousins produces intergenerational reciprocal exchange alliances between households of different "bone" (*nakhrit*) and "milk" (*nye*) or "flesh" (*shya*). And the continued village residence of women after marriage generates ongoing hospitality and productive exchange between clan women (*busing*) and clan men (*pamyung*), especially connected to gifts of dowry.

In all these permutations of domestic focus I wanted to resolve the matter of "the special place of the household", to borrow Fricke's phrasing, in the organisation of agricultural labour. To summarise the findings reported in Campbell (1993, 1994), my research into the agricultural activity of nine selected households over one year revealed that **on average more than half the work done on their fields was not by household members alone**. Fricke's model of household economy derived from Chayanov via Sahlins, that households are autonomous labour units and kinship relations the important relations of production, simply did not apply. Something far more interesting was happening.

When it came to the busier periods of cultivation, transplanting (finger millet and paddy), and to a lesser extent harvesting, the cooperative groups of *nangba* exchanged their labour, day-for-day, between participating households. The work of men and women, young

and old, was calculated as equal and substitutable in this flat-rate currency of labour. In this balanced reciprocity between domestic units people who might in many other contexts consider themselves to be of the same house defined themselves as separate for the purpose of production. Even people who might sleep and eat under the same roof could be represented as being of different households, as in the case of adolescents not yet resident in marital homes, but already working for in-laws. Kinship relations were not the relations of production. Rather, delimited domestic interests superseded the relations of classificatory kinship. In so doing, however, the hierarchies normal to internal domestic relations were overshadowed by an acephalous equality of common participation among the representatives of the different domestic units in the *nangba*. The membership of these groups was based more on friendship and choice than ascription, contradicting Fricke's statement that "reliance on kin permeates all other adaptive strategies in Timling, and the relationship among space, cooperation at work, and kinship distance is so integrated that one can be used to predict the other" (Fricke 1994: 189). In Tengu the composition of *nangba* followed no obvious lines of kinship, nor did they in Toffin's study (1986). It should also be mentioned that *nangba* were the primary means of recruiting wage labour. A person in a group could sell their day to receive workers to someone needing labour, allowing the transformation of this type of reciprocity into commodity.

Nangba is not the only form of collective work group. There is also *gohar*, a less specific reciprocity in which food and drink for workers can be expected but the labour itself sometimes not, especially when the work is of a more tributary nature for village headmen or the rich (*baru*). It is in the reciprocal distinction between *nangba* and *gohar* that different versions of domestic idiomatic elaboration occur with implications for village political economy. In *nangba* people stand clearly as equal and short-term exchangers of like for like. In *gohar*, on the other hand, there is uncertainty in mutual relation, but affinal asymmetries are clearly expressed, and the likelihood of return is indeterminate. Rather, the idiom of extended domestic familiarity is conveyed by the feeding of cooked meals (*ken pimba*), which can mask relations of inequality by shared commensality. It was precisely the villagers' recent experience of freeing themselves from indebtedness to powerful rich families, obliging them to attend *gohar* for no return, that

they emphasised to me. It meant they had more time to organise the use of their own labour. Contrast this situation with Sahlins' dismissive comment: "Cooperation remains for the most part a technical fact, without independent social realisation on the level of economic control" (1974:78).

In labour, then, and in other activity and ceremonial contexts, different versions of domestic definition come into play. In broad terms, **delimited** definitions emphasise a community (*namsaba*) of equally participating households (as in *nangba*, in donations to funeral expenses, and in the distribution of rice-dough *tormo* (Tib. *torma*) in shamanic or Buddhist ritual), whereas **extensive** definitions emphasise asymmetrical incorporation into greater domestic entities (as in *gohar*, in lineage land and livestock holding, in brideservice, and the collective identities of exogamous clans).

In contrast to Fricke's version of the Tamang household as a substantial empirical entity with a special place in village life, adapting to land pressure by economically diversifying its natural labour pool into migrant wage labour, I would suggest that changes in political and economic conditions entail people reformulating their definitions of domestic association. The household occupies different places. People group strategically under a variety of domestic idioms and contexts, and articulate their interests in terms of particular forms of inter-domestic exchange. At any time what appears as a household is a perspective from within a community in which the importance of domestic identities is their active plasticity. With increased access to market exchange, commodity-commensurate forms of reciprocity favoured delimited inter-household exchange relationships over more diffuse and extensive forms.

A Nation of Householders?

It would be hard to find an argument more opposed to the one I have been developing for Tamang households than that of John Gray in his book on Kathmandu Valley Bahun-Chetris *The Householder's World: Purity, Power and Dominance in a Nepali Village*. Following on from his edited volume *Society from the Inside Out*, Gray is a domestic reductionist. Even caste, for him, can be simply explained as a matter of relations between households before anything else. Gray criticises Seely

(1988) and Fricke for not adequately explaining why the household has been taken as the primary unit for understanding Nepali society. He advocates a "'holistic apperception' of the household as a discrete sociological and experiential entity" (Gray 1995:21), as "an ontological institution" sustained by Hindu *grihastha dharma*, producing a "fundamental mode of being in the everyday world" (ibid:23). He eschews approaches which privilege concerns of membership, of kinship, and cooperative activities to insist there is a "structure of consciousness" in the first place which determines these as domestic (ibid:25).

Not being a specialist on Bahun-Chetris, my comments on Gray's work are necessarily limited, but the aspect which seems most difficult to comprehend concerns Gray's taking at face value the Hindu patriarchal attitude to women. They become part of a *pariwar* "through marriage as a means for men to fulfill their *dharma*...Men are associated with the goal of moral action in the world...Women are the means and accordingly they are subordinated to their husbands" (ibid:49). All this is stated without problematisation, or analysis as to why this should be the case. Being more familiar with the Tamang world it is exactly the different position of women in the two respective societies which is striking. It will be recalled that I drew on March's work on women's domestic intermediacy to help define the character of relations in Tamang households. Cross-cousin marriage, significant village endogamy, and wife-giver status superiority, are all reversed in the Bahun-Chetri universe. Surely, contrary to Gray's insistence on the primacy of domestic ontology, the logic for high-caste women's subordination is the concern of the men to maintain perceptions of *jat* morality and status, which prefigures what goes on in any one household? In effect the importation of wives into communities of strangers produces an immediate appropriation of women to their marital households.

My own research has brought me to look at Tamang households primarily from the perspective of how communities structure their productive relationships as domestic. In looking further afield at ethnographies of mixed caste communities I have found the issue of inter-household reciprocal labour to be particularly revealing as an indicator of class, caste and gender in any given case. In fact Sagant

anticipated my observations in writing about labour groups in east Nepal: "Si le principe des groupes est simple, dans le détail leurs caractères sont complexes. Ils sont très représentatifs des particularités sociologiques de chaque hameau, de chaque village" (1976:253). For the most part in Nepal these groups are called *parma* or *pareli*. Why these groups can be so revealing is that they make visible contradictions between hierarchies of status and gender on one hand, and the fact of being subsistence producers on the other hand. Participation in *parma* can be an economic leveller of caste distinction, though not without particular angst for Bahuns (Prindle 1983:39-41, Miller 1990:77-78).

What does Gray have to say about the Bahun-Chetris' extra-domestic productive relations? His analysis of *parma* is that these relations replicate the domestic *santan* as a brotherhood of neighbours. (In fact it is mostly women who work, and one woman's daily labour is considered half the value of a man's). Gray mentions the Silwal Chetris' equation of the balanced symmetry of *parma* reciprocity with exchanges between households of brothers, as contrasted to the asymmetry of wage labour (*jyala*) contracted between households of different *jat*. He then points out that many *jyala* labourers were in fact Silwal women (1995:177). Now if his commentary on this is correct, that though the relations technically were waged, they were "rendered as essentially *parma* relations of equivalence between brothers and thus did not have the status implications normally entailed by *jyala* relations" (ibid:178), I fail to see how this could be construed as anything but indicating the primacy of the collective status interests of the landowning class, over a structure of consciousness that Gray supposes to be about being a householder first and foremost. The hierarchy as an ongoing product of history frames what householders then do, not the other way round. Of course people's first experience and understanding of hierarchy is importantly in domestic contexts (Toren 1990), but this does not explain the structures that sustain the hierarchy societally.

