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European Bulletin of Himalayan Research

The European Bulletin of Himalayan Research (EBHR) was founded by the late Richard Burghart in 1991 and has appeared twice yearly ever since. It is a product of collaboration and edited on a rotating basis between France (CNRS), Germany (South Asia Institute) and the UK (SOAS). Since October 2002 onwards, the German editorship has been run as a collective, presently including William S. Sax (managing editor), Martin Gaenszle, Elvira Graner, András Höfer, Axel Michaels, Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka, Mona Schrempf and Claus Peter Zoller.

We take the Himalayas to mean, the Karakorum, Hindukush, Ladakh, southern Tibet, Kashmir, north-west India, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, and north-east India. The subjects we cover range from geography and economics to anthropology, sociology, philology, history, art history, and history of religions. In addition to scholarly articles, we publish book reviews, reports on research projects, information on Himalayan archives, news of forthcoming conferences, and funding opportunities. Manuscripts submitted are subject to a process of peer-review.

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If you visit our new website, **http://ebhr.sai.uni-heidelberg.de**, then you will be able, not only to access subscription information, instructions for contributors, news and the like, but also to download older issues at no cost. In addition, we will make available for sale the music CD accompanying EBHR numbers 12 and 13 (1997), which was a special double issue edited by Franck Bernède on *Himalayan Music: State of the Art*. Our thanks go to Mr. Lukas Siegwald for providing the technological expertise to make this possible. The possibility of downloading older issues is limited to numbers that appeared up to two years before the present one. The editors felt that it was important to make this limitation in order to retain the viability of our subscribers' list.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Martin Gaenszle for all the work he has done on the *Bulletin*. Although my name appears as Managing Editor, it is really Martin that has done most of the work. We shall miss him over the next few months, as he conducts research in Nepal.

Bo Sax

Managing Editor

Notes on Contributors

Andrew Alter is a lecturer in ethnomusicology at the University of New England, Australia. His PhD, completed in 2001, examined musical practice in Garhwal with specific emphasis on drum repertoires in ritual occasions. His current research is focussed on performance techniques used by folk epic singers in the region.

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Ulrike Müller-Böker is Professor of Human Geography at Zurich University, Switzerland. Since 1977 she works regularly in Nepal. Her areas of specialisation are Social and Cultural Geography and Development Studies. Since 2001 she is in the Board of Directors of NCCR North-South and leads the Individual Project "Institutional Change and Livelihood Strategies."

Anne de Sales has carried out fieldwork in western Nepal during several stays since 1981. Her publications include a monograph on shamanic rituals among the Kham Magar (1991). More recently she has focused on local effects of the Maoist movement in Nepal. She is chargée de recherches in anthropology at the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique (CNRS, Maison Française d'Oxford/Institute of Anthropological and Cultural Studies,Oxford, UK).

Reto Soliva did his PhD at the Department of Geography, Zurich University, Switzerland on "Nature conservation in Nepal seen from a political ecology perspective" (in German) in 2002. Currently he is working as a post-doctoral fellow at the Swiss Federal Institute for Forest, Snow and Landscape Research on the project "Reconciling Biodiversity Conservation with Declining Agricultural Use in the Mountains of Europe".

Remarks on Revolutionary Songs and Iconography[1]

Anne de Sales

Very soon after the outbreak of the Janandolan (democracy movement of 1990), cassettes of revolutionary songs began to circulate clandestinely. In 1994, I heard some of these songs in a Magar village which I had been visiting since the 1980s, in the north of Rukum district. It may be worth describing briefly the circumstances in which this happened, since the guerilla war was launched in this district a couple of years later. The scene took place on a veranda, at the end of a night-long shamanic seance, as everybody was served beer, a privileged moment for debates. A villager, specifically an ex-mayor of the Panchayat times, came along with his cassette player, the forbidden songs at full blast. He was wearing a pair of shorts rather than the traditional woven hemp *luṅgi,* and brand new training shoes, his general allure strongly reminiscent of the city and slightly odd for this man in his fifties in a remote village. In a vindictive and perhaps slightly intoxicated mood he accused the guests of remaining powerless in a dark age, still believing in superstitions, observing old customs and *jhā̃kris'* prescriptions of blood sacrifices, rather than standing up and fighting for hospitals. The shaman faced this avalanche of criticisms with good humour, granting that hospitals were no doubt necessary, and that he had too many patients anyway. He added with modest confidence that his healing powers were given to him by spirits and he had to comply with them whether he liked it or not, and this kind of power the doctors did not have. The others discussed the need for a road to modernise the local economy, the question of its itinerary through certain villages and not others obviously being a hot issue. Nobody paid attention to the songs that gradually died in a gurgle as the batteries failed. After he left, some people mocked the ex-mayor's political convictions as well as his outfit: perhaps he wanted to look young.

A lot of ground would be covered within ten years of that incident.

In 1994, four cassettes had been produced by the *Raktim Parivār*, the 'Family of Blood', a cultural association closely linked to the Nepali Communist Party Masal (picture 1).

Picture 1:
The people's song tour (part 3) "Here comes Masal"

By 2001, 11 cassettes had been released, and 10,000 copies of a booklet with the song texts - about a hundred of them – were published every year. Their success gives enough grounds to consider these cassettes as a significant corpus, an open corpus that has been developing over the years of Maoist insurgency. The conflictual history of the affiliation of *Raktim Parivār* to revolutionary parties along these years deserves a study of its own, and it would be misleading to analyse this material as the faithful reflection of one party line. It nevertheless constitutes a rich source of information on revolutionary propaganda, using words and music as well as images, each cassette being differently illustrated. The following remarks are preliminary investigations in a vast domain of study concerning the Nepalese version of what became an international Marxist rhetoric over the course of the last century. How is this alien rhetoric adopted to the Nepalese context? What do Nepalese recognise in this new form of organizing the world? How do they make sense of it?

It is clear that the music is inspired by popular folksongs. For a native of East Nepal, the musical style sounds characteristic of the Western part of the country. The musicians of the Maoist propaganda draw from a traditional fund, more popular in villages than in urban centres. Surprisingly, these songs calling for rebellion are accompanied by gentle or lyrical melodies, although a few marches with the sound of a bugle display a more military style. The musical aspect of the songs would deserve an analysis of its own but these first observations lead to two interesting points: the revolutionary prose is expressed not in a newly composed type of music but on the contrary along the lines of a well-known and easily recognisable repertoire; people will be moved, it is hoped, by this familiar genre and the rather violent lyrics, as we shall see, are gently conveyed in this way.

A newsletter published by the *Raktim Parivār* on the occasion of the release of the eighth cassette takes up these points in the form of a debate which is worth presenting here.[2] All participants agree on the exceptional power of music to rouse people. The question is how best to use this power. One line of thinking encourages the modernisation of the Nepalese songs:

> We need music that would stir the hearts of new generations through modernisation of Nepalese songs...In a modern world, many quality programmes are run or broadcast from international forums. Why not learn the modern technology from them?... We should accept even the technology developed by the class enemy. (*Raktim* 1998: 6)

By contrast the other opinion expresses, not without some puritanism, the need to keep Nepali culture away from foreign influences:

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[2] The debate took place the 25th June 1997 and is reported in *Raktim* (1998).

Alien music has made a formidable attack on Nepali culture. So much so that people perform disco-dances to the tune of vulgar and sensational Hindi and English songs even on occasions like weddings, *bratabandha* feasts, religious ceremonies etc... We should not forget Nepaliness while composing any music... our music born in the hills and hillocks, streams and brooks, mountains, hills and Terai. The primitive age is where our hearts lie. (*Ibid.* 21)

There are at least two issues in this debate. One is ideological, concerning the borrowing of style and technology from your enemies; the other is pragmatic, with the end - moving people's hearts - justifying the means. This debate is strongly reminiscent of the debates that once animated Marxist dialectics. The question was whether it was appropriate to use a classical form in order to express a revolutionary content. Or, as the Russian G.V. Plekhanov put it using a famous metaphor, whether it was good to put new wine in old bottles. It seems that Mao agreed on a compromise: a minimum tolerance should be observed towards the old culture, which will nevertheless have to be transformed in order to suit the communist rhetoric.[3] In the Nepalese debate the compromise is advocated on the grounds of pragmatic efficacy, in a contemporary musical context characterized by the fusion of genres:

Proper lyrics combined with a blend of modern popular and original Nepali music will be very beautiful. We should learn foreign music too, and study world music (...) our music should be a great cultural weapon against the tyrants. (*Ibid.* 21)

This fusion has had the desired emotional impact on villagers whom I know. They now like hearing the revolutionary songs again and again over the loudspeakers that Maoists bring to villages for their cultural shows.

The question I am addressing here takes up the issue that lies at the heart of these debates on political culture, although from a different point of view: to what extent does the rather recent revolutionary rhetoric merge with the various sets of interpretations that people have at their disposal and have had for a very long time? In what way precisely do the symbols, the images used in the Marxist discourse, make sense to people? It must be recalled that the events that are dealt with here do not even cover one generation yet. The interpretations lack historical distance and selection of facts. Like the people who are experiencing this new situation, observers, too, are faced with several possible interpretative frameworks within which to understand it.

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[3] Cf. S. Trebinjac (1997). The author mentions these ideological debates that animated Chinese intelligentsia in the 1920s, when the nationalist movement raised against the war lords of the north and the foreign powers.

Who are we?

There are a few recurrent themes in the songs. One prominent theme is the farmer's hard life in the hills, his *dukha*, his pain. The words give a realistic and depressing image of the living conditions of the rural population: "A thin body" (*pātalo euṭā śarira*), "So little grain and water" (*yati thorai anna pāni*), or "Poor inside that hut" (*garib tyo jhupro bhitra*) (*Raktimko gītharū*: 46, 57, 59). In "The long sigh of the porter" (*bhariyā lāmo sās phereko)*, the singer looks back on his life as a porter since childhood, the loss of his wife who could not be treated in hospital and the death of his son in India where he had gone in search of work (*ibid.* 12). The same inspiration is found in the song called "When in the hills" (*pahāṛmā chãdā)*, in which a hillman remembers his modest patrimony, his fields and his house, that he lost while he was working in India (*ibid.* 19).

The melodies are gently sad or nostalgic, and words are in simple prose with no trace of abstract political jargon. Villagers identify themselves easily with the characters and the life depicted in these songs. As I was working out their meaning with Magar villagers, they would state with conviction that these stories were *true* - which meant that to their eyes the rest of the propaganda was not. In other words, these songs speak to them, even if they may remain ambivalent about other revolutionary cultural performances. When a villager says "this is true", he partly legitimates the movement that can express this truth.

India definitively appears as the evil place where poor Nepalese are forced to go for economic reasons. Several songs are addressed to these expatriate workers, exhorting them to come back home and fight for their own country. In the songs entitled "When I was travelling in India" (*ḍuldai hĩḍḍā bhāratmā* (*ibid.* 9), the singer remembers many Nepalese spending "their life in tears, blood and sweat", working as porters, factory workers, miners, making roads or breaking stones, with their "children born in a foreign land". More specifically the song "Come back Lahure" (*pharkideu lāhure*) reminds the expatriate that he should not live as if he did not have a country "like a Palestinian":

> Come back to your own country and don't think only of yourself.
> This is what the Nyauli bird sings, giving hope everywhere in the
>   jungle.
> Let's go back to change Nepal, Lahure,
> Carrying your *khukuri*, carrying your *khukuri*. (*Ibid.* 78)

Several songs are devoted to women. Once again expressive details of everyday life in the village are picked up and contribute to give a credible picture of hill women who see themselves in the characters featured in the lyrics. The following song starts with the image of the bodice of a woman

soaked with sweat as she is working (*coli bhijcha*) and goes on to lamenting that her husband is away:

> The whole morning at the fireplace,
> The whole day in the field going barefoot and drinking dust,
> When I carry the load of the rich merchant
> My husband is abroad, he does not hear me weeping.
> Who can see the tears of the mind?
> The heavy heart is washed clear. (*Ibid.* 54)

Other songs take up the theme of the woman left alone at home, bearing not only the heavy burden of daily works but also the responsibility of elderly parents and more generally of social cohesion. Here the sister reminds her brother serving in the Indian army, of the Tihar festival, when he should be back home to receive her blessing with a garland of marigolds (*ke diũ maile kośeli*):

> What shall I give you as a present, elder brother who is weeping in your
>   barracks,
> Hey! Everybody knows that this is Tihar in the maternal house;
> Now who is there in my maternal house?
> How could we forget our old parents?
> Where to keep the love of your own parents?
> Hey! How do you like it, brother, to stay in barracks abroad?
> How much pain did you cause to your father and mother?
> Let's hear now the signal of the poor,
> The garland of marigolds faded away,
> The night is gone, this is the morning of a new day
> Now it is time for you to come back
> Whether you lose or win your life,
> Come back to your own country. (*Ibid.* 86)

As the flowers are withering away, waiting for her brother to return, the sister's song takes a more combative tone, calling him to fight for his country.

All the songs above ensure that singer and listener feel they are of the same kind, in the sense that they share the same life. The songs are addressed to rural communities among which farmers would live a peaceful life with their own kin, in their fields and in their own houses, celebrating festivals, in a sort of golden age, if only the enemy did not disrupt this harmony. The songs below encourage people to fight this enemy, who is a composite "other", built up of words and images.

Who is the enemy?

The illustrations on the covers of the first four cassettes are particularly interesting in that they present a historical progression of the revolutionary movement. They start in Kathmandu with student demonstrations under the red banner of Akhil, the Maoist student union, passing Trichandra College, the first Nepalese college established under the Rana (picture 2). Then the demonstration involves a wider public and takes a more military turn as the title of the song that is depicted suggests: "left, right, step ahead" (*lephṭ raiṭ kadam baḍhāu, ibid.* 23). However it is still confined to the capital, the demonstrators walking down Darbar Marg. The only recognizable emblem remains the ink pen and the star of the Maoist student union (picture 3). Whereas in the third phase the movement reaches villages in the hills where a population of farmers is now marching under the hammer and sickle of the Communist Party of Nepal (Masal)[4]: "Here comes Masal!" (*Masāl āyo,* picture 1).

> All around the village houses,
> In all the streets of the city,
> The bugle of the revolution is blown,
> The red red flag is held up. (*Ibid.* 33)

In the fourth illustration the Congress party, identified by four stars, is hidden in the shade and shoots at the communist demonstrators (picture 4). Some of them already lie on the ground in a pool of blood. This cassette was released in 1993 before the "People's War", but there had been several cases of political murders by then. It is worth noticing that the song "Yankee go home", illustrated here, goes back and forth between Peru and Nepal, associating in the same breath the Americans and the corrupt government of Nepal:

> O Yankee go home, dirty Yankee go home,
> Our red flag is fluttering in Peru,
> The poor grasped their guns in order to take power;
> Our vocation is class war, our task is revolution,
> Our red salute to the Peruvian revolution,
> The soil is soaked with the blood of the brave,
> The fearless war makes the world vibrate; Watch out corrupt people, we are not afraid!
> A hundred countries will get freedom, we will not lose!
> Those who say socialism is over are liars. (*Ibid.* 43)

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[4] Masal (derived from *masāl* 'torch') is the name of a Maoist faction.
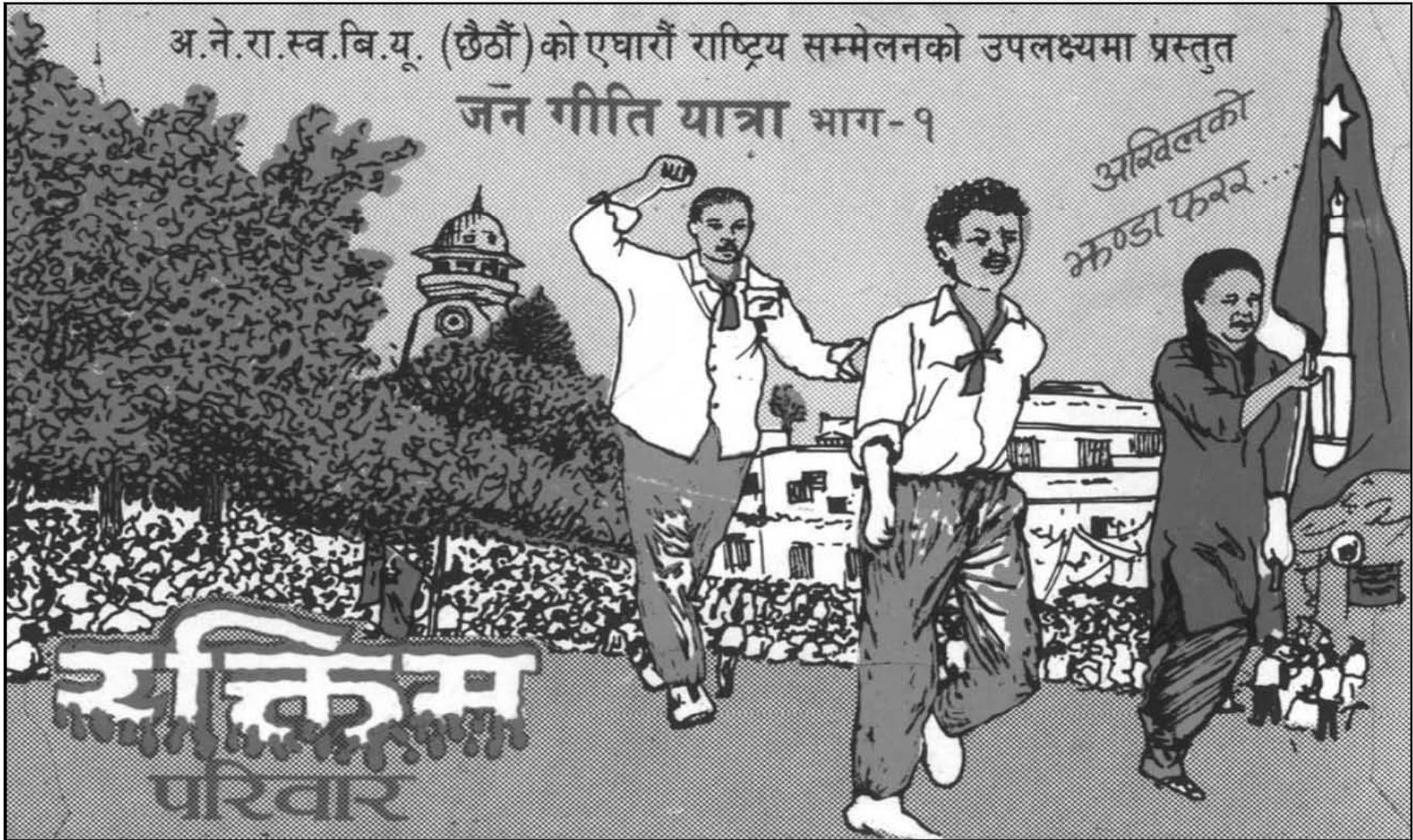
Picture 2: The people's song tour (part 1) "The flag of Akhil [the student union] is fluttering"

Picture 3: The people's song tour (part 3)"Left, right , step ahead"

Picture 4: The people's song tour (part 4) "The reign of dictatorship again at work", "yanki go home"

In the shadow of the Congressman lurks India, adding a third element to the category of the enemy. India is the closest enemy and is asked to leave Nepalese territory. Kalapani[5] is a recurrent issue in the propaganda, as expressed in the song "Leave, leave" (*choḍa choḍa*):

> Imperialism, leave the Nepalese soil
> Oh! Indian army, leave Kalapani. (*Ibid.* 99)

At this early stage of the guerilla war the main task of the propaganda is to forge the 'other', by fighting against whom 'we' become one:

> Once the bugle of freedom is blown in the poor people's hut,
> The ignorant mind of the people is enlightened and awakens;
> Once our own people (*āphanta*) are distinguished from the others
> (*parai*), The fort of the enemy can be destroyed. (*Ibid.* 2)

These few lines show that 1) the territory "is soaked with the blood of the brave", 2) the alien, the "other" (Westerners, India and exploiters) must leave Nepal and 3) the borders must be defended. These images stress the nationalist concern of the movement: all within the fixed bounds of the territory have to be of the same kind, even of the same blood, and the alien has to be removed.

The territory as a *maṇḍala*

A remark should be made about the revolutionary territory as it is presented in the songs. When place names are mentioned they all refer to a few districts in Western Nepal: Rolpa, Rukum, Pyuthan, Sallyan, Baglung. In the song "In the shade of Dhaulagiri" (*dhaulagiri chāyanmā)*, "all of us, let's learn how to live for ever in the love for this country, in the shadow of Dhaulagiri, stretched out in the cool of the evening" (*ibid.* 4*)*. By contrast with these first lines expressing an emotional attachment to the place, the next lines take up the conventional and general revolutionary style, speaking of "the infinite power (*apāra śakti*) of the young people, ready to destroy the parasite" and exhorting Nepalese to wake up "in order to go forward on the way to progress, by lighting the lamp of consciousness shining over the world" (*ibid.* 20). The point is that revolutionary discourse is centred on a specific place, from where it addresses not only Nepal but the world.

The image of a height like the Dhaulagiri mountain dominating and therefore protecting the country that it overlooks is taken up in the song

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[5] Kalapani is in a corner of the north-western Indo-Nepalese frontier where the Indians were allowed to put a radio station in 1954. Nepal asked them to leave in 1969 but Indian troops are still occupying this piece of strategic Nepalese territory. This has been an object of friction between the two countries ever since.

entitled "At the foot of Jaljala" (*tyo kākh jalajalako)*. The Magar village of Thawang, which played an important role in the history of communism in the region and which is by now the 'capital of the Maoist country', is located there.

> At the foot of Jaljala, the army is on parade
> Like Ching Kyang[6], the settlements will remain intact.
> The soldiers patrol everywhere carrying their guns,
> (But) our iron fort will remain.
> Whatever the threat over Thawang village
> A thousand villages will stand up. (*Ibid.* 28)

Other songs mention important market places in those districts such as "In Baglung bazaar" (*Baglung bajārmā, ibid.* 72) or "Let's meet in Burtibang" (*Burtibaṅgmā beṭh*). The latter is about a farmer who walks along the Barighat river on his way to Burtibang, listening to its murmur and watching people working hard in the fields, and porters who are scolded like dogs. Magar villagers like to recognise the itinerary that they follow from their villages in Rukum district to the bazaars in the plains, stopping for the night in Burtibang.

The references to these districts in particular should be explained by the simple fact that the revolutionary movement took root there (cf. de Sales 2000). The songs are not just abstract revolutionary rhetoric: they refer to events that happened at a certain time in a specific place and relate the history of the guerilla war.

I also suggest that, by being geographically centred, the propaganda constructs a cosmos, the centre of which can be identified with the whole: what might, in terms of the Hindu system of thought, be called a *maṇḍala*. The point here is that the propaganda has to be legitimized or, more precisely, that the voice which exhorts villagers to die for revolution must have some authority to do so. If it did not, the demands would go unheeded. This legitimacy rests on the idea that the Maoist militants as well as the villagers share a common identity: We are the same, and I am ready to die as you are ready to die. We share the same centre, we are part of the same bounded circle, the same *maṇḍala*.

However, my informants, the villagers who listen to these songs, would not speak of a *maṇḍala* centred on their districts. They may feel a certain pride in seeing their remote villages, formerly ignored by Kathmandu the political centre of the country, becoming the centre of revolution. The names of Rolpa and Rukum are all-too-often on the front page of the national press. This sudden fame carries a high price, considering the number of deaths in the area, and people's adherence to the movement remains

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[6] A non-identified place, supposed to be located in China.

ambivalent, to say the least. It is nevertheless a fact that those districts are now seen as a source of power.

Natural metaphors

Metaphors related to nature are widely used in the songs, presenting the revolutionary process as inevitable as natural phenomena. The vitality of a bud depicts the newborn Maoist movement (picture 5). However fragile it may look at first sight, it will soon break its chains, and "the flower will blossom" (*phul phulnecha)*:

> When the throne falls,
> The moon will appear tearing the clouds;
> The feudal lords (*sāmanti*) keep tightening the rope,
> But the flower will blossom when the throne falls. *(Ibid. 60)*

The same contrast between apparent fragility and destructive power is taken up in "The song of the bird as a storm" (*huri carako git, ibid.* 66).

The awesome power of natural disasters (earthquake, flood) is used as a prophetic image of the revolutionary movement, that will create a *tabula rasa* (picture 6):

> The flood of revolution surged today, sweeping away leaves and grass;
> Rise up with enthusiasm for war,
> Hey! Towns and villages,
> How could our faith die in front of burning fire (and the threat) of a
>   bayonet?
> Whether in Russia or in Peru, where did the Red Army bow?
> Who can stop the torrential stream, the waterfalls?
> Who can survive now, suffering the rule of the exploiters?
> All the poor are now rising up;
> Hey! Provoke an earthquake!
> Carrying a *khukuri* at the waist, a gun on the shoulder, with fire in the
>   eyes,
> A world will come to birth, reddened by the gun with a river of blood…
> How can we stay without doing anything when our rivers and streams
> are sold off? (*Ibid.* 74)
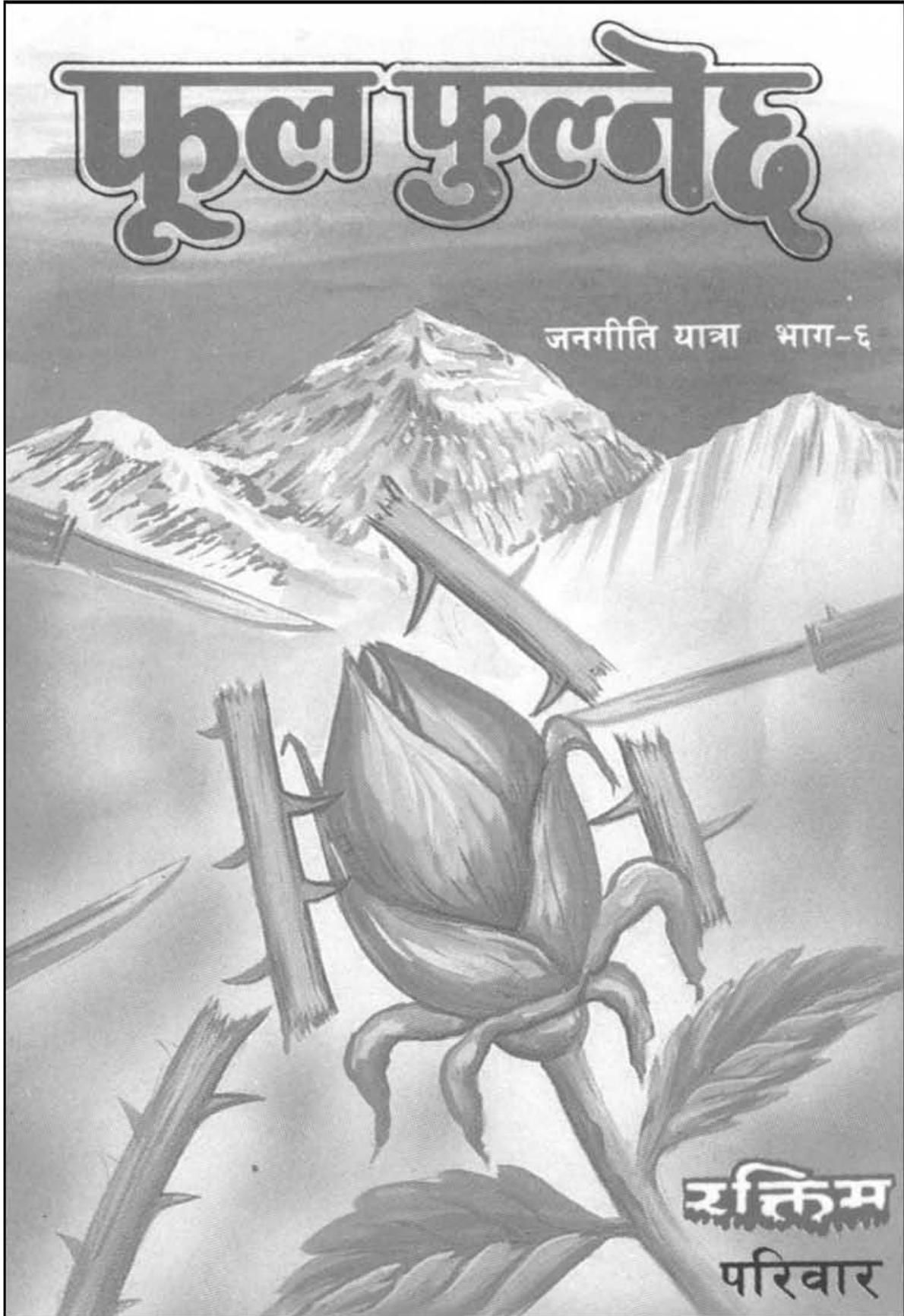
Picture 5: The people's song tour (part 6) "The flower will blossom"
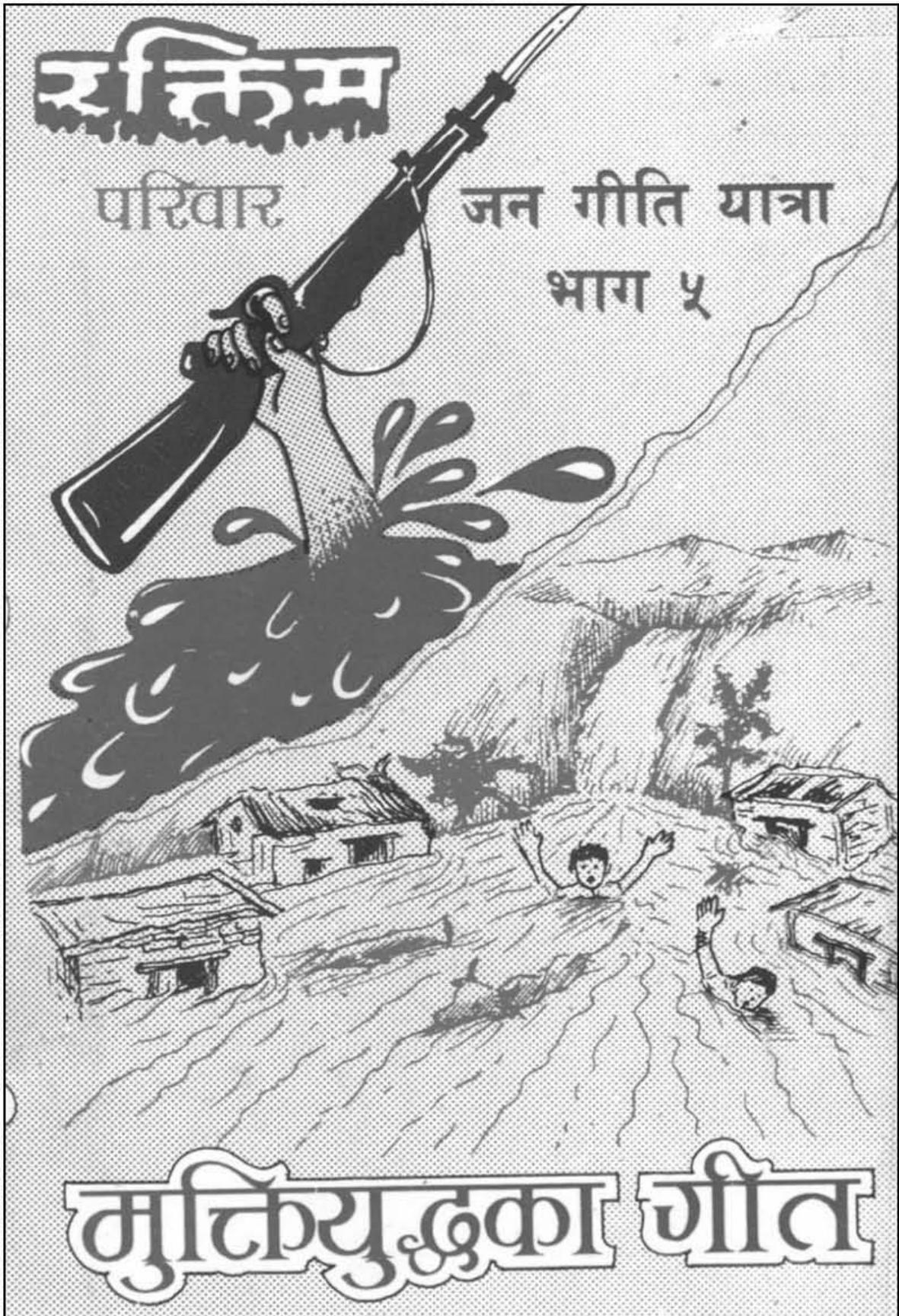
Picture 6: The people's song tour (part 5) "The song of liberation war"

The image of rivers and streams conveys several ideas. One is the main stream of revolution that keeps growing as it is joined by the tributaries flowing down from hills all over the country. The main stream eventually bursts its banks and becomes a deluge from which a new world will emerge "in a river of blood". More precisely, in the song just mentioned the country is irrigated by its rivers in the same way that a human body is irrigated by the blood in its veins. This image is illustrated on both pictures 4 and 6. It is worth recalling at this point that the Nepalese government agreed on selling hydroelectricity to India, a crucial issue in national politics and, for the opposition, one of the main points of disagreement with the government. Keeping in mind that water is transformed into electrical power, into energy, it becomes clear that beyond any economic reason or political strategy, selling off the Nepalese rivers to India is symbolically extremely violent, especially in a Hindu tantric system of thought. Once her energy has been drained, Nepal ceases to exist. The underlying idea here is to keep the boundaries of the *maṇḍala* closed in order to retain one's energy.