Beyond the Domestic Facade

Limits of space prevent here further elaboration of possible new ways of looking at Himalayan household issues. Theoretical developments from other regions need to be evaluated. Gudeman and Rivera (1990) is a well argued case for the European folk origins of much of the

sociological theory of the domestic domain, much of which has found an (unwelcome?) accommodation in the Himalayan region. They claim that in terms of models for organising the economy in Latin America, the house provides the basic structure for orders of magnitude as far as the hacienda, but is then superceded by the ever-expandable corporation. Not only the Durbar might be considered in this respect, but also the Tibetan gomba. Descriptions of Ladakhi society reveal a striking parallel between the hierarchical relationship of village "big houses" and their "small houses" on one hand (Dollfus 1989, Phylactou 1989), and the relationship between the male gomba and the female ani-gomba on the other hand (Grimshaw 1992). Can we talk of thematic variations of one or several 'house societies' for the Himalaya as recently explored elsewhere by Carsten and Hugh-Jones (1995)? I borrow as final words of caution for this endeavour an observation from Toffin "Les maisons ne sont ni des plantes ni des animaux. Elles constituent des ensembles fluides, elles s'écartent du modèle commun et se métamorphosent au moindre souffle nouveau" (1987:275).

Postscript : Could I suggest that *EBHR* allow space for notes, comments, and queries, reports on research etc on the Himalayan House from whoever would like to contribute, if the interest is there? Dare I say it, a sort of 'home page'?

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Gregory G. Maskarinec: *The Rulings of the Night. An Ethnography of Nepalese Shaman Oral Texts*. 1995, Wisconsin, The University of Wisconsin Press, 276p.

Review by Anne de Sales

An earlier version of this book was a thesis (University of Hawaii, 1990) that was reviewed in the columns of this Bulletin (n°3, 1992) along with several other studies of the last decade on shamanic oral literature in Nepal. Now that it has been reworked and published, the book deserves a review of its own.

Gregory Maskarinec has chosen to present a shamanic tradition among a community of Blacksmiths in Western Nepal through its songs. Echoing the way in which shamans invoke their ancestors in their ritual ouvertures, the author uses the introductory chapter to situate himself - in this case, in the lineage of Wittgenstein and other philosophers of language. The theoretical position that is stressed throughout the book may be summarised here. In the analysis of a social phenomenon, what is said is of primary importance: "Language is the most central social phenomenon...the primary means by which people are socialised... by which they participate in a society" (12). This principle is illustrated in shamanic seances which "affirm that reality truly is socially constructed through the medium of language. Consequently only words have any genuine effect on the world and its participants." (242). Therefore, in order to understand what a shaman is and what he does, one has to listen to him - to his public discourse and his songs, and not to his private conversation or the expression of his internal state, because the perspective here is sociological, and not psychological (15).

Moreover - and here comes a second set of propositions - one has to keep to what is said, and understand the texts within themselves, respecting the limits that they set. In other words one should neither step out of the tradition that is studied nor try to impose exhaustive interpretations from a so-called objective point of view. The texts contain everything there is to know.

Understanding tradition in this way means abandoning the *a priori* of classical Western philosophy whereby language denotes things in a world that it mirrors. For Maskarinec the shamans do not use

language to *signify* a reality different from this world but rather to *create* another reality. The idea is that shamanic words really generate a new world, in which shamans can exercise their power: "With his words, which are his power and his tools, he creates the illness, creates the body of the patient, and creates the world in which his patients experience relief" (193). Any study that shuns the text in favour of interpreting what is said would be condemning itself to see only irrelevance in shamanic action.

Whether or not one agrees on these principles, this is a clearly stated position. To the extent that it is inspired by ethnomethodology, this position adopts the methods of the ethnos in question. In this respect it is radically different from those underlying classical ethnographical descriptions in which the observer remains outside what he observes. And the premises here will be accepted *a priori*, since they underlie the presentation of the information.

The author's desire to show that shamanic texts are "carefully crafted to appear exactly a theology, pure, perfect, sacred and unchangeable" (117) determines the course of the book. The second chapter argues that the songs present a "comprehensive" and "refined" aetiology of all the possible diseases known of the villagers. The fourth chapter shows how these songs enclose the "stage directions" to be followed as the rites unfold - what the author calls the "reflexive character of shamanic speech and shamanic action", in the sense that one uses what is said to explain what is done. The idea that shamanic words are perfectly intelligible is recurrent in the fifth chapter on the subject of magic spells or *mantra*. Maskarinec shows that these spells, too often represented in the literature as meaningless gibberish uttered by charlatans, actually convey a deep meaning. The rhyming and rhythmic verses restore order by fighting entropy, "the true enemy of a shaman".

In view of the importance that the author rightly accords to shamanic literature, it is regrettable that the texts are presented piecemeal, as mere illustrations of the argument. Hardly any of the songs are given in their totality, and their local origin (the author worked in several villages and even several districts) and singers are rarely specified. The transcription of the songs is absent here (although it is presented in the thesis), and notes and comments on the translation

are rare. For example, we do not know the original expression that the author translates as "Rammâ Jumratam [the first shaman] began to be possessed" (99), although it is known that in Nepali various images can be used to describe the phenomenon that anthropologists call "possession". What are these images here? No doubt the author knows them: this is clear from some of his other works, but we are here left in the dark. Although very rich, the material presented in this book cannot easily be used as a source.

It seems that what matters to the author is less to provide documents on the tradition that he studied, than to invite the reader to experience this tradition as far as possible, that is, within the limits of a book. This is also why he prefers to leave a text partly unexplained rather than to impose upon it an interpretation that he feels would be totalizing and would prevent the shamanic poetry from attracting the reader towards the world that it is made to create. The conclusion (chapter 7) is actually very explicit about the initiatic intention that guided the writing of the book. Similar to a shamanic journey, it aims at transforming the reader in the same way as the author has himself been transformed: "I too struggle to create a new world, where we no longer suffer from treating words as though they were pictures" (236).

It may be worth mentioning that Maskarinec transcribed in Devanagari thousands of lines that he recorded and translated during the six years that he was based in Jajarkot. Far from being a humble copyist, he completed his knowledge by learning these lines by heart. The author's mastery of his material is expressed in terms more reminiscent of the discourse of a shaman than of a social scientist: "By now I know more shaman texts than does any shaman in Nepal... It is this competence that permits me to write with a certain authority... with some assurance that I have got things right" (236). And a little later: "I have, it seems, gone further than most ethnomethodologists having not just uncovered native methods of constructing sense but applying those methods to help members make sense of their lives." (238).

It should be obvious that for the author it is only by trying to become a shaman that one may understand what a shaman is. From this point of view the exclusive distinction between the two roles that was made above becomes irrelevant. This is a debate that indeed lies at the

heart of the study of religions: is it possible to understand a belief without holding it? Or, on the contrary, is it possible to give a fair account of a belief that one also holds? But what to my eyes remains undebatable is the presentation of what has been chosen to be explained. The reader has no means of checking and discussing or even using the material presented here in different perspectives. The decontextualised presentation of dismembered shamanic songs renders this impossible. And it remains difficult to understand how the shamanic world of "literal metaphors" (167) is inscribed in the ordinary world of the community.

One cannot but agree with Maskarinec when he writes that shamans create (or at least "create") other worlds with their words, but the process of this creation deserves a careful description. Strangely enough, Maskarinec limits himself to Malinowski's perspective in seeing the song as a charter for action. Even in the interesting chapter devoted to "the Sound of Things", he neglects to analyse the way acts, words and objects are tied together in a shamanic seance to the point of forming a kind of ritual conglomerate where words tend to solidify. My own experience in a neighbouring area led me to see acts, rather than words, as the focal point in the ritual. There is no question that in the process of borrowing their shamanic tradition from the Magar, the Chantel gave scant attention to words, keeping the acts as the main bearers of the tradition. If this is definitely not the case in the situation studied in Jajarkot, it would have been worth stressing it.

Although the vectors of this shamanic tradition are mainly Hindu Blacksmiths, Maskarinec emphasises that "this distinct culture [is] often at odds with surrounding dominant cultures of Western Nepal" (75). There are, nevertheless, "rare, severely transformed appearance of classic [Hindu] mythology in the shaman's material" (40) as well as the possible influence of the Tibetan *chöd* ceremony on a specific ritual act in which the shaman is shown performing a sort of self-sacrifice (59). In the third chapter he attempts a sketch of the historical and cultural background of this tradition. The region is traversed by pilgrims on their way to Mount Kailash and is marked by important centres of Kanphata yogis, about whom many references can be found in the mythology studied. By contrast the presence of important Buddhist centres in the North (Jumla) is hardly mirrored by the songs in which

there are only rare mentions of lamas. Since these mentions are always negative, the author suggests that the shamans were somehow linked in the past to the practitioners of the Bon religion which was in violent conflict with invading Buddhism. While this is certainly an interesting line of inquiry, it is worth investigating the possibility that the implicit hostility may be derived from an association with the ethos of the Kalyala dynasty of Jumla, which carved out a strongly Hindu Kingdom in the ruins of the Buddhist Malla Empire.

The tradition presented here is also strongly reminiscent of what J. Hitchcock called Dhaulagiri shamanism, that is practised by the Northern Magar as well as by the Blacksmiths who live with them. Not only do the similar narrative motifs of the songs make this obvious but also the two ceremonies that frame the life of a shaman, his initiation and his funerals, that are described in the sixth chapter. These provide a mine of information of great comparative value.

This book is the fruit of an experience of which any reader will acknowledge the authenticity, and it has already been greatly appreciated, not least by the nation which hosted the research: the author was recently awarded the Birendra Academy Decoration, a distinction that until now has been extended to Toni Hagen and the late Christoph von Fürer-Haimendorf.

Diana K. Myers and Susan S. Bean, Editors, *From the Land of the Thunder Dragon : Textile Arts of Bhutan*, London, Serindia Publications, Salem, Peabody Essex Museum, 1994, 248 p., 130 colour plates, 20 b&w photos.

Review by Ann Hecht

In recent years there has been a proliferation of books on textiles, especially on India and the far east, and the subjects have become familiar with a surfeit of pictures but not necessarily scholarly texts to accompany them.

It is all the more exciting therefore to find this excellent book on the textiles of Bhutan, a less well known country, written by four experts. The book was published to coincide with a special exhibition 'From the Land of the Thunder Dragon' based on the collection of the Peabody Essex Museum, augmented with further examples from public and private collections. The text is written and edited by Diana K. Myers and Susan S. Bean with contributions from Michael Aris and Françoise Pommaret. As one would expect from such a scholarly volume there are notes, a glossary, a catalogue of the exhibition objects, references, and a detailed index.

It is only in roundabout ways that Bhutan textiles have come into museum collections. The first such were acquired by museums in Britain, brought back by British diplomats, the only western power at the time to have relations with Bhutan. Jane A. Phillips, a patron of the Peabody Essex Museum, was captivated by the exquisite and intricate patterns of the Bhutanese costumes in a collection of textiles from Kathmandu brought into the museum by a dealer in the early 1980s. From that first sighting she began to build the collection on which this catalogue is based.

Textiles in Bhutan are integrated into all aspects of life. They represent prestige, wealth, and forms of payment, in addition to their use in Buddhist ritual. Items of clothing and gifts of cloth mark important social occasions, both small and large, private and

diplomatic. No transaction is complete without the accompanying gift of textiles carefully chosen to accord with the standing of the recipient.

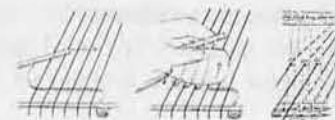
Three areas of Bhutan (following north-south corridors) have distinctive weaving traditions, eastern, north central, and central Bhutan. Eastern Bhutan is renowned for plainweave fabrics, supplementary-weft-patterned fabrics, and supplementary-warp-patterned fabrics such as the popular *aikapur* made in the northern region of eastern Bhutan. It was also a centre for dyeing, especially the warm eastern valleys which were noted for lac production and the production of indigo from a local broadleaved shrub *Strobilanthes flaccidifolius*. Nowadays, synthetic dyes are much in use, though not exclusively; sometimes the natural ingredients include a measure of powdered dye in the bath or, stranger still, yarns dyed with chemicals are later dipped into a natural dye bath!

North central Bhutan, in the Lhunsi district, was the home of the traditional woman's tunic (no longer worn), woven with distinctive techniques of supplementary-weft-patterning, on a warp-faced cotton ground, in wild silk, wool, and bast fibres. This tunic style, the patterning of which is perhaps the most intriguing of all to be found in Bhutan, was later abandoned for the new style of wrapped dress (*kira*) worn now throughout the country by royal command.

The predominant fibre in use in central Bhutan is wool, woven on the horizontal frame loom introduced from Tibet. It is used for blankets and rain coats in the heavier weights, or sold by the yard in the lighter weights for making up into women's dresses and men's robes.

The weaving of western Bhutan does not compare with the sophisticated practices elsewhere, but Thimphu, the capital and the seat of the royal family, has seen many weavers move west following their employers in government service. The Queen of Bhutan takes a personal interest in promoting the traditions of weaving and the Khaling National Handloom Development Project in Thimphu is one of several royal government initiatives to stimulate weaving.

From the Land of the Thunder Dragon is beautifully illustrated throughout with lengthy and helpful captions: indeed, one could learn much about Bhutan and its textiles by simply studying the pictures and reading all the captions. The text of the book, however, lacks structure and gives the appearance of a collection of articles, some of which cover the same ground. Given that more than one person had a hand in the writing of the book, and that the subject was specifically textiles, it might have been helpful if an expert on weaving, spinning, and dyeing had been asked to join them to elucidate in words and with diagrams some of the more specialised techniques.



Susi Dunsmore, *Nepalese Textiles*, London, British Museum Press, 204 p. 100 colour pl., 80 b&w illus.

Review by Ann Hecht

Susi Dunsmore is no stranger to Nepal. Readers may already be familiar with her two previously published titles, *Weaving in Nepal* and *The Nettle in Nepal*, two small books with the directness and intimacy which comes from reproducing handwritten script. But now she has joined the big league, adding another title to the excellent series on textiles published by British Museum Press.

Susi Dunsmore's knowledge is built on practical experience in the field, gained on her frequent visits to Nepal, often while accompanying her husband who was involved with the Land Resources Development Centre's programme in east Nepal. She worked with the weavers and the spinners, especially in the Kosi Hill area, the centre for dhaka cloth, and further north, Sankhuwasabha, where the giant nettle (*allo*) grows. Her personal involvement in these crafts enables her to write in depth and with clarity about all the details that are so important to people in the field of textiles: how the fibres are prepared, how the posts are arranged for warping, how the heddles are made, the loom put together and so on - and not only once but for every regional variation. This is not to say that the history and legends have been neglected; only to point out that the focus in books on textiles vary.

No textiles from ancient times exist in Nepal, therefore the author has to embark on detective work, studying sculptures, wall paintings and manuscripts to glean what is possible about the textiles in antiquity. Susi Dunsmore identifies designs on the folds of clothing, for example, from stone reliefs or sculptures dating between the third and sixth century AD. And, miraculously, she locates the figures of a spinner and weaver amongst the hundreds in the large topographical scene of the Pilgrimage to Gosainthan in the early nineteenth century, visual evidence of cotton cloth weaving.

The chapter on raw material is particularly interesting because of the inclusion of more unusual fibres: the yak, both the inner and outer hair; the central Asian species of mountain goat (*Capra hircus*) from which the renowned cashmere shawls are made; and the Himalayan giant nettle *allo* (*Girardinia diversifolia*) which is proving to be a most versatile fibre used for anything from a sack to a lacy hand-knitted fashion garment sold in London.

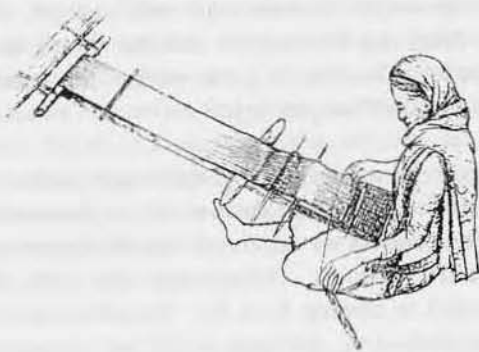
"A new type of *allo* cloth began to be developed in the 1980s, when some weavers of Sankhuwasabha asked if KHARDEP, a rural development programme operating in the area, could assist them with improved processing and marketing of the traditional *allo* products for which the returns were very low." Experiments were started in which an *allo* warp was combined with a wool weft in traditional twills and diamond patterns. The resultant tweed became a popular alternative to the previously imported cloth used for men's jackets.

Similar experiments were made with the cotton dhaka cloth used in making men's topis and women's blouses. Traditionally woven wove the standard width and length necessary for the topi using the inlay technique with red, orange and black supplementary wefts on a white ground. Again, KHARDEP was asked to help find additional sources of income for the scattered weavers and it was decided to adapt the traditional techniques to a new market. The size was increased to scarf, and later shawl, widths and lengths. At the same time, and this was a revolutionary decision, it was decided to substitute a black from white ground, and introduce all the colours of the rainbow into the endlessly inventive supplementary weft designs. The results were amazing, delighting the weavers, and the scarves and shawls found a ready market. This was a great success story and Susi Dunsmore should be proud of her part in it.

The relevant chapter and the longest, under the title 'Middle Mountains', concludes with the weaving of the woollen *raris*. This is followed by chapters on two more regions: 'Himalayan North' on the Sherpa and Dolpo-pa (information for the latter gratefully acknowledged as coming from Dr. Corneille Jest of the CNRS); and the 'Subtropical south', the home of the jute, where biodegradable jute

is being put to new issues in large mats of netting laid on bare roadside slopes to prevent surface erosion.

Unfortunately in a short review one cannot do justice to the contents. However, what stands out above all else in *Nepalese textiles* is the feeling that the text is about the present and the future rather than the past. The weavers and spinners are prepared to experiment and are taking responsibility for their own future.