Sacrifice of and sacrifice for

The overwhelming presence of blood in the songs, most often associated with the land, the soil, the ground or the earth (*bhumī, māṭo, dhartī*) and one's own country (*deś*) or flag, introduces the theme of sacrifice. This theme, central to the Nepalese revolutionary ideology, presents several possible developments. One song is devoted to "the infinite power of the people" (*janatāko śakti cha apār)*:

> The reign of the demon is vanishing,
> The morning of the people is coming,
> The soil of the country is coloured (with blood), the mountain cracks,
> The chests of the brave are pierced (by bullets), the eyes have holes.
> Don't cut the throat of revolution!
> Don't stop! Go ahead, oh people! *(Ibid.* 20*)*

The lines describe the death of the brave and their blood being shed on the ground. This, we understand, generates more *śakti* to fight the enemy. Soaked with the blood of the martyrs, the soil germinates, power grows. The reasoning here reminds us of a standard Hindu sacrifice according to which the ritual is supposed to generate more life by taking life. There is however an important difference: in a standard sacrifice, the beneficiary of the sacrifice, the sacrifier in Hubert and Mauss' terminology, sacrifices a substitute of himself in order to obtain more vitality or prosperity for him and his people – his family if the sacrifier is a householder, his subjects if he is a king. He himself does not die but instead has the sacrificial victim killed in his place. With the martyrs, who give their own life, we are dealing with another pattern of sacrifice, more common in religions of salvation, such as

Christianity or Islam. Revolutionary ideology can be brought into the same frame of thought, since the martyr is dying here and now for a better world beyond his or her death. S/he displays exemplary behaviour. S/he is not a sacrificial victim whose life is taken away for the benefit of the person who performs a sacrifice. The martyr is the beneficiary of his or her own death through which S/he will live on if only in the memory of the people of which S/he is a part. The following song takes up this idea of self-sacrifice generating power and implicitly contrasts it with another vision of the people's death.

> The fluttering red flag unites all the students.
> The white terror of the enemy always frightens people.
> *The blood of the martyrs reddened our fluttering red flag.*
> *The blood of the poor was drunk by the corrupt feudal lords.*
> Our existence was taken away by the partyles. (Emphasis added)

By giving their lives, the martyrs create unity among the people who remember them and worship them. In becoming one kin the powerless gain power against the enemy. This is the meaning of the flag of unity that is red with the blood of the martyrs. What is expressed in the next line is different. Poor people here are victims whose life and blood benefited the rulers in Panchayat times. The two lines implicitly contrast the self-sacrifice of the martyrs generating more power with simple murder committed by the rulers.

There are two competing models of sacrifice in the songs: self-sacrifice and sacrifice of the other. The second pattern is dominant in Hindu ritual practices and may orient the understanding of the sacrificial scenarios set up in the songs. But at the same time, revolutionary propaganda stresses another pattern of sacrifice: self-sacrifice for a cause. This second pattern is not new, and neither is the figure of martyr. We were reminded of this shortly after the *janāndolan*, in a review of the Nepali literature concerning the recent events, in the second issue of this Bulletin: 'In the rituals of Nepalese political culture the martyrs of 1990 joined those at Martyrs' Gate, who two generations earlier had given up their lives in the overthrow of the Ranas (Burghart and Gaenszle 1991: 15). It is worth quoting at length from the authors' conclusion:

> Despite their deaths, the martyrs continued to play a decisive role in the negotiations concerning the new Constitution...and it was clear in the rhetorical construction of the people's movement that sovereignty had already transferred from the king to the people. *The king was no longer the mediator between deity and people who by sacrifice preserved the well-being of his subjects.* From the Nepalese texts under review, it is clear that *the martyrs had sacrificed their lives to the motherland for*

democracy which *they*, not the king, gave to the people. Powers of
legitimate agency had shifted within the kingdom. (Emphasis added)

The italicised phrases implicitly distinguish the two patterns of sacrifice
mentioned earlier: the royal Hindu sacrifice and the self-sacrifice of the
martyr for democracy. It could be argued that these two patterns share the
same structure: a larger self (the people or the king) gives a part of itself in
sacrifice to obtain a higher goal (freedom, prosperity, here sovereignty), or,
as Mauss put it in his *Essay on the Gift,* they give less to obtain more. In this
perspective the martyr would condense the positions of sacrifier and victim
without altering the purpose of sacrificial killing, which is to generate power.
However the distinction between the two patterns remains relevant in order
to understand how the shift in sovereignty operates. The illustration of the
10th cassette suggests a hypothesis.

The image (picture 7) shows the slaughtering of the Maoists by the
government. It is remarkable that this slaughter is set up as a royal sacrifice:
the sabre of the king in the hand of the Nepali Congress is beheading a
crowd of fists raised in the red salute. According to a Hindu conception of
sacrifice, the rebels would be depicted here as sacrificial victims for the
benefit of the ruler who takes their life away.

But according to the other pattern of sacrifice, the self-sacrifice, the local
logic of the standard sacrifice is diverted. The ruler who is performing the
sacrifice is, so to speak, deprived of his efficacy. The benefit of the sacrifice
no longer goes to him but *directly* to the people who share the same blood in
accordance with the martyrs' self-sacrifices, that generates one kin. In this
perspective, the beheaded rebels are not passive victims any more, but
intercept the generative power of Hindu sacrifice for the benefit of the
people's revolution. This interpretation presents the advantage of remaining
within the framework of a Hindu sacrificial scenario, as is strongly
suggested by the royal sabre.

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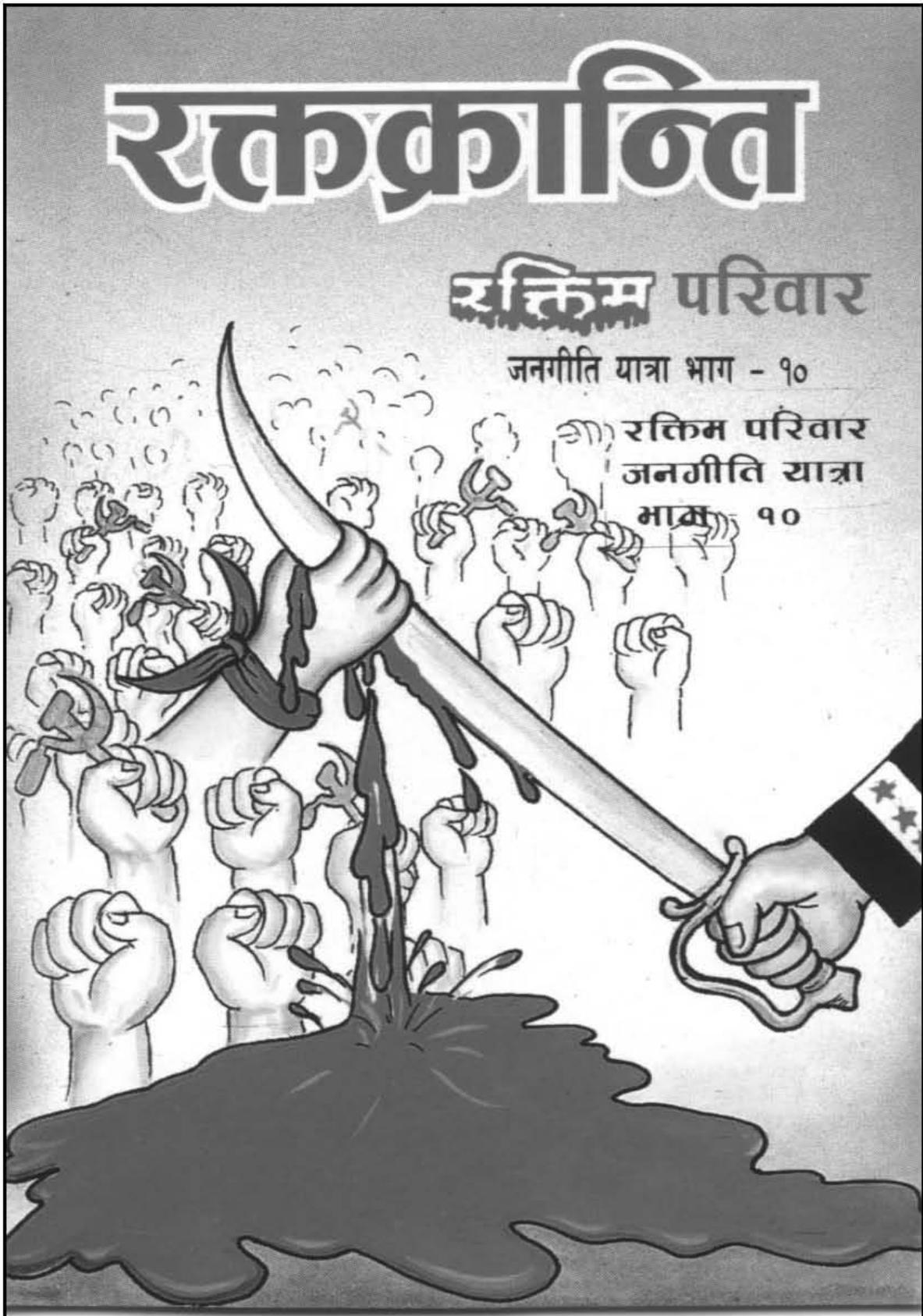
Picture 7: The people's song tour (part 10) "The revolution of blood"

These revolutionary lyrics and iconography have shown how propaganda aims at mobilizing people by creating empathy and by "othering" the enemy using the powerful concept of blood to draw the line between "we", the *Raktim Parivār* or "family of blood", and "them", who are of an other kind, drinking human blood. The naturalisation of revolution is strongly suggested by the recurrent metaphors drawing from the natural world: the revolution ineluctably follows its course. This leads to the people's self-empowerment which, as I have tried to argue, is achieved through a manipulation of the royal sacrifice. The shift of agency, as it was first noted by Burghart and Gaenszle, is achieved not only through political processes. This brief tour (*yātrā*) of revolutionary songs shows culture at work.

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The Social Context of Nature Conservation in Nepal

Michael Kollmair, Ulrike Müller-Böker and Reto Soliva

1 Introduction

Third world and transition countries have placed an increasingly high priority on nature conservation in recent decades. In many cases, the designation of dedicated nature reserves causes conflict between conservation objectives and the demands of the local population. We assume that such conflicts may become more controversial if there are conflicting concepts regarding protection of the environment. It is obvious that international nature conservation activities are mainly based on western concepts of nature and its protection. These concepts are globalised and universally implemented, but within different cultural contexts. For this reason, scientific, sociological and cultural analyses have gained importance in recent years (see Röper 2001, Ghimire and Pimbert 1997, Blaikie 1995). Studies in the field of political ecology (Brown 1998, Knudsen 1999, Neumann 1992, 1995, 1997, Peluso 1993, Abel and Blaikie 1986), emphasise the relationship between the different interested actors at various local levels.

This article summarises the most significant results[1] of the research project 'Nature and Society' (sponsored by the Swiss National Fund), and investigates nature conservation projects in Nepal within a social context. Nepal, a country with extremely diverse biological parameters, and also one of the world's poorest countries, includes a large number of protected areas, developed with varied concepts and management plans. In Nepal, as in other parts of the world, this has resulted in a number of conflicts.

The introductory section summarises and interprets Nepal's history, and the development of the country's nature conservation policy. Of special interest is an analysis of the parties involved at various spatial levels. This provides an insight into the 'functionality' of nature conservation in Nepal by considering the political, economic and social contexts at a national level, as well as referring to international relations. The framework for this approach is provided by political ecology. Methodologically, this part of the investigation is methodically based on the analyses of legal provisions, management plans, the existing literature, and problem-oriented empirical field work in selected conservation areas.

Three case studies of protected areas with differing historical developments and management approaches are chosen to illustrate the

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[1] An earlier version of this article was published in German in issue 55 (3) of the journal 'Asiatische Studien, Zeitschrift der Schweizerischen Asiengesellschaft' in the year 2001.

diversity of Nepal's nature conservation concepts. Starting from a joint research question, for each case study an adequate social science approach is applied

The first case study introduces the Bardiyā National Park in the western lowland of the Terai, designated in 1976 mainly for the protection of large mammals, and analyses the parties involved from the perspective of political ecology. The second study analyses the Khaptaḍ National Park, which was created mainly for religious reasons. This nature reserve is located in Nepal's far western mid-hills, a previously unknown region of Nepal. The study focuses explicitly on the importance of institutions, with regard to pasture use and nature conservation. This aspect, hitherto neglected, is based on the "Environmental Entitlements" approach. The third study deals with the Kanchanjaṅgā Conservation Area in the Himalayan mountains of eastern Nepal. It analyses the implementation of an integrated nature conservation and development project, and the local population's perception of it. Finally, based on the findings of these case studies, conclusions are drawn about Nepal's nature conservation in general, and on the theoretical implications and research approaches, in particular.

2 Nature conservation in Nepal: Diversity and change of approaches

Nepal's nature conservation programme is currently concentrated in 16 reserves of various conservation categories, covering more than 18% of the country (see figure 1 and table 1). The following analyses show how they have been created, over the last 30 years. The history of nature conservation in Nepal has been studied by, amongst others, Nepal (1999a, 1999b), Keiter (1995), Heinen and Yonzon (1994), Heinen and Kattel (1992) and Basnet (1992). Below we refer to these publications, and to an interview with B.N. Upreti, Director of the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation, from 1980 to 1991.

2.1 The early stage: Royal Hunting Reserves and the 'Yellowstone Model'

The first legislative efforts to introduce nature conservation in Nepal occurred in the second half of the 19th century. The autocratic regime of the Rāṇā dynasty introduced the first hunting bans. Nepal's ruling elite, who prided themselves on being passionate big game hunters, invited the world's nobility to elaborate hunting parties in the jungles of the Nepalese Lowlands (see Gurung 1983, Filchner 1951, Shaha 1970). The most treasured trophies – the tiger, leopard and Indian rhinoceros – were considered 'royal game', not to be hunted by the local population.
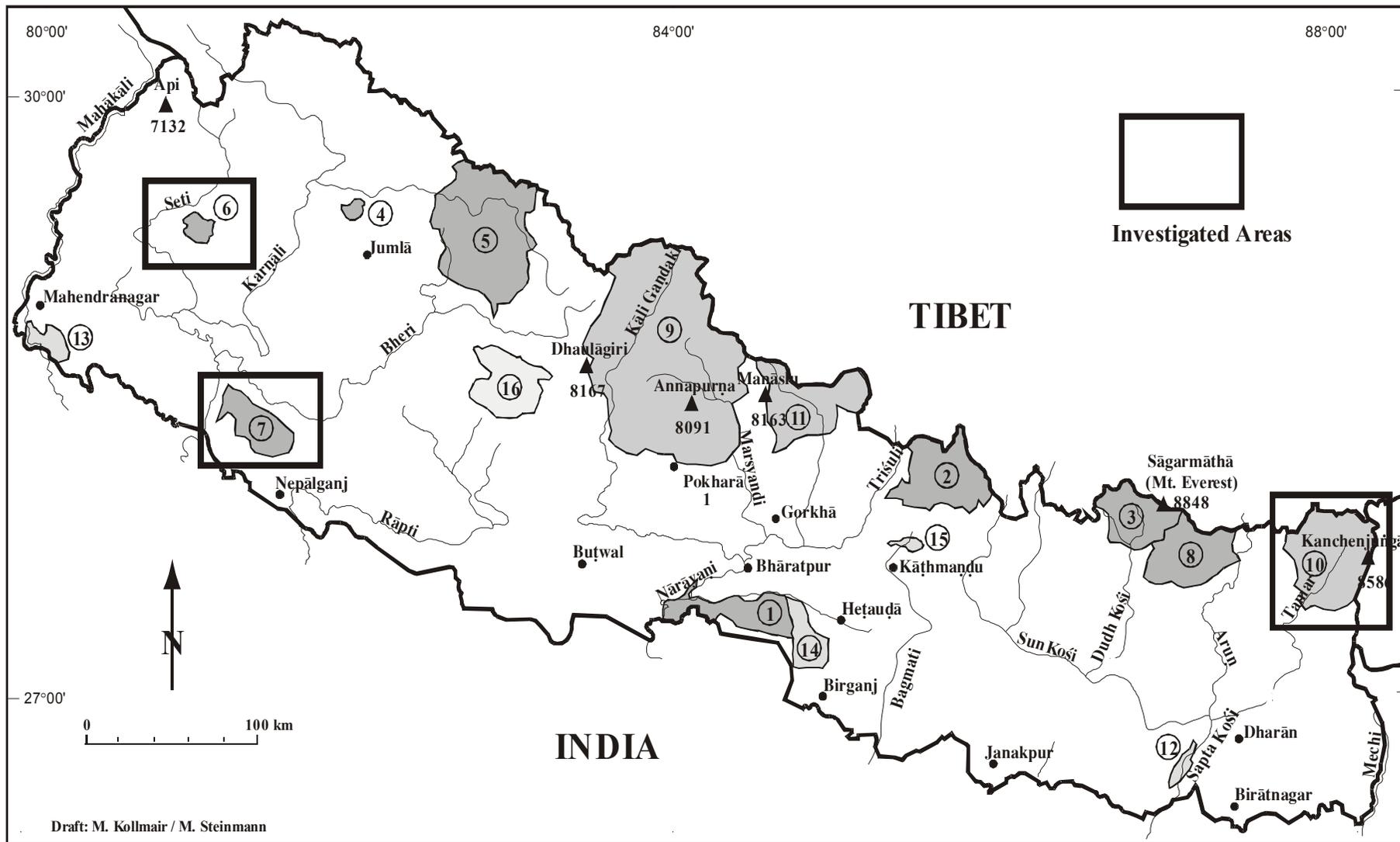
Fig. 1: Nature reserves in Nepal and location of research area