UPDATE OF HIMALAYAN ARCHIVES IN PARIS

(EBHR n°3 & n°4)

by

Lucette Boulnois, Jenny Ferreux & Pierrette Massonnet

Since the publication of papers on Himalayan resources in Paris in issues n°3 and n°4 (1992) of this bulletin, some changes have occurred as to the locations of the collection.

Maison de l'Asie

22, avenue du Président Wilson, Paris 75016 (Tel : 01 53 70 18 20)

The Maison de l'Asie was closed for a long time for repairs and reorganisation; it has reopened and now shelters not only the library collections of the Ecole Française d'Extrême-Orient and the Centre d'Etudes pour les Religions Tibétaines (see *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, n°3, 1992, pp.34-36 and 32-33), but also the collections of two libraries previously located at 54, boulevard Raspail in the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme : the Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde et de l'Asie du Sud and the Centre de Documentation sur la Chine contemporaine (see EBHR n°4, 1992, pp.28-31).

The three libraries, EFEO, Centre d'Etudes de l'Inde and Centre de Documentation sur la Chine contemporaine, have been regrouped there and their collections (with the exception of some periodicals on India which are still kept at their former address, boulevard Raspail) are available to readers (no special conditions for admission) in a spacious common reading-room. The Chief Librarian in charge of this library is M. Jean-Louis Taffarelli (Tel : 01 53 70 18 41); the Deputy Chief Librarian is Mme Barrès-Koteli (Tel : 01 53 70 18 43). Opening hours : 9 a.m.-6 p.m., Monday to Friday.

Centre d'Etudes sur les Religions Tibétaines

The Centre d'Etudes sur les Religions Tibétaines (Director : Mme Anne-Marie Blondeau) has returned to its former home 22, avenue du Président Wilson. Its collection chiefly includes photographs, slides, audio cassettes and videotapes, and books offering a rich iconography. The library's total resources include 4500 volumes, 3300 offprints, a number of periodicals and 400 publications in Tibetan. There is also a photographic library which will be described in a future issue of the *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*. In addition, the Imaeda collection (250 volumes in Japanese) and the Stein collection (Professor Rolf Stein's private books purchased from him by the centre) are located there. Computerised cataloguing is in progress. The Stein collection alone includes 2500 volumes in western languages, 350 Tibetan language volumes and a large number of works in Chinese and Japanese in addition to periodicals and offprints. Later, all of the resources will be available in the main reading room of the "Maison de l'Asie" along with other collections; for the time being they are available for reading in the own space at the centre (opening hours not confirmed. Scholars are requested to call 01 53 70 18 66 for information).

Centre d'Etudes Tibétaines in Collège de France

(see *European Bulletin of Himalayan Research*, n°3, pp.33-34) remains in the building of 52, rue du Cardinal Lemoine, Paris 75005. The library is open twice a week, on Wednesday mornings and Thursday afternoons (Tel. : 01 44 27 18 30). Mme Anne Chayet is in charge of the centre and Mme Jenny Ferreux is the Librarian.

The collection of 2323 titles (2618 volumes) consists primarily of books and periodicals in Tibetan (2234 volumes, 10 periodicals) and about 300-400 books in Western Languages and a few modern books (88 volumes) and 6 periodicals in Chinese.

Musée Guimet Library

The Musée Guimet, 6 place d'Iéna, Paris 75116, has been closed since February 1996, and will not re-open before 1999, because of building repairs; only the annex, 19, avenue d'Iéna, remains open.

The library will normally not be open during the same period, but it has been decided that researchers may use it. Prospective readers are requested to send a written application to Monsieur le Conservateur de la Bibliothèque du Musée Guimet, 6, place d'Iéna, one or two weeks in advance; they will receive a written answer at their own address.

Bibliothèque Interuniversitaire des Langues Orientales

4 rue de Lille, Paris 75007 (See EBHR, n°3, pp.27-29).

Tel. : 01 44 77 87 20.

The computerisation of books and periodicals in Western languages. Card files are still in use for other languages.

Since the 1992 issues of this bulletin, the collection of books in Nepali has been moved from the building on rue de Lille and put in storage in Orsay, not far from Paris. The library is acutely short of space, so while waiting for new buildings to be found, and there is nothing in view for the time being (the same is also true for the Institut National des Langues Orientales as a whole), books which are rarely read, as is the case for books in Nepali, have been stored.

However, they are still available provided the reader asks for them, in person or by letter, about one week in advance, and the requested publication will be sent to the reading room, rue de Lille.

For admittance, only two photographs are required, and a pass will immediately be made.

Bibliothèque Nationale

58, rue Richelieu, Paris 75002. Tel. : 01 47 03 81 26 (see EBHR, n°4, pp.22-28).

In the near future (1997-1998), as is well-known, the bulk of printed books kept in the National Library will be transferred to the new buildings of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, 11 quai François Mauriac, Paris 75706 (metro : Quai de la Gare). But the Département des Manuscrits Orientaux and the Département des Cartes et Plans (Maps Department) will remain at "Richelieu".

Centre d'Etudes Himalayennes

1 pl. Aristide Briand, 92195 Meudon cedex. Tel. : 01 45 07 50 03.
Librarian : Mme Pierrette Massonnet.

In 1992 the Centre d'Etudes Himalayennes began computerising its collection. Today nearly half its references are in the database and can be interrogated by scholars and other visitors. About 200-250 copies of the annual acquisitions list with approximately 2000-2500 new references continue to be sent. The database will soon be accessible on the Internet.

ERRATA

In the paper on Himalayan archives in Paris, part II, EBHR n°4, 1992, some words or lines have been dropped during the printing process :

- p.23, 2nd column, from line 35 on, one should read :
...such as Dor Bahadur Bista's and Marc Gaborieau's works, and monographs on Nepalese castes, tribes, or localities : Limbu, Gurung, Tamang, Sherpa tribes and on Dolpo, Tarap, Panauti, etc.
- p.26, 1st column, from line 3, one should read :
...Later on it was Miss Silburn only who was in charge of the cataloguing. The following register lists a Kanjur reprint...
- p.27, 1st column, last three lines, one should read :
...even English and German editions of Huc's and Gabet's famous book, of which 6 French editions already existed when this catalogue was written.
- p.28, 1st column, from line 39, one should read :
...or the subject classification catalogue, also divided in sections according to the time of arrival of the book in the library, successively hand-written in registers, on cards in classical drawer files, and finally on line through computers, this last system since 1985 [This was in 1992, now in 1996 the Catalogue is computerised back to 1974 at least].
- p.30, 2nd column, from the first line, one should read :

... Eastern miscellany (in Chinese) from 1905 to 1973 including articles on Tibet, useful items are also books on the whole of Chinese history, dynastic histories, biographic dictionaries, etc. But what is especially valuable...

THE ORGANISATION OF SPACE AND THE SYMBOLISM OF THE INDO- NEPALESE HOUSE IN CENTRAL NEPAL - PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS DURING FIELDWORK¹.

Gil Daryn

The House has a central role in the organisation of Bahun (Brahman) culture and society. It can be seen as part of a general conception in which the self (microcosms) and the world (macrocosms) are all considered to be 'living temples'. The house is related to and built according to this model which combines two perceptions. The first sees the house as a living entity which, like a Bahun, should go through Hindu life cycle rituals and can become sick etc. The second views the house as a temple, a pure and holy place for the gods. The Bahun also perceive other artificial constructions they build around their houses, such as *cautara* (a resting place for travellers built in and out of the village), Bhume (the earth god) temples in and near the premises of the rice fields, and other temples that surround the village like *kul deota* (clan gods) and *ban Devi* (forest goddesses), in a similar way.

The Bahun view themselves as being an organic part of the house: being the house *ama* (soul). Moreover, people actually identify themselves with their houses. The house, the way it is built and used can be seen to symbolise human perceptions of the self. The exchanges of evil messengers (through witchcraft and sorcery) between the village houses or family temples, reflects the social milieu to be found there. That social milieu is sodden with mistrust and suspicion, people are continually acting behind masks and playing role games up into the most intimate levels they may have.

The house has a primary role in a series of security fences that Bahuns try to build around themselves and their village. Mainly, it is seen as a shelter from the majority of the evil spirits found in the village and its surroundings. However, the lifelong daily effort of guarding one's own body/family/house borders and the endless quest for safety and purity seems to be somewhat futile.

¹ Field work going on in a Bahun village in hills of central Nepal. This is done as part of Ph.D. research under the supervision of Professor Alan Macfarlane at the Department of Anthropology, the University of Cambridge, England.