Table 1: Overview of the development of nature reserves in Nepal

Nr	Name	Year of foundation	Status (IUCN category)	Size (ha) in 2000	Settle-ments	Buffer zone since	Main conservation objectives at the time of establishment
1	Royal Citawan	1973	National Park (II)	93.200	a, r	1996	Wildlife conservation; tourism
7	Royal Bardiyā	1976/ 1988[1]	National Park (II)	96.800	a, r	1997	Wildlife conservation; tourism
12	Kośi Tappu	1976	Wildlife Reserve (IV)	17.500	a, r		Wildlife conservation
2	Lāṅgtāṅg	1976	National Park (II)	171.000	B	1998	Soil protection; tourism; protection of species
13	Royal Śuklā Phā̃ṭ	1976[2]	Wildlife Reserve (IV)	30.500	a, r		Wildlife conservation
3	Sagarmāthā	1976	National Park (II)	114.800	B		Landscape and species conservation; tourism
4	Rārā	1977	National Park (II)	10.600	a, r		Landscape and wildlife conservation
14	Parsā	1984	Wildlife Reserve (IV)	49.900	A		Wildlife conservation
5	She-Phoksunḍo	1984	National Park (II)	355.500	B	1998	Ecosystem-, landscape- and wildlife conservation
15	Śivapuri	1984[3]	Watershed and Wildlife Reserve (IV)	9.700	b, r		Watershed conservation, securing the drinking water supply
6	Khaptaḍ	1986	National Park (II)	22.500	C		Conservation of religious heritage
9	Annapurṇa	1986/ 1992[4]	Conservation Area (VI)	762.900	B		Conservation and development
16	Dhorpāṭan	1987	Hunting Reserve (IV)	132.50	C		Conservation of wildlife for hunting
8	Makālu-Baruṇ	1991	National Park (II)	150.00	C	1992/ 2000[5]	Conservation of species and biodiversity; soil protection; tourism; research
10	Kanchanjaṅgā	1997	Conservation Area (VI)	205.00	B		Biodiversity cons.; tourism and development
11	Manāslu	1999	Conservation Area (VI)	166.30	B		Tourism and development; environment protection,

Sources: IUCN (1993); WCMC (1997); Shrestha and Joshi (1996)

Settlement / Utilisation
a: unsettled, utilisation strongly restricted or prohibited
c: unsettled, limited utilisation allowed to local people
b: settled, limited utilisation allowed to residents
r: residents resettled from the protected area

Notes
1) 1969–76 Hunting Reserve, 1976–88 Wildlife Reserve, NP since 1988
2) 1965–76 Hunting Reserve, Wildlife Reserve since 1976
3) 1976–84 Watershed Reserve, Watershed and Wildlife Reserve since 1984
4) 1986 project start, 1992 gazetted as a Conservation Area
5) 1992–2000 Makālu-Baruṇ Conservation Area, since 2000 buffer zone

When the Rāṇā dynasty was overthrown in 1951, the members of the reinstated royal family also showed great enthusiasm for hunting, and became concerned about the numbers of large animals. In the 1960s, King Mahendra created various Royal Hunting Reserves in the lowlands, presumably because of personal hunting interests. The local population were allowed to use the reserves 'at first, but not for hunting'. Heavy migration from the Nepalese mountain regions, and increased poaching during the politically unstable 1950s, dramatically reduced the numbers of tigers and rhinoceros[2].

It was not only that the elite saw their hunting under threat, but, for the first time, international organisations for nature conservation were campaigning for the protection of tigers and rhinoceros. Their pressure and involvement (e.g. the massive World Wildlife Fund (WWF) campaign 'Operation Tiger') resulted in effective nature conservation planning in the early 1970s. Several scientific studies, along with the 'National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act' of 1973, came out of this movement. This legislation enabled the establishment of the 'Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation' (DNPWC), to designate national parks and three other categories of nature reserves. The National Parks and Wildlife Conservation Act and subsequent studies for the Nepalese government were prepared and provided under the guidance of western FAO and UNDP experts who had previously worked in East Africa's national parks. They wished to transfer Africa's strict nature conservation concepts to Nepal (Upreti, personal communication, 2000).

The Citawan National Park, established in 1973, was followed by several wildlife reserves in Nepal's lowlands. They each followed traditional western nature conservation models (as implemented in East Africa), with the protection of large animals as the main objective. This so-called 'Yellowstone Model' (named after the world's first National Park in the western U.S.A.), provides strict protection of a large area from human settlements and use, except for tourism and research. This means, in effect, the sudden prohibition of the traditional use of resources, mainly for subsistence, by the population in neighbouring areas. Overnight, hunters became poachers and farmers became squatters (see Colchester 1993) without being given realistic alternatives for securing their subsistence. Units of the Nepalese army were stationed to protect the reserves. The only exception was the right to cut grass within the reserves, a few days out of the year. Thousands of people were moved from the reserves (see Willan 1965, Pradhan 1995: 10), with some forced migration from the Citawan National Park still continuing (see Müller-Böker 1999: 190), and additional resettlements from other nature reserves presently under discussion.

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[2] Whereas Stracey (1957) estimated the entire Nepalese rhinoceros population to be 400 in 1957, Spillett and Tamang (1966: 564) assumed this number to have fallen below 100 nine years later.

2.2 The extension stage: Inhabited National Parks of the high mountain areas

When the first national parks were created in the Nepalese Himalayan region, in the second half of the 1970s (Sagarmāthā, Lāṅgtāṅg, Rārā), the DNPWC realised that it was impossible to move the many villages within the parks. With the exception of the Rārā National Park in western Nepal, where villages were relocated to the Terai region (see Fürer-Haimendorf 1984: 59), the DNPWC opted to allow settled villages to remain in the national parks of the mountain regions. The villages, together with private agricultural land, were legally excluded from the reserve area. The local population was allowed, under the provisions issued by the nature reserve management, to continue with traditional use of forests for firewood, timber, animal fodder, and pasture land. However, army units were also deployed to monitor the national parks, using up three quarters of the conservation budget in doing so (Shrestha 1997: 56).

The main objective of national parks in mountain regions is to secure the sustainability of agricultural use and tourism in fragile ecological systems. The protection of endangered species is not as significant as in the lowlands. In particular, the controlled promotion of tourism in the mountain regions is of major importance, as tourist admission fees have become the most important source of revenue. Only recently, a part of this revenue has been used for local development projects. However, the park management still adheres to the classic 'top-down' approach.

Until the introduction of the political party system in 1990, the king, as absolute monarch, was above the nature conservation law and was therefore allowed to continue hunting in the reserves. Presumably, these occasional hunting parties did not have much detrimental effect on the wildlife inventory. On the contrary, they may have secured the king's personal interest in nature conservation and his commitment to it (Upreti, personal notes, 2000). Even after the political overthrow of 1990, the royal family remained involved in nature conservation, for example through the position of Prince Gyanendra (the present king), as chairman of the 'King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation' (KMTNC), the most important national nature conservation NGO.

2.3 The conservation areas: The paradigm shift in Nepalese nature conservation

During the second half of the 1980s, the inauguration of the Annapurṇa Conservation Area Project (ACAP) marked the beginning of new nature conservation concepts in Nepal. Its aim was the sustainable use of ecological systems through integrated nature conservation management approaches. Originally, a national park had been planned for the Annapurṇa region, but a feasibility study (Sherpa et al 1986) revealed that a 'conservation area' with

extensive consultation rights granted to the local population would be a more suitable form of protection.

This example was soon copied and met with much international acclaim. During the 1990s, three more conservation areas were designated in the Nepal Himalayas (Makālu-Baruṇ, Kanchanjaṅgā, Manāslu). Legislation enables management through national or foreign NGOs (King Mahendra Trust for Nature Conservation, WWF, The Mountain Institute). It also allows for the direct participation of the local population in nature conservation and tourism management, and in the implementation of development projects. The substantial revenue from tourist admission fees of the Annapurṇa Conservation Area is used for local nature conservation and development projects and is not poured into the state's coffers, as was the case until recently at other reserves (Gurung 1998).

This 'participative turn' in Nepalese nature conservation had several causes. Since the 1980s, international nature conservation organisations had increasingly realised that "nature conservation is only possible with the participation of all involved and, in an ideal world, through them" (Ellenberg 1993: 295). Subsequently, the objective of 'participation' has become a top priority on the agenda of the major international nature conservation organisations, such as IUCN and WWF. In Nepal, increasing conflict between the local population and nature conservation authorities apparently also made inevitable the involvement of the population with nature conservation, along with their participation in the economic benefits of nature reserves. At the same time, domestic political factors have promoted the development towards involvement of local forces in the course of development.

The political movement of 1990, resulting in the introduction of a democratic party system, was accompanied by increasing political awareness, and the demand for political participation, in particular from urban populations (see Krämer 1991). However, several nongovernmental and community based organisations, involving large numbers of people, have developed in rural areas in subsequent years. Ethnic minorities have also formed organisations demanding more political and social rights (see Hoftun et al. 1999). The decentralisation of state administration demanded by foreign sponsors has also been taken into consideration, although the implementation of reforms remains rather modest (see Thapa 1999). This means that interaction between political changes at the national level and a paradigm shift in international nature conservation have resulted in the reorientation of Nepalese nature conservation towards more participatory approaches.

2.4 New trends: Buffer zones and transnational corridors

At the beginning of the 1990s, in conjunction with the 'participation turn' controversial plans were implemented to designate areas adjacent to nature reserves, often densely populated, as buffer zones. This followed concepts practised in other countries (Upreti, personal communication, 2000). The DNPWC, with the financial support of UNDP, created the Park People Programme (PPP), with the objectives of lifestyle improvement and sustainable use of natural resources in buffer zones, by means of various development projects (Park People Programme 1998). A 1993 amendment to the Nature Conservation Act forms the legal basis for the designation of buffer zones, with the result that 30% to 50% of the park revenue of four national parks is now used for development projects in buffer zones. However, local populations in buffer zones remain excluded from management decisions affecting the core zones.

A noticeable feature of current Nepalese nature conservation is the effort, supported by the WWF, to connect various nature reserves via (partly border crossing) corridors. This improves the protection of species that migrate between nature reserves (e.g. wild elephants) and larger ecological systems (WWF Nepal Program 2000).

Starting with the Bardiyā National Park in western Nepal, the following three case studies illustrate the major approaches to nature conservation in Nepal. One reason for choosing Bardiyā as a research area was that here, although it belongs to the first generation of nature reserves in Nepal, more modern management procedures have been adopted, together with a comparatively advanced buffer zone implementation. Unlike the Citawan National Park (comparable in many other aspects), the Bardiyā National Park was previously poorly documented.

3 The Royal Bardiyā National Park: 'Whose nature? Whose resources?'[3]

With an area of nearly 1000 km², the Royal Bardiyā National Park (RBNP) is one of the largest protected areas of the Terai. It was established in 1976 as the 'Royal Karṇāli Wildlife Reserve', mainly for the protection of the Bengal tiger, and has been managed according to the classic 'Yellowstone Model'. Accordingly, it aims to protect 'untouched nature', the high biodiversity of the area, and the habitats of threatened animals against human influence. Earlier inhabitants of the park area have been resettled and are kept away from the national park by units of the Royal Nepalese Army (Brown 1997).

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[3] For a more in-depth analysis see Soliva 2002 and 2003.

3.1 Political ecology as an approach, and its methods

Several previous studies have dealt mainly with the ecology of Bardiyā and particular aspects of park-people conflicts. This study aims to give a more extensive view of the interests and interactions of the environmental actors. The concept of political ecology is used as an analytical framework. It emerged in the 1980s as a combination of ecology and a broadly defined political economy (Blaikie and Brookfield 1987: 17), and is concerned with the integration of political, historical and social aspects in the analysis of environmental change (Krings 1999: 129). Its basic assumption is that the environment is always political, and that special consideration must be given to the interests and interactions of environmentally relevant actors, at different spatial levels. Environmental actors are vested with varying amounts of power and pursue their diverse interests, resulting in conflicts over natural resources. Nature conservation can, therefore, be seen as a social process in which actors on the local, national and international levels are involved.

For the Bardiyā case study, the available literature was collected, and semistructured interviews were conducted with various actors in Bardiyā as well as in Kathmandu, supplemented by the method of participant observation (see Girtler 1992).

3.2 The development of the Bardiyā National Park

Located on the fringe of the Gangetic plains and in the *Curiyā*-range, the Royal Bardiyā National Park, particularly along the rivers Karṇāli and Babai, provides a perfect habitat for many threatened species. These include the Bengal tiger, the elephant, the gharial and the Asian one-horned rhinoceros, which was reintroduced from Citawan National Park (Upreti 1994). Approximately 70% of the park surface is covered by sal (*Shorea robusta*) forest, while the remaining 30% consists mostly of a mosaic of forest and grassland. Until the 1950s, because of malaria, Bardiyā was very sparsely populated, with the Thārus as the only inhabitants, mainly relying on shifting cultivation, fishing and gathering. This situation changed in the 1960s, when a malaria eradication programme led to the mass immigration of caste groups and ethnic groups from the densely populated hills. This process continues: between 1981 and 1991, the population of Bardiyā district rose from 199,000 to 290,00 - an increase of nearly 46% (Central Bureau of Statistics 1993). The forest areas have been steadily decreasing, while agriculture has been intensified and is today dominated by paddy cultivation. Many people are, for lack of alternatives, still forced to rely on natural resources (grass, firewood, timber, grazing areas, etc.) from the national park.
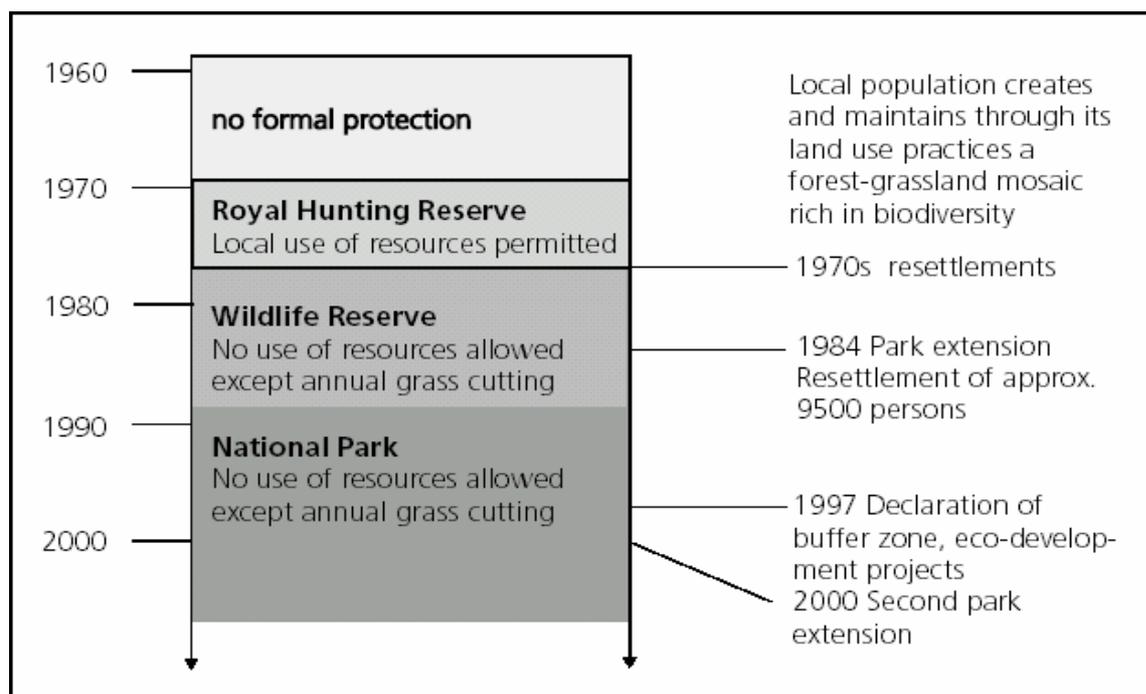
Fig. 2: The history of conservation in Bardiyā

For the Rāṇā rulers, Bardiyā was a prime site for big game hunting. Only in 1969 was the western part of today's park area declared a Royal Hunting Reserve, in order to protect the big game for royal hunting parties. Grazing and hunting by the local people were thereby banned inside the reserve. Following the advice of an international conservation expert, the Royal Karṇāli Wildlife Reserve was officially established in 1976. This brought about a total ban on the use of the reserve's natural resources by the local people, except for a short grass cutting period in the dry season. Since then, the territory has been guarded by the Royal Nepalese Army, which is supposed to prevent the local population from entering the park. As early as the 1970s, three villages were resettled (Bolton 1976). In 1984, the protected area was expanded eastward to include the Babai valley, which was inhabited by about 9,500 people (Pradhan 1995: 10).[4] They were all resettled outside the protected area, in many cases against their will. In 1988, Bardiyā was 'upgraded' to national park status, but the park regulations remained the same.

As a reaction to increasing park-people conflicts, but also following the international trend of involving the local people in conservation, a buffer zone was declared in 1997, on three sides of the national park. It has

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[4] A second park extension, to include another 500 km², plus a nearly 400 km² buffer zone further to the east were approved by the government in October, 2000. According to a zoologist involved in planning, the park extension will not cause any new resettlements of villages. At the same time, RBNP was declared a 'Gift to the Earth' by the government in support of the 'WWF 2000 – The Living Planet Campaign'.

attempted to make the more than 90,000 inhabitants living inside the buffer zone (PPP 1998: 15) independent of park resources. They are encouraged to form user groups responsible for sustainable forest use. Through conservation education programs, attempts are made to make them aware of conservation needs. Moreover, the UNDP-financed 'Park People Programme' and several NGOs are implementing a number of development projects. These include the promotion of alternative energies and the generation of alternative income to raise the standard of living of the local population. 50% of the national park's income is to be directed to the local communities in the buffer zone.

As the history of the Royal Bardiyā National Park shows, various actors with different interests and vested with varying amounts of power have been involved in conservation in Bardiyā. Their interactions have been investigated in the following analysis from the viewpoint of political ecology.

3.3 Actors in the process of nature conservation in the Royal Bardiyā National Park

Starting at the national level, there is above all the administrator of RBNP, the Department of National Parks and Wildlife Conservation (DNPWC). Its main tasks lie in the conservation of biodiversity and threatened animals and in promoting and controlling national park tourism, the main source of revenue for the national park. To enforce the laws and to protect the park against poaching, two companies of the Royal Nepalese Army are stationed in the national park. Many conservation experts acknowledge the role of the army in fighting against poaching in the protected areas of the Terai. However, even in conservation circles there have been complaints that stationing the army is too costly, that the co-operation between the army and park staff is poor at times, and that most soldiers are not motivated. They are given very little specific training and are transferred and given other duties every two years (Upreti 1994: 40). Furthermore, some local people complain about the bad behaviour of drunken soldiers who roam around the village at night, starting fights and molesting women.

The national park administration, together with the army, generally manages to prevail against the interests of local actors. Nevertheless, they have not been able to eliminate poaching, and park resources being used illegally by local people. Most farmers as individual actors do not possess much power. Together, however, they are a considerable force of resistance, which does not manifest itself through organised rebellion against the park authorities, but through 'everyday forms of resistance' (Scott 1985), small violations of park rules that cannot be brought under total control by the
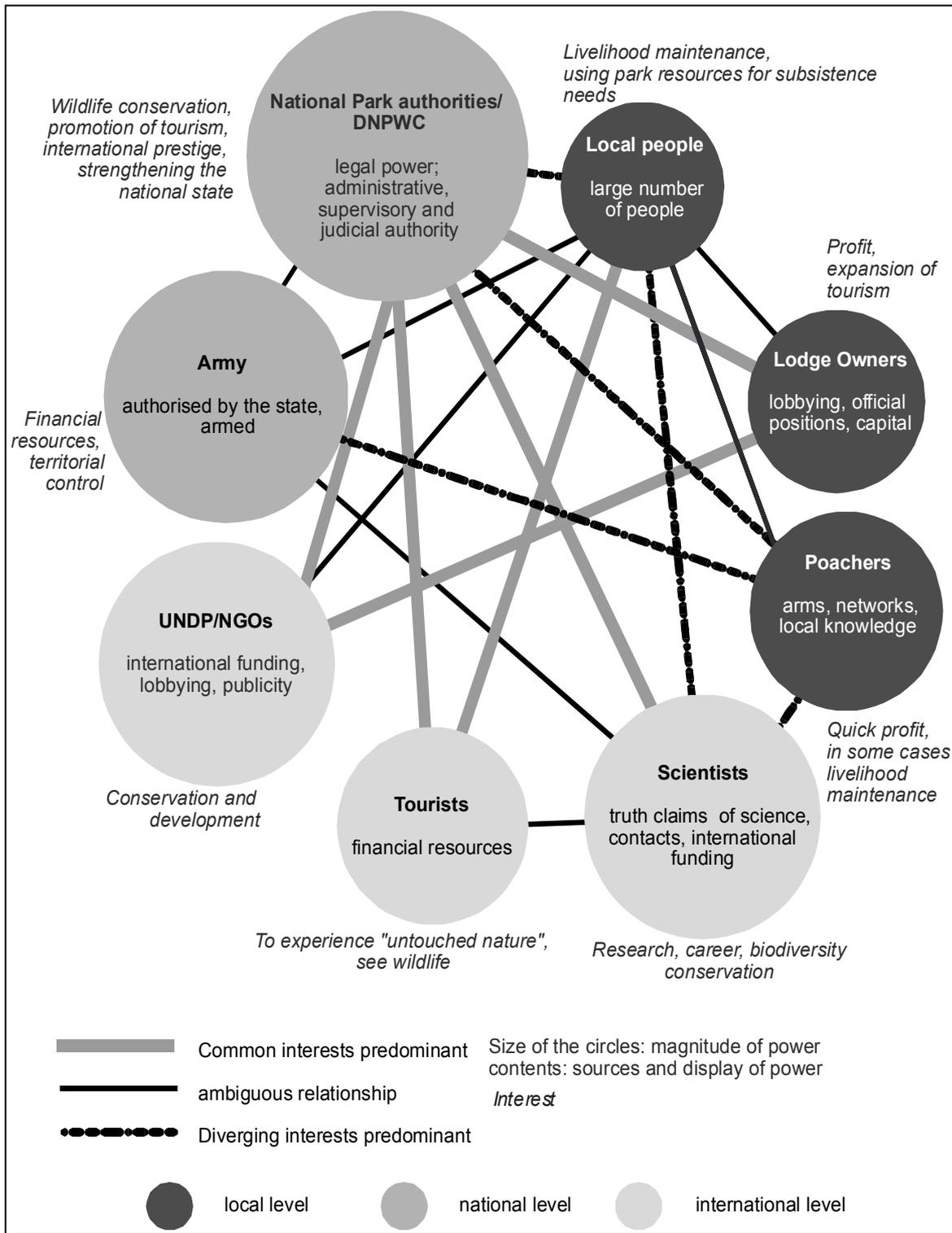
Fig. 3: Model of actor groups, interests and power relations in the Royal Bardiy National Park and its buffer zone

army. Regarding its original and primary goal, the protection of threatened species, the national park has been rather successful. The tiger and its habitat are protected, and the rhinos that have been relocated from Citawan seem to prosper in Bardiyā.

The rural population makes up the vast, heterogeneous majority of actors at the local level, differing in ethnicity and caste, social and economic status, land possession, etc. As most local people are poor, they are mainly concerned with meeting their basic needs through agriculture. With the establishment of the protected area and growing population pressure outside, some resources, such as firewood, have become scarce in certain areas. Many households near the park boundary have no other option but to collect firewood illegally in the park. The most serious problem the national park poses to the existence of local farmers is crop depredation by wild animals from the park. It results from both the increase in wildlife in the national park, and the intensification of agriculture in the buffer zone. The chief crop depredators are wild elephants, rhinos, wild boar and deer, all being strictly protected except wild boar. The park administration and NGOs working in the buffer zone are aware of the problem and are trying to build fences, which they claim to be effective. According to many farmers they are not.

The only use of park resources permitted to the local people is the cutting of grass, ten days per year. The national park administration regards the annual issuing of grass cutting permits to local people as a partial compensation for the restricted access to park resources. Indeed, the annual grass cutting is very important to the farmers. The grass is used for thatching and a variety of other purposes, and is only available inside the park, since there are no grasslands left outside. Between 1983 and 1993, the annual number of permits issued increased from 21,000 to 45,500: as in Citawan, a higher increase than the annual population growth rate (Brown 1997). Some conservationists and scientists are, however, worried about the increasing number of grass cutters. They fear a negative impact on the ecosystem, disturbances of wildlife, and theft of firewood. On the other hand, ecologists point to the necessity of annual cutting and burning for maintaining the grasslands and preventing the invasion of woody species. For the park managers, the question arises, how many grass cutters the park can support, and how they are best controlled. It has recently been suggested that the organization of grass cutting be left to local user groups, certainly an important step toward greater 'participation' of local people in park management. It does not, however, answer the question of the maximum number of grass cutters.

Tourism is gaining importance in Bardiyā, and year after year new lodges are being opened in the village of Andhākurdwārā. Between 1993/94 and 1998/99, the number of foreign visitors has more than tripled, from 871 to 2853 (annual reports of DNPWC 1994 to 1999). Most tourists come all the

way to Bardiyā to experience 'untouched nature' and avoid the mass tourism of Citawan (Müller-Böker 2000, Johnson and Orlund 1996). Bardiyā is said to be the best place in Nepal (and probably one of the best in the world) to see tigers, certainly an important motive for many tourists. For the national park, tourism is the main source of income, through entry fees and fees for elephant riding (around $10 each in 1999). Therefore, the park administration is interested in a controlled expansion of tourism, even into areas that have been as yet closed to tourists. There are, however, fears among scientists and conservation–focused NGOs that Bardiyā may become another Citawan, which for them is a symbol of uncontrolled mass tourism.

The lodge owners are mainly people from Kathmandu or Citawan, who are already established in tourism, or local people with enough capital and connections to open up a lodge. So far, only a small minority of Andhākurdwārā inhabitants has benefited from tourism by working in a lodge, as nature guides, by selling souvenirs to the tourists, or vegetables to the hotels. Nevertheless, the attitude of local people towards tourism is generally positive, as Johnson and Orlund's survey (1996: 51) confirms. Many farmers rightly see in tourism a potential for development of the region.

3.4 Participation in the buffer zone: Juggling with names

A final, important group of international and national actors consists of international organisations and NGOs. There are several NGOs, in addition to the UNDP-financed Park People Programme, operating in the buffer zone of Royal Bardiyā National Park. These include the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the KMTNC, and CARE, Nepal. Their rhetoric emphasises local participation in their projects, yet the term 'participation' is rarely clearly defined in their publications. 'Participation' is a complex, multidimensional concept that may have different meanings to actors within the same context of interaction. Thus, Pimbert and Pretty (1997) distinguish between seven levels of participation on a wide scale, from 'passive participation' to 'self-mobilisation'. The term 'participation' as used in this study is located on an upper level of this scale, where actors in the process of conservation are not only consulted, but have effective decision making powers. Accordingly, participation is understood here as effectively taking part in collective decision making and development processes. Participation is effective if actors are able to bring their opinions to bear in discussions and if their voices count when decisions are taken. The buffer zone programme suggests, however, that only part of the local population is given limited decision making power, which would assign the programme to the lower rungs of Pimbert and Pretty's 'ladder of participation'.

Interviews with villagers show that the majority of those people interviewed has no clear idea about the buffer zone and has not benefited

from the projects. While those people who benefit from the projects are fairly satisfied, the poorest section of the population seems to derive little benefit from the projects. Quite a few people lack sufficient land or capital to take up income-generating activities. Furthermore, one informant complained that she had been excluded from forest user group membership due to her low caste, thereby being forced to illegally use park resources. It can be assumed that this is not an isolated case (cf. Graner 1997, concerning user groups in community forestry in Sindhupālcok District). In its brochures, the Park People Programme presents itself as highly 'poverty- and gender-conscious' by explicitly listing the percentage of participation of 'disadvantaged groups' in its statistics of activities and projects (PPP 1998, DNPWC/PPP 1999). However, definition of disadvantaged groups employed by the Park People Programme, which includes Thārus and members of lower castes, seems problematic. Poverty in Bardiyā does not occur precisely along ethnic or caste lines. While most members of lower castes arer indeed poor, there are also some rather wealthy Thārus. In addition, just being present at group meetings does not guarantee participation, in the sense of taking part in decision making. Often, Thārus and members of low castes are present in user group meetings, but do not raise their voices, and silently agree to the decisions the local elites take.

While the user committees are expected to set up their own forest management rules, they have to adhere to a framework of rules formulated by the park authorities, such as a general ban on hunting in the buffer zone. Finally, the plan has to be approved by the chief warden of the national park. Generally, any use of natural resources in the buffer zone have to be 'sustainable' and in accordance with the objectives of the national park. In this way, the establishment of the buffer zone can be seen as an extension of power of the national park authorities.

Sharing park revenues with local people in the buffer zone is, in principle, an important step toward participatory park management. In the case of RBNP, the resulting economic benefit for the population has until now been small. Park revenues accruing from the barely 3,000 visitors per year are very low, compared to those from more than 80,000 visitors in Citawan National Park, and must be distributed over an area with more than 90,000 inhabitants.[5] Moreover, as several informants pointed out, the distribution of these funds to the user committees has not been functioning well.

Although it may be too early to evaluate the buffer zone programme in the Royal Bardiyā National Park, there seem to be grounds for the assumption that a 'participatory veneer' has been given to a traditional

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[5] Although suggested on several occasions, there is no direct mechanism for balancing the revenues among different protected areas. While considerable sums accrue in frequently visited parks such as Citawan or the Annapurna Conservation Area, the revenues of, for example, Khaptaḍ National Park are negligible.

fortress style of conservation in order to please foreign donors. Although a substantial benefit from park revenues arises for some in the buffer zone of Citawan National Park, this is not the case in Bardiyā. It is true that some villagers, often the already better-off section of the population, benefit from development projects implemented by the NGOs. The continuation of this benefit after the cessation of financial aid is not yet secured. Yet, for most inhabitants of the buffer zone of Bardiyā National Park, the buffer zone programme means, first of all, a limitation of their control over natural resources, and a reproduction of the existing power structure.

4 The use of pastures inside Khaptaḍ National Park

Bardiyā National Park is strongly marked by the so-called 'fence and fine' approach. Khaptaḍ National Park, on the other hand, represents an officially regulated natural resource regime.

Khaptaḍ National Park, probably the most unknown and least investigated protected area in Nepal, was established in 1984 in the Far-Western Development Region. It covers an area of 225 km² at an altitude between 1,400 and 3,300m, and includes parts of the districts Doti, Acham, Bajhang and Bajura. Gazetted in 1986, and guarded by the Royal Nepalese Army, it is managed directly by the DNPWC, each having headquarters inside the park and several posts at the border.

The districts bordering Khaptaḍ National Park, populated by some 600,000 inhabitants, constitute, even in the Nepalese context, an extremely poor region (NESAC 1998). Relatively small production figures within the farming sector, regular food aid and the absence of development and research projects are characteristic indicators of the region's marginal position. Temporary labour migration and emigration are widespread in this marginal region.

With an average of 15 foreign visitors per year, tourism in the park remains negligible so far. There is, however, domestic pilgrimage tourism with a peak season in June, when thousands of pilgrims visit the holy places in Khaptaḍ. The park is surrounded by a 'buffer zone', from which the local population is allowed to use several resources of the park. It comprises 22 Village Development Committees (VDCs) with approximately 10,000 households, belonging mostly to the so-called 'hill-castes' which are grouped in a very orthodox caste system (see Müller-Böker 2003).

Despite the absence of a general management plan for the protected area (IUCN 1993), regulations pertaining to the resource use were drawn up shortly after the park came into existence in 1986. They have remained in force, with a few changes, up to the present. Seasonal summer settlements are located on a 3,000m plateau within the park. For four months, people living on the park's borders are allowed to let their animals graze in the park. Under a strictly regulated scheme (requiring the payment of fees, and

only for a few days each year), a number of other resources in the park, such as bamboo, *daphne*, grass and firewood, may be exploited.

The conservation values of Khaptaḍ National Park can be basically divided into physical and cultural values. Its main physical value derives from the fact that it is the only protected area representing Mid-Hill-ecosystems in the western part of Nepal. Furthermore, it stretches over an altitude belt that is under-represented in the extensive protected area system of Nepal (Hunter and Yonzon 1993). It contains abundant forests (e.g. *Quercus leucotrichophora, Abies spectabilis*) and rare lake and mire ecosystems. Four plant species found in the park are endemic to Nepal, from which *Cotoneaster bisraminanus* is only found here (Shrestha and Joshi 1996). Among the broad diversity of fauna in the park, there are 223 bird species. Five of them are of supranational importance, and the only sighting of *Yuhina nigrimenta* has occurred here (Inskipp 1988). Endangered wildlife like musk deer, wild dog, *ghoral* and *thār* occur in the park, as well.

Cultural values seem to have been of great importance for the establishment of Khaptaḍ National Park. Its history differs fundamentally from other parks, worldwide. It was established basically on the initiative of Khaptaḍ Baba, a well-known Hindu holy man who lived for 50 years in Khaptaḍ. He personally approached the king of Nepal with a request to protect the land surrounding his ashram. Within six months, the national park was established and the borders were defined, and he took over the role as an 'unofficial caretaker of this park' (IUCN 1993). In the core of the park, there is a 5 km² 'sacred zone', which encompasses important holy places and the ashram of the Khaptaḍ Baba. At this place of 'meditation and silence', grazing, felling trees, killing animals, as well as the consumption of alcohol and tobacco are prohibited. Khaptaḍ seems to have been a sacred place for a much longer time. In ancient mythology the Khaptaḍ region is mentioned as being in the lower part of Manasa Kanda (the upper part is Mt. Kailash and Manasarovar Lake). It is said that Lord Shiva lived near Khaptaḍ in mythic times and that he invented Aryuvedic medicine with herbs from Khaptaḍ ridge (KRTC 1999). However, for local as well as for foreign visitors, the peaceful setting and the unique landscape of Khaptaḍ is now the main attraction. A mixture of grazing grounds and forests shapes the landscape on the high plateau at 3000m.