Houses and people alike are believed to have no immunity to the invasion of *birs*, which are considered to be the most the most terrible evil messengers to be kept by people in their houses. They keep them in order to send them to other people's houses and by that try to harm and destroy each other. *Birs* actually symbolise the inevitable danger to one's body and house. This concept of *birs* shared by the Bahun in the village in which I am working is indicative of the main ambivalence that governs their life. Although they might have liked to see themselves as Leibniz's Monads, closed in a bubble with no window and thus immune to invasion of evil and impurity, they are compelled to have families and live as part of a society. That inevitably brings with it an immanent danger that is to be found in almost every facet, stage and action through life.

The main function of the houses or living temples seems to be connected to the keeping and consuming of food. Eating in itself is seen as an act of sacrifice or *puya* done for the gods of the house and those within oneself.

The relative way in which the borders of a house are defined suggests a perception of a continuum between interior and exterior rather than the definite concept to which we might be accustomed. This relativity, or perception of things as being on a continuum between two extremes resembles another main concept in the Bahun culture, the concept of purity.

In sum, understanding the place of the house in the Bahun culture, its stages of construction, and the social relationship of living in it seems to be the key to the uncoding of the self and society of the Bahuns, who are the most influential social group in Nepal.



MYTHOS TIBET, Bonn, 10-12 May 1996

Conference report by Bettina Zeisler

Since antiquity up to the present day "Tibet" has been associated with romantic notions of a counter - or other - world. These affirmative as well as antipathetic representations of Tibet were critically reviewed at the international symposium "Mythos Tibet" (10-12 May 1996) in Bonn (organised by the Forum der Kunst- und Ausstellungshalle der Bundesrepublik Deutschland and the Seminar für Sprach- und Kulturwissenschaft Zentralasiens, Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn) held on the occasion of the opening of the exposition "Weisheit und Liebe - 1000 Jahre Kunst des tibetischen Buddhismus". Contrary to academic traditions the symposium was open to and was met with a good response from a broader public - except a few visitors whose hopes for a deeper foundation of their personal myths about Tibet were severely disappointed by the high scholarly pitch of the lectures.

On the first two days, the focus lay on the historical development of the ambivalent images of Tibet in the West and the use and effects of these images. The first rather reliable information did not reach Europe before the 17th century with the reports of the catholic missionaries Antonio d'Andrade and Ippolito Desideri, who nurtured negative prejudices about the uncivilised barbarians with their disgusting superstitious rituals (**Rudolf Kaschewsky**). Enlightened scientists looked down with contempt and fear on the mystical enthusiasm on the one hand, and the degeneration of original Buddhism on the other, while romantic partisans (not knowing that the Blue Flower does, indeed, grow in the Himalayas) were looking for secret wisdom of the Orient, criticising Occidental civilisation and incipient modernisation with its impact on individuals and society (**Loden Sherab Dagyab Rinpoche**). Per Kvaerne's survey of more modern Tibetan studies showed that they were either led by evolutionist and colonialist attitudes or, again, by the search for archaic traditions and the original religion of Tibet. Recent studies consider Tibet as integrated in a broader context of Asian culture and history.

Reinhard Greve described how German Tibetan studies were incorporated into the National Socialist foundation "SS Ahnenerbe". Obscurantist "scholars" protected by Himmler, who was an adherent of occultism, maintained that the Aryan race from Atlantis found refuge in Shambala. Likewise, but from a more rational point of view, the expedition of 1938/39 led by Schäfer and Beger aimed to study the enclave of Tibet and the remnants of the immigrant Nordic race, which was "weakened" and "suppressed" by a Judaic-Masonic-papal-lamaist pacifistic conspiracy. The extreme negative position was held by Rosenberg and the circle around Mathilde Ludendorff: Europe was threatened by satanic-lamaist sexual practices introduced by the Etruscans. Thus, Buddhist associations like the one in Berlin-Frohnau should be eliminated by assassinations. The "empty space" in Central Asia met with an increasingly political interest resulting in the foundation of the Sven-Hedin-Reichsinstitut in Munich. However, Helmut Hoffman and Johannes Schubert found a niche apart from politics, and the course of war prevented them from being manipulated by the Nazis. After war they build up the first chairs for Tibetology in East and West Germany.

A prominent part in shaping Western ideas of the Orient and the psychologisation of its arts and religion was played by the Theosophical Society which, at the same time, by reflecting back the Western imaginings of the Orient affected the self-perception of the Easterners (**Poul Pedersen**). In America, from the 19th century, Tibetan Buddhism was co-opted by and fused with marginal religious groups such as the "Buddhistic Swedenborgian Brotherhood of Los Angeles". The romantic images of Tibet and misunderstood "Buddhism" provided an ideal sect of religious principles for the New Age movement (**Frank J. Korom**). Since the days of European Enlightenment Illuminati and other "enlightened" people always found a big market. T. Lobsang Rampa's book "The Third Eye" (1956) is one of the best-selling books on "Tibet" ever written. **Donald S. Lopez** gave a condensed summary of the work of this would-be Tibetan lama, showing that the borrowing from scholarly research makes trivial fiction so seemingly authentic. Peter Bishop's lecture followed a similar path, examining the image of Tibet in Western films and literature for adults as well as for children. Documentary films found their way to Tibet and met with an ambivalent reception. While the image of Tibet as Shangri-La found a

positive echo the Mount Everest films of the 1920s led to a severe disturbance of Anglo-Tibetan diplomatic relations (**Peter H. Hansen**).

Responding to Donald S. Lopez, **Thierry Dodin** (who together with **Heinz Räther** projected and organised the symposium) claimed that fictional literature, as unserious as it may be, may play an important role in drawing the interest of the public to Tibet and Buddhism. However, as **Loden Sherab Dagyab Rinpoche** remarked in his lecture, although recourse to romantic ideas by Tibetan teachers facilitated the spreading of a superficial interest in Buddhism in the West, it did not lead to and even prevented a deeper understanding of Buddhist teaching and practice. Similarly **Dawa Norbu** complained that lay Tibetan refugees, when confronted with the Western notion of all Tibetans being noble savages and saintly magicians, were set back in their adaptation to a new environment. Obviously they are torn between nostalgic sentiments and the rejection of their traditions combined with an uncritical adoption of the Western myth of development. **Toni Huber** added the observation that Tibetan women in exile seeking their identity were attracted by the Western idealisation of the ancient Tibetan society as an egalitarian one and were, consequently, quite upset to find out that women were precluded from several rituals in these good old times.

"Orientalism" or exoticism is not only a European invention. Parallels of clichés were presented by **Thomas Heberer**. China claimed to be the cultural centre of the world, and the barbarians, seen as minor children or instinct-driven libertines, had to be elevated by education to the standard of Confucianism. Nor was the mystification of Tibet a product of mere fantasy, but, as **Heather Stoddard** argued, at least partly a result of the cultural shock that Westerners underwent when they were confronted by the visual representations of tantric practice and imagination. **Oskar Weggel** discussed actual political positions towards Tibet that are still marked by the same old sentiments, positive and negative mystifications of (secret) tradition versus (superstitious) backwardness.

On the third day, panel discussions and introductory lectures centred about the question of whether Tibetans were exemplary ecologists, peaceful, and tolerant. **Ludmilla Tüting** admitted that

while insight into Tibetan Buddhism might help to restore the ecological balance, the application of this insight encounters economic as well as socio-cultural limitations. **Graham E. Clarke** polemicised against the new myth of a "noble conservator", drawing attention to problems of desertification and deforestation, partly natural and partly caused by Tibetans entering the modern market economy. Likewise, the Gandhian principle of non-violence adopted by the present Dalai Lama for political reasons is merely projected back onto his predecessors and was not part of the intellectual atmosphere of the past (**Elliot Sperling**). As for tolerance and rationality, **Jeffrey Hopkins** expounded the custom of noncritical allegiance towards the own, as well as opponent-bashing of rival monastic colleges that is part of the traditional education system.

With the exception of **Robert A.F. Thurman** who, in his lecture and in his opening address (as organiser of the exposition), emphasised the spiritual power of the Tibetan culture, the lectures showed a rather critical distance towards the subject of their studies. However, not without reaching a limit: the discussion was blocked when the question was raised from the audience whether the visual art of Tibet, especially the representation of the Shambala myth, was not full of terror, violence, and intolerance (against Moslems), and which could not be explained and put aside as psychological means leading to a peaceful mind. If this somewhat emotional accusation corresponds to the negative mystification of Tibet, the uncritical affirmation of the harmless contents of Tibetan paintings corresponds to the romantic one, and it might be time to examine this question with as much scrutiny as the various themes of this conference, presented in a way that makes us look forward to the publication of the proceedings.

PILGRIMAGE IN TIBET, Leiden, 12-13 September 1996

Conference report by **Katia Buffetrille**

A Seminar on Pilgrimage in Tibet was convened by Dr Alex McKay at the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden, The Netherlands, September 12th and 13th 1996.