4.1 The Environmental Entitlements Approach

The 'Environmental Entitlements Approach' (Leach et al 1999) attempts to deal analytically with the rights to use natural resources, and tries to show the central role of institutions in mediating the relationships between societies and the environment. Based on an extended form of the entitlement analysis (Sen 1981), it also appeals to the 'New Ecology', the

'New Institutional Economics', the 'Theory of Structuration' (Giddens 1984) and 'historical landscape interpretation'. It is used to analyse the means of access to environmental resources, of various social actors. Central importance is given to institutions as mediators of the interaction between people and environment. The focus of attention is on the transformation of actors' endowments into capabilities by means of the entitlements. Endowments are very broadly defined as the 'rights and resources that social actors have', entitlements as the 'legitimate effective command over alternative commodity bundles', and capabilities as 'what people can do or be with their entitlements' (Leach et al 1999: 233). Institutions may be conceived as rules which manage human activity (North 1990: 3), and which are, in turn reproduced by actions (Giddens 1984). The consideration of institutions that are involved in nature conservation is useful for an analysis of the various related interests. Thus, it becomes clear that different groups of actors view themselves as being tied to different institutions, and accordingly appeal to different rules when pursuing their activities. Moreover, institutions differ from each other regarding their power and their temporal and spatial range of effectiveness. The goal of the Environmental Entitlements Framework is to analyse the connection between ecological and social dynamics, and the use of natural resources by particular social groups. Consequently, the results obtained may serve to more clearly target external intervention in order, for example, to protect particular social groups, or to be able to use natural resources better.

4.2 Endowments: Who has the right to use Khaptaḍ?

The pastures, as well as the other natural resources of the park, may only be used by the inhabitants of a buffer zone surrounding the park. This zone comprises 22 communities with a total of some 10,000 households. For a relatively small fee, one may graze animals on the pasture lands of the plateau and in the directly bordering forests, for four months in the summer. Surveys have shown, however, that even before the park's establishment, people from only ten communities brought animals to the area of the present national park. Among these ten communities, it was only people from villages situated very close to the (present) park who kept their animals on the plateau over the summer. One may conclude that traditional institutions have already restricted access to a pool of some 1,000 households (see Fig. 4). Decisive factors here are proximity to the park, availability of other pasture lands, and physical accessibility. These elements would make use of the park too difficult for the settlements further west.
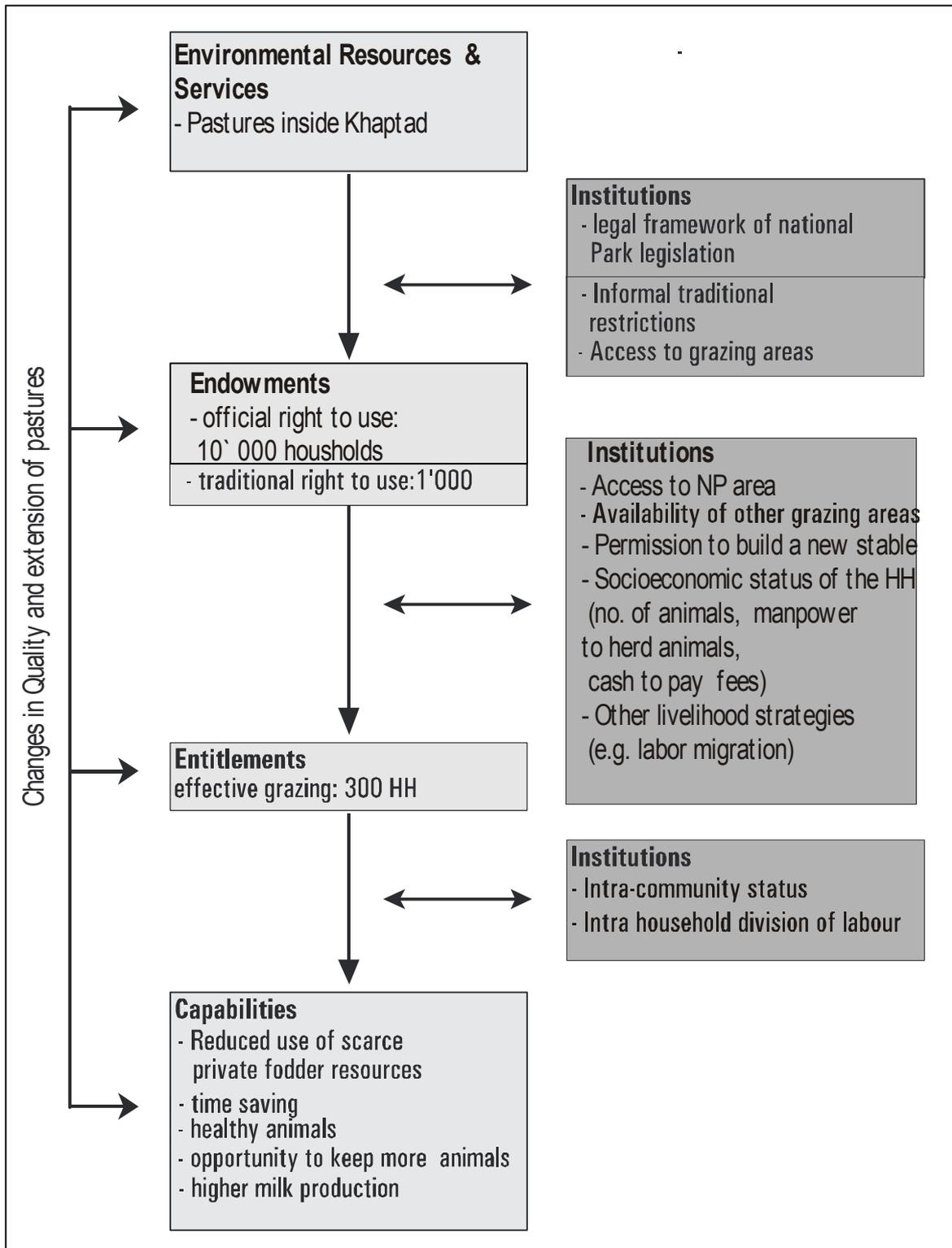
Fig. 4: Environmental entitlements of pasture use in Khaptaḍ National Park

4.3 Entitlements: Who uses Khaptaḍ National Park?

Can it be that of the 10,000 households that have right to engage in pasturing within the park, only some 300 households lay claim to this entitlement? The vast majority of households, as previously noted, are denied access by traditional institutions. Some households have been denied use of the pasture resources because their stables lie outside the public pasture lands. Following the establishment of the park, such stables had to be abandoned. The necessary approval from the park administration to build new stables was not given.

The most important institutions determining whether use rights will be turned to account or not, can be observed at the village level. They may be seen in the social and economic status of individual households, and in the economic strategies they pursue. Thus, certain preconditions must be met in order to make rational use of the summer pastures as a resource in the park. There must be enough animals and enough workers to tend them, and also the cash to pay the fees. This would initially suggest that it is mainly the larger, better-off households that satisfy these conditions. Household surveys have nevertheless shown that many poorer households also make use of this resource. Other household strategies that are independent of natural resources and the availability of other sources of income play a role as well. Additional income is, above all, generated from temporary labour migration to India, a widespread phenomenon in the region.

4.4 Capabilities: Who profits from the use of the resources in the National Park?

A total of only some 300 households from eight communities use the pasture resources of the national park. Those who have been able to translate their endowment into capabilities constitute up to 40% of all households from a few villages in the directly surrounding area. But who profits?

The advantages of using pasture land in the national park are obvious. By spending the summer on the mountain pastures the animals have access to better grazing and produce more milk. The pressure on scarce pasture resources near the village is reduced, as well as the input of labour, since grass doesn't need to be cut nor do the animals need to be permanently watched. Indeed, both factors tend to raise the value of the animals.

Within a household, it is not easy to judge winners and losers. Women are socially extremely underprivileged and overburdened. They may profit from not having to cut grass, but must then take over male labour when necessary. This typically happens when the men are pasturing their animals in the national park.

4.5 Conclusions

Regarding the use of pastures, the example of Khaptaḍ National Park makes it clear that traditional, local institutions decisively regulate the transformation of resources into assets. If only formal institutions existed, the intensity of grazing would greatly increase, and the park's resources would be quickly overexploited. This does not mean that institutionalised 'nature conservation' has no impact on the surroundings of Khaptaḍ National Park. This is proven by the conflicts between the army and the local population, when they collect firewood 'illegally', as well as the increasing damage to harvests from the growing number of wild animals (mostly wild boars).

Even though the 'sacred institution' nature conservation (Backhaus and Kollmair 2001) acts as a restriction for a small portion of the population, there are recurring calls to prohibit the use of the park for grazing altogether (KRTC 1999). This proposal, formulated by powerful representatives of the tourism and nature conservation sector, shows that the institution of 'nature conservation' claims special status for itself. Decisions to change use-related regulations have until now usually been made without consulting the users (Kollmair 2003).

The Environmental Entitlement approach has proved to be a useful tool for the analysis of problems associated with the institutional regulation of claims upon natural resources. The involvement of institutions in the recursive processes between action and structuring framing conditions could be illustrated. The distinction between endowments and entitlements leads to a deeper understanding of institutional processes involved in natural resource use. The use of resources as well as the often ignored non-user can be identified with the aid of the restricting institutions.

These results, combined with investigations on socio-economic strategies at the household level (Müller-Böker 2003, Müller 2002), make it possible to develop proposals for improved buffer zone management.

5. The Kanchanjaṅgā Conservation Area: A participatory concept of nature conservation and its local perception

The Kanchanjaṅgā Conservation Area Project (KCAP), established in 1997, follows the principles of the new participatory concepts of nature conservation. These concepts suggest that sustainable nature conservation is only possible with or, in the best case, through the local population. A preliminary study was conducted in the remote and sparsely populated area of the northeastern corner of Taplejuṅ District. The aim was to clarify the local population's perception of the project's participatory approach, by taking a look at the condition of livelihood and local institutions. The region was chosen because the conservation area was very recently established

there. The World Wildlife Found (WWF), an important stakeholder within the international conservation community, provides the funding and management. In other words, concepts and ideas of the international conservation lobby meet those of a traditional subsistence oriented population.

5.1 The Kanchanjaṅgā Conservation Area Project

The Kanchanjaṅgā region in eastern Nepal was declared a 'Gift to the Earth' by the government of Nepal in April 1997, supporting the 'WWF 2000 – The Living Planet Campaign' (WWF 1999). In July 1997 it was designated as a Conservation Area, and in November 1997 the WWF (US)-funded project started work. Administered jointly by the DNPWC and the WWF (Nepal), KCAP covers an area of 2,035 square kilometres southwest of Mt. Kanchanjaṅgā, the world's third highest peak (8,586 m). The area encompasses an impressive high mountain landscape with glaciers, rocks (65%) and meadows (9% of the protected area), as well as abundant forests (24%) below 4,000 m. Only 2% of the area is under cultivation.

The main reasons for protection, as stated by the WWF, are the unique environmental characteristics of the Mt. Kanchanjaṅgā area. It has a great density of glaciers, biodiversity, extensive forests of endangered Himalayan larch *(Larix griffithiana)*, as well as endangered wildlife (e.g. red panda, snow leopard, blue sheep). The potential for trans-boundary conservation with the Kanchanjaṅgā National Park in Sikkim (India) and the Qomolangma Nature Preserve in Tibet (China), is regarded as a further benefit (Rastogi et al 1997). The general project aim is "to safeguard the biodiversity of the area, and improve the living conditions of the local residents by strengthening the capacity of local institutions responsible for making decisions, which will effect the long-term biodiversity conservation and economic development of the area" (KCAP 1999: 1).

These aims should be reached by the following measures (KCAP 1999, Gurung and Gurung 2001): [6]

- implementation of a management plan through Conservation Area Management Committees (CAMCOM) formed by local people;

- motivation of the local population towards community and infrastructure development;

- raising the awareness and motivation of local people to work for conservation management, community development, biodiversity conservation and eco-tourism development; and

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[6] Because the project was still at an early stage in 1998, only a few measures had been implemented to the state in 2001. See Gurung and Gurung 2001: 162 ff.

- enhancement of the economic status and education opportunities of women.

The well-known, and successful, Annapurna Conservation Area Project (ACAP) (e.g. Bunting et al 1991, Bajracharya 1995) served as a model for the Kanchanjaṅgā area. However, the preconditions of ACAP are quite different from KCAP. The success of ACAP has an economic foundation, based on the income generated from tourism. Entrance fees and expenditures of the more than 50,000 foreign tourists per annum (Yonzon and Heinen 1997) can be used for development activities. On the other hand, the Kanchanjaṅgā region only opened up for trekking tourism in 1988. Currently, there are only 500 to 800 tourists per year (Watanabe and Ikeda 1999, Yoda et al 2001). The main disadvantages for tourism include the difficult access due to its remote location, a short season (high precipitation and low temperatures) and poor facilities for tourists. In the near future, a substantial increase of visitors and income opportunities is not expected (Gurung 1996).

5.2 Livelihoods and local institutions in the Kanchanjaṅgā Conservation Area

Around 5,700 people of different ethnic origins reside permanently inside the conservation area. Living in five Village Development Communities (VDC), the population is split between the ethnic groups of Sherpa (Bhoṭe), Limbu, Rāi, Guruṅg and Chetri. Their main source of income is subsistence agriculture and animal husbandry. Beyond these, the local population depends on a wide variety of activities to sustain their livelihood. These range from small cottage industries and trade with Tibet, to income generated from tourism, seasonal labour migration, and mercenary employment. Most households combine these different strategies to minimise risk and optimise the use of natural and economic resources.

The KCA can be roughly divided in two altitude belts with different livelihood strategies (tab. 2).

Table 2: Altitude belts with different livelihood strategies in KCA

	Lower Altitude (1,000 – 2,500 m)	Higher Altitude (above 2,500 m)
main villages	Tāpethok, Māmānkhe, Lelep	Ghunsā, Olāṅchuṅgolā
ethnic groups	Limbu, Rāi, Guruṅg, Sherpā (Lāmā)	Sherpā, Tibetan refugees
farming system	mixed small-scale farming on irrigated and dry fields; shifting cultivation	animal husbandry in transhumance; dry field farming (not in Olāṅchuṅgolā)
main crops	rice, maize, millet, cardamom (cash-crop), two crops per year	potato, wheat, buckwheat, one harvest per year
livestock	cattle, buffalo, sheep, goat	yak, nak, chauri, sheep
off-farm activities	portering, military service, seasonal labor migration, selling of forest products	trade with Tibet and Sikkim, tourism, carpet weaving

A bundle of local institutions regulates access to the natural resources of the surrounding environment. Examples are pasture management regulations, grass-cutting regulations, and local forest protection regulations.

The pastures are officially registered as government land, but their use and management is under the control of local user groups. A healthy population of blue sheep above Khāṅpāchen (Brown 1994) indicates that the local management of pastures is not only sustainable, but also supports wildlife. Only the inhabitants of Ghunsā have free access to these pastures, while users from outside (non user group members) have to pay fees. Since the refugee residents of Phale do not have pastures or pasture rights, they have a system of joint herding with the residents of Ghunsā. In exchange for half the produce (*ghiu, churpi*), Ghunsā herders take Phale livestock to their summer pastures. The livestock is kept near Phale in winter. Another group using Ghunsā's pastures are Chetri shepherds from Taplejuṅ Area, practicing an extended transhumance.

The 'grass-cutting day' is one of the most exciting and effective institutions of Ghunsā (Brown 1994: 30). It regulates the supply of winter fodder. To avoid individual exploitation of a crucial common resource, village representatives fix the day on which the grass cutting is allowed to start. After three to four days, all the grass is harvested. All members of the community will have had the opportunity to collect sufficient hay. The grass cutting regulations also extend to private land. This helps to mitigate economic disparities and prevents the theft of grass from private lands. The ability to adapt the system to a new setting was proved after Tibetans took refuge in Phale in 1959, when they were accepted as equal partners in this system.

Locally developed rules and regulations are also found concerning the forests, especially the heavily used forests in the vicinity of settlements. The term *'rāni ban'* designates those forests that are traditionally preserved for religious, as well as secular reasons. The timber for the construction of schools, gompas, bridges and other needs of the community is taken from these forests.

Various local institutions establish governance over a particular resource defined by a user group, demarcating a boundary and establishing and enforcing a functioning set of user-rights and restrictions. In the past, these local institutions could effectively resist external state control because of the remoteness of the area. However, the KCAP tries to enhance and modify these traditional rules and regulations through the implementation of a management plan through Conservation Area Management Committees (CAMCOM).

5.3 The local perception of the KCAP

In autumn 1998, we visited nearly every village inside and bordering the KCA (with the exception of the restricted area of Olāṅchungolā). We conducted around 40 interviews with various local residents and with the representatives of the project who were present.

The first set of questions dealt with the following subjects: What does the local population know about the KCAP? What are their expectations concerning the project?

The majority of interviewees knew that a project called KCAP existed. However, only two of them were aware that the main organisation running the project is the WWF, without knowing what kind of organisation it is.

After having explained that the WWF is an international nature conservation organisation, the question was raised: "Why, in your opinion, do people from other countries donate money to protect nature in this area?" The reaction to this question was astonishment and laughter. Many people admitted that they had never reflected on this. After some considerations, sometimes it was stated: "Probably people from foreign countries know about our very bad situation. They want to help us!" However, they gave no thought to nature conservation.

When questioned about the main targets of the KCAP, it was surprising that intrinsic conservation targets like the ban on hunting, protection of animals, plants and forest use regulations, were known in only a fourth of the cases. Twice as many responses were related to the project's aim of 'improving in the standard of living'. It was repeatedly mentioned that the main objectives of the project are the construction of large buildings and roads, supplying water and electricity, restoration of monasteries, improvement of schools, agricultural training programs, and the formation

of women's groups. These expectations, which go far beyond the intention and economic potential of the project, are comprehensible in view of the main problems of the area.

Asked about the main problems, many respondents stated that there are 'far too many' of them. Most frequently mentioned was the lack of infrastructure. Nearly everybody complained about the bad conditions of the sometimes dangerous trails and bridges. High transportation costs for all commodities, limited access to markets (the nearest vehicular road is a walk of two to five days from the KCAP), and dangerous routes to the school were mentioned. Problems with the drinking water supply, no access to electricity, insufficient medical supplies, lack of telephones and milling facilities, were stated less often. Other frequently stated problems were the general lack of education and employment opportunities. Only a few interviewees noted environmentally linked problems, such as poor firewood supply and erosion. One respondent even identified the conservation project itself as the main problem!

Overall gender differences in the perception of problems were significant. While more than two-thirds of the male interviewees mentioned the poor infrastructure (paths, bridges, electricity), only one-third of the females did so. The perception of the drinking water supply was quite the reverse, being often mentioned by women, but only occasionally by men.

The perceptions of the few tourists we interviewed were in sharp contrast to those of the local population. They mentioned that the main problems for the local population were (in order of frequency): deforestation and erosion, hygiene problems (toilets), education, medical supplies, general economic problems, the bad influence of outsiders (sic!), drinking water supply, footpaths, and drug problems.

The second set of questions concerned the topic: Is it necessary to protect nature? In which way could it be done?

That it is necessary to protect nature, or more precisely, that rules and regulations for the use of natural resources are necessary, was common sense. The reasons mentioned for the protection of nature were mainly utilitarian, and focused on their own locality. These reasons included, "for our own security", "our children will need firewood in the future", and "that tourists have something beautiful to see". Aesthetic aspects were also quite frequently mentioned: "If there are many trees, then there are many birds and animals, and that is beautiful to see". Opinions were divided with relation to the fauna. It was stated that it is 'bad' to kill animals, but referring to the frequent harvest losses due to wild animals and highly dangerous encounters with bears, there were also those who demanded the extinction of these animals. Only a few men, Buddhist Sherpas and Tibetans, gave religiously motivated reasons for conservation by referring to Buddhist concepts: "not to kill animals or to plant trees, this is good for our *dharma*".

While the answers concerning the reasons for protecting nature were diverse, the answers regarding how it could be done were quite consistent. Most of the interviewees emphasised that it is first of all necessary to find consensus within the community. Conservation, in their eyes, is only possible if the whole community pulls together: "I can't do anything by myself, we must work together" was heard frequently. This refers to institutional regulations. As mentioned above , there are traditional ones in existence, but new ones have to be created. KCAP can count on the readiness of the local population, especially women, to take up these innovations. The most positive and successful examples of new institution building, as promoted by KCAP, are the mother-groups and the informal education classes for women.

5.4 Conclusions and outlook

An important result of our investigation in the Kanchanjaṅgā area is that only a small part of the population is aware of the principal objective of the KCAP, which is nature conservation. The WWF project is almost always perceived as a rural development project. Consequently, the expectations are unrealistic. It can be deduced that in the new generation of conservation projects the main target of 'conservation' is embedded within development measures and, for the local population, is hardly visible. Acceptance of such a project is high, at least in the beginning. However, as soon as the conservation targets, including the restrictions, become more obvious, and many of the expectations with regard to improvement in the living standard are not fulfilled, critical voices tend to become louder. The lack of transparency, as well as campaigns against the project, have already led to rumours about army stationing, prohibition of forest resource use, and grazing restrictions. A lesson that the KCAP team had to learn was that, "As a result of misinformation, it was very difficult for the extension team to build trust with the local communities and address conservation issues" (KCAP 1998: 12).

Nevertheless, compared to many other conservation projects in the developing world, the KCAP makes serious attempts to integrate the needs of the local population. With the implementation of the community-based CAMCOMs on different administrative levels, including women's groups and forest user groups, it is on the best path to embed traditional institutional structures in the conservation approach.

The project will, however, have to face a number of problems in the future. A permanent one will be financing of the development activities. The income generated through entrance fees paid by tourists will never cover the expenses. Another problem facing the project is a social one: the multiethnic composition and local stratification of society. The project headquarters is situated in a village with predominately Sherpā inhabitants, and most of the

local employees are Sherpās. The Limbus, the second most numerous group of the area, are not represented at the headquarters and therefore feel discriminated against. Again another conflict seems to emerge from the fact that the KCAP interferes in local polities. The project ran into serious trouble in 1999. Local political leaders tried to urge the management to shift the headquarters to the district capital, and to involve local NGOs, which are under their control, in the park management. In other words, participatory nature conservation programs have to tackle primarily social questions and depend on existing political structures.

The main aim of 'conservation' has not been adequately explained to the local population, which shows once more that 'participation' is easy to promulgate, but difficult to implement. In the environmental conservation context, participation is still largely seen as a method of reaching externally desirable conservation goals. It is generally interpreted in ways that do not allow the transfer of control to the local people, and is not seen as a social process (Pimbert and Pretty 1997).

6 Discussion of the most important results

6.1 Different nature conservation concepts

Case studies have shown that the impact of nature conservation projects on the local population can differ according to the project's approach. In its early phase, Nepalese nature conservation was influenced mainly by U.S. notions of nature and nature conservation, which were then implemented within the context of Nepalese societies. Later adaptations, executed in various conservation areas with solutions that were influenced by international mainstream nature conservation but generally based on the Nepalese concept, were developed together with ACAP, KCAP and other conservation areas. For this reason, in an international context, Nepal can be said to have pioneered participative management of nature reserves in High Mountain regions.

Case studies confirm the initial hypothesis that conflicts between nature conservation and the local population increase when contradictory concepts of nature and nature conservation exist. It has become apparent that the evaluation of the natural environment in Nepal's subsistence-oriented societies is primarily focused on use (see section 5). However, nature can also be understood as part of a religious reference system, where mountains, rocks, forests or trees are worshiped (see section 4). Western perceptions of nature, on the other hand, are based on the segregation of nature and culture (Schiemann 1996), and consider it necessary to maintain an unspoiled natural environment as the converse of civilisation.

According to the classic 'Yellowstone concept', research and recreation are the only forms of use permissible in national parks, and they are

intended to serve the 'enlightenment of mankind'. In more recent times, the conservation of genetic biodiversity has gained importance for future exploitation by the pharmaceutical industry and bio-technologies.

One area where the interests of the local population coincide with western nature conservation concepts is nature conservation for religious motives. It should be noted that in most cases where religious motives were instrumental in designating nature reserves, these areas are sacred to Hindus, and their protection is in the interest of a Hindu kingdom. If, on the other hand, Limbus had demanded the protection of a mountain that was sacred in their religion, or if Thāru had demanded access to a forest within a national park where forest spirits are worshipped, it would have been unlikely that the state would have considered their demands.

6.2 Tourism and wildlife protection

National park tourism is another area with a trend toward combining interests of the local population with the authorities in charge of nature conservation. Tourism is an important source of revenue for the state as well as for (some) members of the population, and is considered by the authorities as almost harmless for the environment. In this context, the necessity to protect wildlife as a prerequisite for tourism in the Terai National Park is probably less controversial than it is in the mountain nature reserves where enjoyment of the landscape is more important.

Nevertheless, all over Nepal the protection of crop-damaging animals and predators that kill domestic animals meets with limited acceptance among the farming population. As long as farmers are not compensated sufficiently for such damage, 'conservation education' is not likely to succeed in convincing them of the necessity of wildlife protection. In other words, a smallholder in the Terai region is not likely to understand the 'immense national and international importance of the rhinoceros', so long as these animals keep destroying his crops and he does not receive any compensation.

6.3 Institutions

If both the local population and the Nepalese state acknowledge a region to be worthy of protection, this does not necessarily mean that the implementation of a nature reserve can go ahead without conflict. This depends rather on the way nature conservation is carried out in accordance within the relevant institutional regulations. In some cases, as with the traditional pasture regulation in the Khaptaḍ National Park, local institutions are compatible with nature conservation concepts designed at a national level, and hardly cause any conflict. However, such institutional regulations are more often incompatible, especially if the farming

community is no longer permitted to use vital natural resources without being offered realistic alternatives.

The monitoring of natural resources is another area where conflict can arise, because of incompatible institutional regulations. For example, in some national parks now monitored by the army, monitoring was previously carried out by traditional 'forest wardens' and other monitoring authorities. Among the best documented in the literature is the 'Shinggi Nawa', the traditional forest warden of Sherpā in the Everest region (Stevens 1996, Sherpa 1993). His job was officially taken over by the army after the Sagarmāthā National Park was implemented, but was carried out much less efficiently. Subsequently, conflicts arose between the indigenous Sherpā and the national park management. Although monitoring of the mountain nature reserves by the army has been widely criticised, even among DNPWC, the Nepalese government adheres obstinately to this system.

For this reason, one can assume that, besides park monitoring, other reasons are responsible for the government's attitude (such as protection of border regions, control over ethnic minorities, and financing of the army).

6.4 Perception and evaluation of nature conservation concepts by different actor groups

Not only are nature conservation concepts and their implementation strategies important, but also the way they are perceived by the different groups involved. For instance, the DNPWC's perception of nature conservation concepts and environmentally relevant institutions of a village community within a nature reserve can determine the scope of use restrictions, or the relocation of an entire village. However, nature conservation agencies' perceptions of concepts and institutions for the use of local resources have changed emphasis in the last two decades.

Until the 1980s, farmers in nature reserves were mainly considered to be a disruptive factor; they damaged the environment by their ill-considered actions (Müller-Böker 1997). Some authorities in charge of integrating nature conservation projects now treat farmers as 'environment caretakers' and 'land managers'. In the beginning, they distinguished between 'indigenous' and 'immigrant' people, in many cases a rather ambiguous decision. Whereas indigenous people such as the Thāru in Bardiyā or the Sherpā in the Everest region were at first considered in a romantic way as 'living in harmony with nature' and sometimes as 'part of the ecological system', the so-called immigrant settlers were considered to be far less capable of dealing sustainably with nature. Nevertheless, in several cases indigenous people were resettled from national parks (for Citawan see Müller-Böker 1999).

6.5 Opportunities and limitations of participatory nature conservation approaches

Local institutions that have proven to be useful for national nature conservation interests are acknowledged by the management and supported as much as possible. However, in conservation areas as well as in buffer zones, the objective is to create new institutions dealing with nature and the environment, and establish them as user groups and committees. In practice this can lead to problems.

Firstly, the results of the Bardiyā case study, as well as investigations in the field of community forestry (Graner 1997), point out that already disadvantaged groups, such as the members of lower castes, are often excluded from effective participation and co-operation in user groups. They are also difficult to reach with development measures. This means that, in some cases, already underprivileged groups are further marginalised by the formalised use of resources, and possibly driven in increasing numbers into dependency on the illegal use of park resources.

In order to promote participation by disadvantaged groups, the law provides that the conservation area management must nominate five (male and female) representatives of disadvantaged groups as members of the user committee. However, this laudable intention is difficult to execute in practice, as effective participation of the nominees is easily prevented by the dominant members. This demonstrates once more that the influence of local hierarchies in participatory projects cannot be overcome within a short time.

It is doubtful that current legal provisions in buffer zones and conservation areas actually enable 'true' participation. In both cases, the user committees, when establishing their use terms, are bound by the objectives of the nature reserve management, and dependant on its approval. The final decision is made, in principle, by the DNPWC. Furthermore, the Conservation Area Management Rules, in force since 1997, restrict local use autonomy by denying user groups the right to impose penalties. The new legislation gives the DNPWC, or its liaison officer, the exclusive right to determine sanctions.

Is such loss of power over natural resources by the local population - caused by the designation of nature reserves or buffer zones - at least compensated by economic benefits? The answer depends largely on the volume of tourism and the associated revenue generated by the parks. The population, or at least some of it, in well-frequented areas such as Citawan and Annapurṇa, profit from park revenue. Economic benefits in the three (more remote) case study areas are small or non-existent. Nevertheless, the development projects within the framework of the buffer zone programme contribute to the improvement of the population's lifestyle, although it remains to be seen how sustainable these measures will be once project support is withdrawn.

How can such problems be minimised? There is no magic wand. It is doubtful that true participation can be realised, especially in the strictly regulated Terai Nature Reserves, with their rich resources (wildlife, sal timber). In the lowlands, uncontrolled immigration of large numbers of people is still apparent. At the same time, the population is becoming more and more heterogeneous. The establishment of relatively stable institutions, acknowledged by all population segments, is becoming increasingly difficult. Furthermore, conservation areas without effective monitoring are surely at risk of becoming the victims of illegal settlements. Nevertheless, efforts should be made to integrate the population in at least some parts of park management, e.g. for controlling the park borders. Buffer zones could be used, initially, as a kind of training area for future tasks within the core zone management.

For this reason, the local population must be made to feel that it is effectively responsible for buffer zone management, and is not outmanoeuvred by the park management. Despite legal ambiguities (Keiter 1995), the user committees should be granted the right to impose fines for violations of resource use regulations.

Secondly, in all nature conservation areas, the participation of the local population in the parks' revenue and benefits is most important in order to improve the lifestyle of all involved. Development projects in conservation areas initially try to win the trust of the population before the real intention, of establishing a nature reserve, becomes apparent (see section 5). If, at a later stage, the use of resources is restricted, and the local population becomes aware that their unrealistic expectations from the project with regard to development and progress are not fulfilled, such trust will be replaced with conflict. Consequently, the objectives of nature conservation should be made transparent to the population from the beginning.

Last but not least, the planning of development projects in nature reserves or in their buffer zones, should acknowledge local livelihood strategies and institutional regulation of the population. Although this notion is by no means new, it is not universally acknowledged, as the designation of the buffer zone for the Khaptaḍ National Park demonstrated, where communities were integrated without having any rights of use of this territory.

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Ḍhol Sāgar: Aspects of Drum Knowledge amongst Musicians in Garhwal, North India

Andrew Alter

In the Central Himalayan region of Garhwal,[1] drummers of the dominant musician caste group (referred to as Bājgī, Dās, or Aujī) are particularly known for their performance of two outdoor drums, the *ḍhol* and the *damauṃ*. Through their performances on these drums, drummers maintain a crucial role in ritual activity at processions, festivals, weddings, and other critical events. Though the intricacies of their drumming practice are not understood by a majority of the region's population, drummers themselves maintain a repertoire of rhythms and patterns called '*bāje*' which are linked to specific ritual moments. In spite of changes to repertoire and practice brought about by various factors during the past century, some drummers today maintain aspects of a musical knowledge that appears to have a lengthy history. The existence of an ostensibly written source for this knowledge is a curious part of what is otherwise an oral tradition.

This paper explores the nature of drum knowledge in Garhwal as it relates to oral and literate practice. In particular, the paper investigates the available published references to - or 'versions' of - the *Ḍhol Sāgar*, a supposedly written 'text' on drum history, knowledge, and practice. This examination reveals a conceptual approach to drumming practice that hints at a deeper system of knowledge in which drum patterns may hold - or have held - esoteric meaning. Consequently, the examination reveals the unique relationship between aspects of drum practice and Hindu philosophy regarding the metaphysics of sound.

Aujī caste members are not the only musicians who play drums in Garhwal. For instance, *huṛkiyā*s (performers of the drum called a *huṛkī*) and *ḍauñriyā*s (performers of the drum called a *ḍauñr*) are shamanic ritual specialists who perform and entertain on smaller drums at indoor occasions. Though drums of all kinds are ritually significant, Aujīs and their drums – the *ḍhol* and the *damauṃ* – are unique in a number of significant ways. Firstly, the fact that Aujīs are part of a large endogamous caste group intrinsically links their vocational practice and knowledge to their identity as a caste group. *Huṛkiyā*s and *ḍauñriyā*s, by contrast, are not normally designated as musical caste groups. Consequently, they usually learn their repertoire from specialists with whom they have no kin relationship. Secondly, *ḍhol-damauṃ* repertoire is distinguished by the fact that it may

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[1] In 2000, Uttaranchal was designated as a state bordering Tibet to the north and Uttar Pradesh to the south. Uttaranchal comprises the regions of Garhwal and Kumaon.

exist separately to song texts. Though *huṛkiyā*s and *ḍauñriyā*s use their drums to accompany the singing of shamanic and epic texts, in general they do not identify their drum practice as separate to their singing/recitation. Aujīs, by contrast, consider their drum knowledge *in and by itself* to contain embedded meaning and structure whether or not sung texts are accompanied by, or interspersed with, drumming. Thirdly, *ḍhol-damauṃ* are played in outdoor rituals and may be attached to larger ensembles including various trumpets and bagpipes. The *huṛkī* and *ḍauñr* are only played indoors and are only accompanied by a performer who rhythmically strikes a metal plate. In this way, the knowledge of Aujī drummers is significantly different to that of shamans and other drummers and remains a unique part of the caste group's identity.