Reflecting interest in the subject over the past few years, this meeting gathered 12 scholars from several countries, belonging to various disciplines. The papers were dedicated to a variety of aspects of pilgrimage as their titles indicate:

Dr Wim van Spengen (University of Amsterdam): "Material Conditions of Tibetan Pilgrimage".

Pr Per Kvaerne (University of Oslo): "An Early Twentieth-Century Tibetan Pilgrim in India".

Dr John Clarke (Victoria and Albert Museum, London): "The Gosains, Hindu Trading Pilgrims in Tibet".

Dr Brigitte Steinmann (University of Montpellier): "The Opening of the sBas yul 'Bras mo'i gshongs According to the Chronicle of the Rulers of Sikkim: Pilgrimage as a Metaphorical Model of the Submission of Foreign Populations (Lepchas) by the Sa skya pa Conquerors".

Dr Elisabeth Stutchbury (Australian National University): "Pumo Kuluta; the Story of a Contested Site".

Dr Katia Buffetrille (E.P.H.E. Paris): "Some Reflections on Pilgrimages to Sacred Mountains, Lakes and Caves".

Dr Andrea Loseries-Leick (University of Graz): "On the Sacredness of Mount Kailasa in the Indian and Tibetan Sources".

Dr Hanna Havnevik (University of Oslo): "The Pilgrimage of Jetsun Lochan Rinpoche (1865-1951)".

Pr W.M. Callewaert (K. University of Leuven): "May 1996: To Kailash via the Northern Route and Saparam".

Peng Wenbin (South West Nationalities College, Chengdu): "Tibetan Pilgrimage in the Process of Social Changes: The Case of Kiuzaigou in Northwest Sichuan Province, PRC".

Dr Alex McKay (I.I.A.S. Leiden): "Asceticism, Power and Pilgrimage: Kailas-Manasarovar in "Classical" and Colonial Indian Sources".

Toni Huber (University of Virginia): "Modernity, Revival and Decline in Tibetan Mountain Pilgrimages: The Case of Northern Bird Cemetery (Byang bya dur) and Eastern Conch Mountain (Shar dung ri) in A mdo Shar khog".



DISSERTATION ABSTRACTS

Olivia Aubriot : *Eau, miroir des tensions. Ethno-histoire d'un système d'irrigation dans les moyennes montagnes du Népal Central*, Université d'Aix-Marseille, 1996, 3 vol. 601p.

The subject of this dissertation is the study of social organisation in a Nepalese village through an analysis of the water management system. In this instance, irrigation is indeed a good entry point to understand the village's social organisation. Geographically, all the villagers' land holdings are within the irrigation work (40 hectares, irrigated by a six-kilometre-long canal on the hillside). Economically, these irrigated fields represent the primary agricultural resource. Socially, as will be demonstrated, water management reflects social units, relationships and group identities analogous to those observed in the community's daily life. The questions that arise concern the relationship between irrigation and society: to what extent does the organisation of irrigation reflect the elements of social organisation? How do social constraints impact on the technical aspects of the irrigation system? Does the irrigation system evolve at the same pace as society? Does the irrigation system reflect the evolution of social changes?

To answer these questions, a historical approach has been adopted and two main themes have been developed through this research. The first one relates to the construction, stemming from a local initiative, and the development of an irrigation system, from 1893 to the beginning of the twentieth century. In examining the history of the irrigation system, the focus is placed on the socio-economic conditions prevalent during that period (population, land use, agricultural products, political incentives, etc.) to permit an understanding of the logic regulating the system's management. In the prevailing environmental conditions, the analysis of the water distribution system reveals that the use of a water clock to determine individual water rights is not technically required. A comparative study of various distribution systems shows that this technology is not commonly used in Nepal. Its presence in this village is the result of adopting an irrigation technique in use in a neighbouring village. Moreover, this technique was imported to this area and is common in arid zones. This analysis emphasizes that a technical process must be considered within the context of the society

through the values attributed to it by that society, and not by physical determinism.

The second theme relates to the evolution of the relationship between irrigation and society. The initial water distribution scheme reflects the lineage system of the village : an irrigation block, that is the land receiving water at a given time, is determined by the land owned by a specific lineage group. As local society evolves and some lineage groups disappear; the water distribution system continues to follow the established pattern of irrigation. However, there is then no management mechanism in place to assure the evolution of those irrigation blocks which no longer belong to a specific lineage group. A greater stability of land distribution due to the sale of fields and inheritance within a lineage group may be observed in those irrigation blocks retained by specific lineage groups, which in turn reflects the influence of a lineage water organisation system. It is not only water distribution, but irrigation management more broadly, which reflects other aspects of social organisation. When conflicts arise among lineage groups, farmers resort to issues of water management to express social tensions. Leaders too will use issues of water management to assert their social position in the village. Problems related to water distribution are also exploited through political conflicts arising out of the more recent establishment of the multi-party system.

Irrigation should not only be seen as a system of technology but as part of the fabric of social organisation. As such, it becomes a reference point for many forms of social expression.

Pascal Bouchery : *Les Hani. Introduction à l'étude d'une population tibéto-birmane du Yunnan en relation avec la Chine*, Université Paris X, Nanterre, 1995, 3 vols., 725 p.

(translation : S. Keyes)

This dissertation chiefly examines the Hani, a minority society from Chinese Yunnan, whose kinfolk are also found in countries adjacent to southern China (Viet Nam, Burma, Laos) as well as in

Thailand, and the population represented today numbers approximately 1,500,000.

The general perception of this society, which even today remains particularly misunderstood from an anthropological point of view, is in keeping with the more general comparative anthropological perception. Until the present, the respective works of Sinology and those of anthropology dealing with societies without a written language system in this part of the world have accorded very little space to the study of cultural relations among the Han, on one hand, and the people living on the periphery of Chinese territory, on the other. In keeping with an extension of the ideas of Maspero, Eberhard and Mus, the author attempts to determine if institutions of people with different languages, political organisations and beliefs, in reality arise from common and ancient structures of thought or if they cannot be reduced to the simple phenomena of assimilation. To support this analysis, the author suggests comparing Hani society, not so much with contemporary Chinese society, but with the ancient cultural roots of China, and more precisely, the period anterior to the first Empire, i.e. up to the third century B.C., which is more favourable for revealing possible convergences.

Particularly, he endeavours to show that the political organisation and the function of the Hani priesthood is based on a coherent intellectual structure whose constitutive elements have equivalents in China's archaic modes of thought. Among the Hani, a unique principle of the emergence of authority, based on notions of virtue and purity, at one and the same time circumscribes the recruitment of political and religious authorities at the village level. In addition, in its role as mediator between the human community and supernatural protectors, the village priest (*migu*) is placed at the centre of a global disposition of correspondences between the village microcosm and the macrocosm. A vital relationship which affects the inhabitants' survival and prosperity is embodied in him. A concept of the emergence of power in relation with the divine becomes clear. Hence, political and religious institutions lead to the realisation of the same project of social normalcy through the synchronism of human actions from the cycle of their social and religious activities and from the natural cycle established by supernatural and ancestral forces. Therefore, this principle of government presents indisputable affinities with archaic concepts which

underlie the "theory of natural government" elaborated by the Chinese at the dawn of the third century B.C., and which reappears as a model of governmental orthopraxy in imperial China. A comparable principle of the emergence of authority founded on the notion of virtue (*daode*) characterised the Chinese lord of the feudal period, the king, and later, the emperor. They all mediated the relation of their subjects with regard to important divinities in the pantheon, and throughout the ritual, they possessed a regulatory function essential to the general prosperity of the dictated territory and its inhabitants.

This homology of structure led the author to question the reasons for the permanence of an archaic organisation in Chinese society which obviously derived from ancient cultural foundations and whose structure never sought to deviate until the recent advent of the Republic. Returning to the manner in which political centralisation was elaborated in China through the influence of the convergence of cults, the author recalls that the progressive extension of the State was accompanied by a dispossession of traditional prerogatives belonging to various specialists at the local echelon, having a mediating relationship with the supernatural (priests, exorcists, shamans) to the benefit of State agents. A dogmatic theory of power was not replaced with another, but rather there occurred at the interior of an intellectual structure commonly shared by all, a simple substitution of the agents of power to the benefit of official representatives. But the concepts of religious order supporting this theory were found as well in the local substratum rather than at the level of the superstructure, and beyond the phenomenon of centralisation, these concepts were only finally adapted to a more vast unity. The process of the centralisation of cults reveals, on one hand, the Chinese principle of sovereignty based on relation with the divine. Far from incorporating any archaic relic, to the contrary, it was used in a permanent manner by the State as an instrument for legitimating its power, leading everywhere to the realisation of an infeudation of divinities in conjunction with political infeudation. Various examples from China's neighbouring countries permit broadening the scope of established facts and prove that the manipulation of concepts linked to mediation towards protector divinities constitutes a paradigm of political centralisation in Asia. Far from constituting any residual anachronism, the ancient concept of a chief mediator "elected by the gods" thus seems to have played an essential role in the process, if not of

development, at the very least of the State's extension. The hierarchical encasing of divinities has permitted, in the first place, the political integration of people at the heart of the State hierarchy, and it is through the infeudation of gods, especially earth gods, that the infeudation of man could be realised. This interpretation may explain why governmental orthodoxy in China has never been able to deviate from archaic concepts of power drawn from the ancient substratum, thus explaining the survival of modes of thinking as well as the imperial structure at the end of the Qing dynasty at the beginning of the twentieth century and among contemporary populations within China such as the Hani.

The research undertaken shows that the diversity of forms of political organisation established in this region of the world is a response to an important convergence of views concerning the practical and symbolic efficacy of power. It allows the disengagement of common intellectual structures around which political institutions in both State and non-State systems are formulated and the role these models play in the process of political centralisation emerging from the formation of countries in Asia. In the representation of traditional states of the sinicized world, it is evidence of cultural schemas pre-existing the State, notably a general concept of authority largely spread out among non-state agrarian societies. Founded on a privileged relation with earth gods, it is used during the course of societal development to establish legitimacy.

This remarkable extension of comparable historical processes in Asia, teaches us that, contrary to a summary evolutionism, the advent of the State, far from being a struggle with religious elements, pre-existing founders of authority, it most often perpetuated and amplified these elements. It tends to confirm the idea by which the magico-religious dimension is primary in the traditional conception of authority and constitutes the cultural melting-pot from which the proper political power of the sovereigns of primitive States emerges. Thus, the ancient concept of the chief "elected by the gods", elaborated in the countryside and villages, could well constitute the very foundation of the monarchical institution in this part of the world. And if this is the case, we can undoubtedly and definitively conceive this group of beliefs and

rituals drawn from Asia's ancient substratum as an integral part of the apparatus which we call the "State".

Katia Buffetrille : *Montagnes sacrées, lacs et grottes, lieux de pèlerinage dans le monde tibétain. Traditions écrites et réalités vivantes*, Université de Paris X, Nanterre, 1996, 3 vol., 813 pp, maps, illus., index.

This work, by focusing on pilgrimages in Tibet proper and in the Sherpa area (east Nepal), studies the relationship between Buddhism and popular beliefs. The notion of pilgrimage is a religious phenomenon full of strong and surprising vitality and it is also one of the chief religious acts of lay people. One of the subject's main interests is the intermingling of several traditions. One finds traditional practices that may be described as "popular" in the sense that they belong to the people and not to any learned tradition as well as Buddhist beliefs and influences from the periphery of Tibetan culture, all of them difficult to identify even today. The purpose of this study was not to separate Buddhist actions and beliefs from those that may be called non-Buddhist but rather to understand how this synthesis has taken place and is still evolving, and how and why some elements have been retained in the form.

Pilgrimage sites are numerous, but the only ones taken into account in this work are those that can be qualified as natural: sacred mountains, lakes and caves. This study primarily focuses on the following:

1- primary sources on Tibet: Kailash (western Tibet), A myes rMa chen (eastern Tibet) and rTsi ri (southern Tibet); and Nepal: the caves of Halase-Maratika (south-east of Okhaldunga) and the lake of 'O ma mtsho (north of Junbesi).

2- previous studies on Kong po Bon ri (east of Lhasa), Kha ba dkar po (in Yunnan, between the Salween and the Mekong) and Tsa ri (south-eastern Tibet).

Mountains are a permanent geographical reality in the Tibetan world; in addition, they form an indestructible religious substratum, an essential component of the religious landscape, as the work of A. Macdonald (1971) based on some of the Dunhuang manuscripts has shown. The association of sacred mountains, lakes and caves derives

from the Tibetan concept of space, where these entities form a whole.

A two-fold approach was adopted for this research: the study of written sources (mainly pilgrimage guides) and the observation of actual pilgrimages combined with numerous interviews with Tibetans in Tibet and in Nepal.

The analysis is directed first to the traditional cult of the territorial gods, *yul lha*. These gods who, as a general rule, are "mountain deities" are mentioned as early as the Dunhuang manuscripts. They remain very present in the life of contemporary Tibetans. Most scholars agree that the concept of territorial gods and thus their cult preceded Buddhism. This cult, which appealed mainly to laymen, thrived until the Chinese occupation, and has recently enjoyed a revival, as witnessed in some regions of Tibet. Therefore, it is a living phenomenon. This remarkable continuity of tradition highlights the importance mountains have enjoyed down through the centuries, even when temples, monasteries and *stūpa*, symbols of the expansion of Buddhism, multiplied everywhere on Tibetan territory. The ritual for the territorial god which involved various competitions, was at the heart of political organisation. It was a life-giving ritual in A. Hocart's sense ([1936] 1978) since it allowed the revival of the environment and that of the society which depended on this environment.

The life-giving rituals thus have a crucial political aspect explaining the interest temporal and spiritual Buddhist authorities have shown for the cult of the territorial god and its implications. Just as a centralised state is slow to tolerate the independence of local powers, its authorities could only reluctantly admit the designation of local chiefs in the name of a territorial god. They could neither accept the territorial gods, nor could they, for fear of violent opposition, completely suppress them. The solution arrived at was one of Buddhization: the *yul lha* were deliberately transformed into "mountain holy places" (*gnas ri*); new cults and the practice of circumambulation materialised and consolidated this take-over.

The present work shows that the process of Buddhization involves a ritual appropriation of space in which written sources play an important role. They describe the submission of the indigenous deities and the installation of the *maṇḍala* of a Buddhist deity (generally that of

Cakrasamvara) within the landscape. The objective of a pilgrimage guide is to lead the ordinary pilgrim from the simple perception of a physical landscape to the conception of the place as a sacred landscape. These texts are literary stereotyped projections of an internal vision of spiritual reality destined to convey the pilgrim towards a supernatural level. Texts of this kind are in fact nothing but a Tantric *sādhana*. The pilgrim knows the content of these texts through the transmission of knowledge by religious people met along the pilgrimage routes. Thus, it is through written sources, passed on orally by religious people that the sacred landscape is created for the one who does not perceive it.

The appropriation of space also takes place on a physical level, in a concrete manner, through the arrival in the area of saints, the construction of religious buildings and marks left in the landscape by prestigious visitors.

Buddhicization also involves also the appropriation of wildlife which belong to the Buddhist world and was originally considered the property of the *yul lha*. One is again advised not to do any harm. In accordance with Buddhist ideals.

Time also falls under this ascendancy and the time of pilgrimage is determined, in a more or less precise manner, according to Buddhist criteria.

The extent of Buddhicization is unequally spread over the Tibetan area, in accordance with the interests of political and religious authorities. The study of various pilgrimages shows that this process is not linear nor monolithic.

Pilgrimages around sacred mountains intervene in many aspects of an individual's life (sickness, death, or the desire to obtain material benefits) and have also great importance for the community and its survival (for example in the case of incest and its purification). They also show how the Buddhist authorities have made compromises in order to impose Buddhist ideology.

Pilgrimages, in any case, reveal changes realised through the contributions made by Buddhism to popular religion, and also by the natural attraction laymen have for some of these contributions.

According to my observations, the lay pilgrim moves within a system that is not exclusively defined either by traditional notions antedating Buddhism or by Buddhist notions proper. It is a composite system harbouring a unique vision of the world and endowed with its own coherence. The behaviour of pilgrims differs according to the concept they have of the mountain they are circumambulating, but their aim is always to obtain material benefits to which spiritual benefits are attached.

Pilgrimages around sacred mountains enter into a logic based on an exchange between the pilgrim and the deity, which tends to disappear as the sacred mountain becomes a holy place. This law of exchange demonstrates the non-transcendental nature of the supernatural entities who inhabit the site. By constructing temples and by spreading *Cakrasamvara's maṇḍala* over the landscape, Buddhists have introduced a change in the relationship between man and deity. The old relationship of two partners disappears, giving way to an attitude of veneration in which the pilgrim implores the deity to grant him what he desires. Once the mountain has become completely "Buddhicized", the pilgrim acts as if he were in a temple.

During times of disorder, the revitalisation of pilgrimages, in Tibet, in India and in Nepal is one of the manifestations of the political and cultural identity of Tibetans. Buddhism, whose principles are often in conflict with popular beliefs, at least from what we know of them, is at present one of the cohesive forces of national identity. This revitalisation underlines the adherence of Tibetans to a practice which has been, in some ways, a symbol of Tibet's sovereignty ever since the Dalai Lama, its temporal and spiritual chief, led a pilgrimage to the sacred mountain of *Tsa ri*. By making pilgrimages, Tibetans seem to assert their identity, wandering along the pilgrimage routes, they map out their territory anew and reappropriate their space in the face of the Chinese occupancy.

Thierry Mathou : Bhoutan. Politique étrangère et identité culturelle : Une stratégie pour survivre, Institut de Sciences Politiques, Paris, 1994, 2 vol., 850 p.

Once the most isolated country in the world, Bhutan has unwillingly become headline news. Forty years ago, foreign policy posed no complex problem for this landlocked, sheltered kingdom. When Prime Minister Nehru made his historic visit to Bhutan in late 1958, he was the first head of a foreign government ever to penetrate the kingdom. At that time, Bhutan had no diplomatic relations. Today, the kingdom maintains diplomatic relations with 18 countries and has 5 missions abroad. It has joined more than 150 international organisations including the United Nations. As a result of a skilful and surprisingly developed diplomacy, Bhutan has chosen to adopt a low profile on the international scene. It has made cautious and calculated moves to enlarge its approach to the world. Among Asian countries, Bhutan probably succeeded best in conciliating three mutually exclusive objectives: sovereignty, preservation of its cultural heritage, and broadening of its foreign relations. Today, amidst political unrest Bhutan is experiencing one of the most critical moments in its history. Indeed, the balance between tradition and modernity achieved through thirty years through thirty years of careful planning and prudent diplomacy is in danger.

The growth of diplomacy has affected Bhutan's social and political life. When the kingdom decided to end its isolation in the early 1960s, following Chinese military incursions and Indian political pressure, it started an inexorable process. Every step meant a new opportunity and challenge to Bhutan. In 1961, the year of the launching of the first Five Year Plan, the opportunity of an "open policy" was the beginning of a new and productive partnership with India which has played a major role in the emergence of modern Bhutan. The challenge, however, was a growing political and economic dependence that Bhutan had to overcome by opening new channels of communication to the world. This was done in 1971 when the kingdom joined the UN. The major step gave Bhutan an international status. But it also challenged its ability to adapt to the international rules of diplomacy and to the set of cultural values imposed by Western countries through international institutions. To compensate for the dilution of its identity and to avoid these influences, the kingdom entered into new commitments that

corresponded more to its interests.

In 1973, it joined the Non-Aligned Movement by subscribing fully to the principles of the Panch Shila. Regional initiatives were also essential for Bhutan in order to balance India's hegemony in South Asia and to develop new co-operation with neighbouring countries with similar problems. The creation of SAARC (South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation) in 1983 furthered the kingdom's interests, but also became a challenge, as South Asia is a troubled region confronted with ethnic problems and political rivalries.

The growth of diplomacy has allowed Bhutan to assert its independence and sovereignty. But it has also increased its exposure to the world and has dragged it into shifting world politics.

This doctoral dissertation, using political science and sociology as a framework, aims to study the process of political development in Bhutan through the analysis of interaction between external factors (foreign policy) and internal factors (institutionalisation).

CALL FOR PAPERS

The 8th Colloquium of the International Association for Ladakh Studies is scheduled to be held from June 5-8, 1997 at Moesgaard, a few miles south of Aarhus in Denmark.

The IALS colloquia have been held regularly, usually every other year, since 1983, and are intended to bring together people interested or engaged in Ladakh studies from many disciplines. Although the majority of participants generally have a social science or humanities background, other disciplines are welcome. With a view to broadening the scope of Ladakh studies and to foster discussions and exchanges across political as well as disciplinary boundaries, researchers working in Baltistan are also welcome.

At this time, we are inviting proposals for papers and/or panels and wish to gauge interest in participation.

Anyone interested in participating is requested to pre-register at this time and - if applicable - to submit a short (250 words) abstract for a paper, preferably in hard copy and on disk (IBM compatible) or by e-mail.

Only those whose are pre-registered can be sure to receive future communications regarding the conference.

Send all communications to :

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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ANTHROPOLOGY AND SOCIOLOGY OF NEPAL

Cultures, Societies, Development and Ecology

March 25-28, 1997

The Sociological/Anthropological Society of Nepal (SASON) and the Department of Sociology/Anthropology, Tribhuvan University are asking for paper submission for the above conference to be held in Kathmandu, Nepal, March 25-28, 1997. Interested researchers, students and professionals with Nepal experience are invited to participate in the conference. Abstracts of papers for the conference should be received by October 30, 1996. The deadline of submission of papers is January 15, 1997. Send abstracts and papers (with your full address) to :
Dr. Ram Bahadur Chhetri, President SASON, P.O. Box 6017, Kathmandu, Nepal, Fax : 977-535269.



NEW BOOKS

Jacqueline Thévenet has recently published "La mission au Bhoutan et au Tibet", an account of George Bogle's thirteenth-month voyage in the seventeenth century. Bogle left Calcutta with the goal of finding new commercial access to these two countries and establishing formal relations between the East India Company and the government of Tibet. This translation makes Bogle's missions available for the first time to francophone readers. It is entirely accurate to the original, even imitating the author's style, and includes a map, notes, an index and a glossary. Lucette Boulnois' brilliant introduction establishes Bogle's mission in its proper political and economic context.

George Bogle, mission au Bhoutan et au Tibet, translated from English and annotated by Jacqueline Thévenet, preface by Corneille Jest and Introduction by Lucette Boulnois. Paris : Editions Kimé, Collection "Manuscrits retrouvés", 1996, 256 pages, ISBN 2-84174-043-9, 160FF.



To appear in October 1996

Célébrer le pouvoir Dasaï, une fête royale au Népal

Gisèle Krauskopff & Marie Lecomte-Tilouine eds.

CNRS Editions/ Editions de la MSH,
20-22, rue St Amand, 75015 Paris. (ISBN 2-271-05321-8. 245FF)

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Le Myahni (Durgā pujā) dans l'ancien palais royal de Patan. Histoire et anthropologie d'un culte royal népalais, Gérard Toffin

Entre dépendance mythologique et liberté rituelle : la célébration de Dasaï au temple de Kālikā à Gorkha, Günter Unbescheid.

Les rituels royaux de Dasaï à Katmandou. Notes préliminaires, Marie Lecomte-Tilouine & Bihari K. Shrestha.

Rencontre des déesses et des dieux du lieu : le Dasaï et les changements de pouvoir à Phalabang (Salyan), Gisèle Krauskopff.

Luttes d'influence dans l'empire de la Déesse, Philippe Ramirez.

Les dieux-sabres. Etude du Dasaï dans une capitale sans roi (Isma), Marie Lecomte-Tilouine.

II. Conflits et marges

Dasaï et le double pouvoir chez les Yakthumba, Philippe Sagant.

Le nouvel an du radis chez les Néwar du Tibet, Corneille Jest & Kesar Lall Shrestha.

La Déesse chez les renonçants : Dasaï dans les monastères sannyasi (vallée de Katmandou), Véronique Bouillier.

Le grand dilemme des musulmans. Comment participer au pouvoir sans le sacrifier ? Marc Gaborieau.

**THE DOZING SHAMAN
THE LIMBUS OF EASTERN NEPAL**

by

PHILIPPE SAGANT

Translated from the French by Nora B. Scott

*Delhi, Oxford University Press, 1996, 461 p.,
ISBN 019562970-1*

**ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY OF TIBETAN MEDECINE
(1789-1995)
KOMMENTIERTE BIBLIOGRAPHIE ZUR TIBETISCHEN
MEDIZIN (1789-1995)**

by Jürgen C. Aschoff

Fabri Verlag Ulm/Germany
& Garuda Verlag Dietikon/Switzerland

ISBN 3-9802975-9-4, 426 p., Ulm 1996, DM 126/ US \$ 86

**GODS, MEN AND TERRITORY
Society and Culture in Kathmandu Valley**

by Anne Vergati

Manohar, Centre de Sciences Humaines, 1995,
ISBN 81-7304-078-8, Ind.Rs. 350.

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The Editors wish to thank Susan Keyes for her kind assistance in the preparation of this issue.

NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

All manuscripts should be written in English and not exceed 20 pages.

Texts should be submitted in hard copy and if possible on MacIntosh disk. If you use special fonts or programmes please send us a copy of it along with your text.

Bibliographic references must be complete (i.e., with the date and place of publication and the name of the editor), and follow this pattern :

Stein, R. A.

1981, *La civilisation tibétaine*, Paris, l'Asiathèque.

Sharma, P. R.

1981, "Nepal : Hindu-Tribal Interface", *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, VII (1), p. 1-14.

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1973, "Dowry and Bridewealth and the Property Rights of Women in South Asian", in J. Goody & S.J. Tambiah, eds., *Bridewealth and Dowry*, p. 59-169, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

The deadline for submissions to issue 12 is January 30, 1997.

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