Aujī musicians frequently refer to the knowledge and history that surrounds the performance practice of the *ḍhol*, as 'Ḍhol Sāgar;'[2] literally 'the ocean of drumming.' Many believe the *Ḍhol Sāgar* to be a written source that contains the mystical and practical information on 'all things" dealing with the *ḍhol*'s correct use in ritual occasions. Its content is intimately linked to Aujī notions of the nature of drum knowledge, and the power that this knowledge encompasses. As stated in various versions of the *Ḍhol Sāgar*, Mahādeva (Śiva) played his drum and thereby intoned the primordial sound (*nāda*) to bring forth the universe. Today, every drummer's performance potentially harnesses the creative power inherent in the *ḍhol*'s sound, as a reflection of the world's initial creation. Thus, *Ḍhol Sāgar* is at once drum knowledge and history. It explains creation, and by association, authenticates the knowledge of drummers, thereby emphasizing their role in society.

The existence and nature of *Ḍhol Sāgar* is enigmatic. No musicians with whom I spoke while undertaking fieldwork in Garhwal were able to show me a copy of a book in printed form. Some claimed to have seen it, or stated that they knew of someone who had a copy. However, very few ever claimed with confidence, that they had read a book purported to be the *Ḍhol Sāgar*. Many Aujī musicians remain only moderately literate today, and it is doubtful that their limited literacy would equip them with the skills to read whatever written versions of the *Ḍhol Sāgar* may exist. Furthermore, available written segments are in a macaronic linguistic form, combining Hindi, Garhwali, and Sanskrit, which adds to the ambiguity of their meaning. Nonetheless, some drummers are able to recite orally transmitted verses and vocable syllables representing drum strokes, all of which they believe comprises a form of *Ḍhol Sāgar*. In spite of the ambiguous nature and meaning of the *Ḍhol Sāgar*'s text, it remains critical to the self-concept of Aujī musicians and their tradition.

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[2] People refer to this knowledge/book using either one word '*Ḍholsāgar*' (see Dabral 1989), or two '*Ḍhol Sāgar*' (see Bhatt 1976). In general, I refer to it using two words.

The *Ḍholsāgar Sañgrah*: A recent scholarly publication

In 1989 Shivprasad Dabral published a compilation of three text fragment documents that were in his possession, two of which were believed to be part of *Ḍhol Sāgar*, and a third, which is referred to as *Damauṃsāgar*. In addition, Dabral briefly mentions a fourth document, *Daiñtsañghār*, which he suggests describes drumming practice in relation to exorcism (1989: 2). His reference to the *Daiñtsañghār* is brief, and no segment of any text is given.

Dabral prefaces his reprinted texts with an introduction and four chapters in which information on the instruments of Garhwal, the circumstances of the *Ḍhol Sāgar*'s creation, information on the Aujī caste group, and an exegesis of the *Ḍhol Sāgar*'s content are given (*ibid.*: 3-8). The reprinted texts from Dabral's three documents comprise 36 pages, while the remainder of the book is 93 pages in length. The chapter on Garhwali folk instruments is written by Keshav Anuragi, while the remainder of the chapters are Dabral's own.

The first reprinted document is referred to as *Bṛhad Ḍholsāgar* [The Comprehensive *Ḍholsāgar*], a name given it by its original publisher, *Paṇḍit* Bhawanidatt Parvatiya. As Dabral states, Parvatiya published his *Bṛhad Ḍholsāgar* in 1926 through the Bharat Printing Press in the town of Meerut near Delhi. Dabral's own copy of the *Bṛhad Ḍholsāgar* was a poorly photocopied and incomplete version of the original (*ibid.*: 3). Dabral contends, that Parvatiya's publication is simply a transcription of a recitation by an illiterate drummer or some unnamed knowledgeable person. Thus, phonetic confusion and the obscure meanings of words and phrases in the original, as well as the poor quality of Dabral's photocopy, compounded the problems Dabral faced as its publisher in 1989. Though Dabral does not dismiss Parvatiya's *Bṛhad Ḍholsāgar* as inauthentic, he does suggest that the lack of documentation about its origin, and the problems associated with the incomplete and damaged nature of his own copy, cast doubt on its usefulness as a scholarly document. Amongst other things, Dabral believes that the person/s who originally recited the *Bṛhad Ḍholsāgar* to Parvatiya placed the *anuswār* (the nasal *ṃ*) after many words to lend it the prestige and feeling of Sanskrit (*ibid.*: 4). However, according to Dabral, the language is not Sanskrit but a mixture of Hindi and Garhwali.

There also appears to be some confusion about the original circumstances of the publication of the second text segment that Dabral reprints. This segment he states simply to be *Ḍholsāgar*, and suggests that its original publication was in either 1913 or 1932 through the Śrī Badrīkedāreśvar Press, Pauri, under the direction of Brahmanand Thapliyal (*ibid.*: 5-6). There is some suggestion that the compilation and typesetting of the document may have begun in 1913, and that Thapliyal's struggles with

establishing his press, including a period in jail during India's independence movement, delayed its actual publication until 1932. In any case, Thapliyal's *Ḍholsāgar* was reprinted in several later volumes. In 1967, Mohanlal Babulkar published his *Gaṛhwāl kī Lokdharmī Kalā* [The Artistry of the Folk Religion of Garhwal] and included an ostensibly complete version of the *Ḍhol Sāgar* within this volume (Dabral 1989: 5). Subsequently, in 1983, he published *Purvāsī* [The Villager], in which he again included the same text. A slightly modified version of this text also appears in Abodhabandhu Bahuguna's 1955 publication *Girīś*, as well as his 1976 publication, *Gāḍamyaṭeki Gaṅgā*.

Dabral acknowledges that there are some slight differences between the versions given by Babulkar and Bahuguna (*ibid*.: 6). He outlines some of the history of the documents collected and consulted by the two authors to illustrate the ways in which these differences may have emerged. Ultimately, Dabral suggests that the texts given by both Babulkar and Bahuguna are much clearer to understand and more complete than the *Bṛhad Ḍholsāgar* of Thapliyal. Even then he postulates that, what appear to be omissions and inaccuracies in both texts would probably have occurred during their original oral transmission before they were written down (*ibid*.: 7).

Dabral clearly confirms the view held by many authors, that the *Ḍhol Sāgar* has a close connection with the religious sect of the *Nāth*s (*ibid*.: 75 and 80).[3] He bases his supposition on the fact that the term 'Nirañjan' appears frequently in the *Ḍhol Sāgar* (*ibid*.: 73). Nirañjan refers to a form/name of Śiva and is used by ascetics such as *Nāth*s in their devotional worship. Similarly, the name of 'Gorakhnāth', the founder of the *Nāth* sect, appears regularly in the *Ḍhol Sāgar*. Both names also appear regularly in other religious literature of the sect.[4] Dabral uses this evidence in attempting to give some idea of the historical development of the *Ḍhol Sāgar*. His comments on the connection between the *Ḍhol Sāgar* and the *Nāth* sect, as well as the oral tradition through which it may have been transmitted are illuminating, and worth citing here:

> Even though the *Ḍholsāgar* states that Gorakh is the supreme *devtā*, Brahma, Viṣṇu, Maheśwar, and Pārvatī, as well as Gaṇeś and Indra are also mentioned. In spite of their relationship with Gorakh and the other *Nāth*s, the *ḍhol*, the *ḍhol*'s parts, and the *ḍhol* player have been connected to Brahma and the other *devtā*s. There is no comprehensive discussion of Gorakh, other *Nāth*s, their philosophical principles, or their practice of *Haṭyoga*. Only in one place is it asked,

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[3] See also Bhatt (1976: 12), Nautiyal (1981:458), and Anuragi (1983/1984).

[4] It is significant to note Maskarinec's comments that many shamans in Nepal regard Goraknāth as their "highest" spiritual authority (1995: 7). Though this paper is too brief to provide an in depth discussion of the *Nāth* sect as practiced across various Himalayan regions, the connection would suggest an interesting area for investigation. See also Mazumdar (1998: 107-110) who cites Briggs ([1938]1973) and describes the *Nāth* sect and its practitioners in Central Garhwal in some detail.

"Who is the *guru* of Ādīnāth?" and the answer is, "Anandnāth Gusāñī is the *guru* of this *anadī*." From this it is my contention that the original form of the *Ḍholsāgar* was created before the widespread following of Gorakhnāth. Afterwards, as the *Nāth* sect grew, a few of the segments of the text began to mention Gorakh. As a result of its oral transmission, the language continued to change. Repetition is still a part of those questions and answers relating to the *ḍhol*, even though it was not written down. In this way, some segments of the book, including those relating to *tāl* and *swar*, slowly disappeared. (Dabral 1989: 80)

Dabral acknowledges the influence that the oral history of Aujī drummers undoubtedly had on the *Ḍhol Sāgar* before, and during, its association with the *Nāthpañthī*s over the past millennium. Furthermore, his suggestion that the *Ḍhol Sāgar* was, in all likelihood, a much larger entity than the written segments he has managed to collect is convincing (*ibid.*: 8 and 67). However, his conclusion that written references to *tāl* and *swar* were once a part of *Ḍhol Sāgar* are more problematic. Very few present-day drummers use the word *tāl* to refer to drum repertoire, and, though rhythmic patterns resembling *tāl* structures do exist, they are referred to today as *bājā*s and not *tāl*s.

The segments of the *Ḍhol Sāgar* published by Dabral follow the question and answer format common to many ancient texts. Śiva is asked questions by his consort Pārvatī, and he responds, giving explanations in an expansive manner. Thus, the origin and order of the natural and supernatural worlds are discussed, the origin of the *ḍhol* and its construction are described, the spiritual significance of the *ḍhol*'s various parts are outlined, and matters relating to the metaphysics of sound and the symbolism of the drum are discussed.

Significantly, connections between the *ḍhol*'s sounds and the phonetic structures/symbols of the Devanagari script are frequently made, hinting at the existence of a system of esoteric meaning for drum strokes and patterns. However, the segments of text reprinted by Dabral give no precise information about the playing technique, or repertoire, of the *ḍhol*. For instance, the following passage reveals the way in which sounds are produced by the drum's bracing (*kasaṇī*, also *ḍorikā*). Though phonetic syllables representing these sounds are given, there is no indication of how these sounds are produced (*ibid.*: 53):

Śrī iśvarovāca - are gunijan! Prathame kasaṇī caḍāīte triṇi triṇi tā tā tā ṭham ṭham karati, kahaṃti dāvaṃti ḍhol ucate. Dutīye kasaṇī caḍāite dī daśe kahaṃti dāvaṃti ḍhol ucate. Tṛtīye kasaṇī caḍāīte tri ti to ka nā tha ca triṇi tā tā dhī dhiga lā dhī jala dhiga lā tā tā anaṃtā bajāite ṭhaṃkaraṃti dāvaṃti ḍhol ucate. (Dabral 1989: 107)

Though translation of the segment cited above is difficult, it is possible to discern that Śiva is responding to Pārvatī's question about the sounds of the bracing as they are placed (tightened?) on the *ḍhol*. With the first, the drum sounded: *triṇi triṇi tā tā tā ṭhaṃ ṭhaṃ*. The reference to the second bracing is obscure. With the third, the drum sounded: *tri ti to ka nā tha ca triṇi tā tā dhī dhiga lā dhī jala dhiga lā tā tā*.

Elsewhere, there is an unclear and incomplete indication of 64 animal sounds (mostly birds, but also the cicada, the goat, and the sheep) which may be produced on the *ḍhol* (*ibid*.: 53). For instance, the following segment outlines the sound of the cicada:

> Ninyārā ko pucchā–o haṃ raṃ raṃ raṃ raṃ raṃ gaṃ taṃ gaṃ taṃ krīdanī krīdanī binatī binati binati bharte pallavantanaḥ picenya sura nara muni buṃ la ra tā laṣūniñā mati niñā pallav tuniā khini khini tā tā tā nī tā jhe jhe tā jhī gī tā. Jhī gī tā. Tā tā tā digani tā dhī tā jāyate. Iti ninyārā ko puccha bajāite. (Dabral 1989: 117)

Though the meaning of the segment is obscure, it would appear that the sound of the cicada – *haṃ raṃ raṃ raṃ raṃ raṃ gaṃ taṃ gaṃ taṃ krīdanī krīdanī binati binati binati* – is linked to the drum's sounds – *khini khini tā tā tā nī tā jhe jhe tā jhī gī tā. Jhī gī tā. Tā tā tā digani tā dhī tā*. Elsewhere, the text mentions sounds for individual finger strokes, though no specific playing technique is mentioned (*ibid*.: 107).

These brief examples illustrate how the information in this printed version of the *Ḍhol Sāgar* remains esoteric in nature. Though it hints at the existence of meanings for strokes and patterns played on the *ḍhol*, no clear explanation for such meaning or playing techniques is given.

Additional secondary source references to the *Ḍhol Sāgar*

It would appear that the publications of Babulkar and Bahuguna are the main sources for other authors' comments about the *Ḍhol Sāgar*. Bhatt only briefly mentions the *Ḍhol Sāgar* and describes it as an invaluable text for the study of the Garhwali language as well as for gaining knowledge (*gyān*) of the *ḍhol*'s 'tāls' and 'bols.' (1976: 12). Though he uses the terms *tāl* and *bol*, their use is not carefully considered. As Dabral states, no reference to *tāl* is made in current written fragments (*ibid*.). Bhatt's emphasis, therefore appears to be on the knowledge inherent in drumming, rather than on specific metric structures (*tāls*) or strokes (*bols*) which these terms imply.

Anuragi undertakes considerable study of the *Ḍhol Sāgar*, and his several articles make frequent reference to what would appear to be Babulkar's and Bahuguna's version of the text (amongst others see Anuragi 1961, 1982, and 1983/1984). His association with both Chandola and Nautiyal, undoubtedly influenced the views of both of these authors on the subject.

Chandola is brief in his references to the *Ḍhol Sāgar*. He mentions it only in relation to the transmission of drum knowledge (1977: 15-16). Though he does not cite his source, Chandola does suggest that the book is in an esoteric hybrid linguistic form which would be difficult for most drummers to understand.

Nautiyal's references to the *Ḍhol Sāgar* are much more comprehensive than either Bhatt's or Chandola's (Nautiyal 1981: 380-381 and 458-460; 1991: 57-66). In his 1981 publication *Gaṛhwāl ke Loknṛtya-Gīt*, he cites Bahuguna's 1955 book titled *Girīś*, as well as Babulkar's 1967 publication *Gaṛhwāl kī Lokdharmī Kalā* (*ibid.*: 458). In Nautiyal's 1991 publication, *Gaṛhwal kā Loksaṅgīt evaṃ Vādhya*, he cites Bahuguna's 1976 publication, *Gāḍamyaṭeki Gaṅgā*, as the source for the *Ḍhol Sāgar*, and reprints the same segments as contained in Bahuguna's earlier publication. Consequently, his comments generally conform to the texts given by Dabral. However, in at least one important respect Nautiyal's *Gaṛhwāl ke Loknṛtya-Gīt* adds considerable exegesis to the 'texts' given by Dabral. He refers to the '*tāls*' described in the *Ḍhol Sāgar*, and then proceeds to name eighteen of these '*tāls*" listed within what he calls the '*Madhyānī* style" of *ḍhol* performance:

The names of the *tāl*s referred to within the *Madhyānī* style are as follows:

> *Baṛhai, Dhuñyel, Tharaharī, Caurās, Cāmaṇī, Cāsaṇī, Dabukū, Sultān Cauk, Bailbāle, Śabd Joṛ, Pattan, Rahamānī, Pūchā, Apūchā, Kiraṇīñ, Paiñsāro, Sarauñ*, and *Cāritālim*. (Nautiyal 1981: 381)

In the passage which precedes the quotation given above, it is clear that Nautiyal is referring to the *Ḍhol Sāgar*. However, the only place that Dabral's reprinted segments of the *Ḍhol Sāgar* refer to '*tāl*' is where the word is used to identify one type of instrument within a list of 36 (Dabral 1989: 110). Nowhere is the term used to refer to repertoire items in the manner adopted by Nautiyal. Nor do any of the passages printed by Dabral give a list of *tāl*s as given by Nautiyal. In some locations in Dabral's reprinted texts, the names that appear in Nautiyal's list are individually referred to in a somewhat tangential manner, but never as '*tāls*' (for instance, see Nautiyal 1981: 114 and 117).[5] It is possible therefore, that Nautiyal is referring to an uncited source different to those mentioned by Dabral, though this is unlikely.

In spite of the existence of printed texts such as those consulted by authors like Dabral, Nautiyal, and Anuragi, most scholars admit that the role of performing musicians in the creation and maintenance of the tradition is primary. Nautiyal highlights this fact when he states:

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[5] The drummers with whom I spoke most commonly referred to drum patterns as *bāje* (singular *bājā*). Most have either very limited or no knowledge of the classical *tāl* system.

In fact, the *Ḍhol-Sāgar* is the foremost literary book of Garhwali folk music. The *Bājgīr*s of Garhwal maintain the book through their knowledge of the various artistic styles of performing the *ḍhol-damauṃ* which may be found within the volume's text. The Aujīs have remained the main contributors to the protection of the folk music of Garhwal. (Nautiyal 1981: 380)

Nautiyal's comments clearly acknowledge that practicing artists are significant to the 'folk' music of Garhwal. They not only play their music at musical events, but also maintain their tradition as a practice of performed sounds and performed knowledge. In this context, the distinction between a book with printed words and a knowledge of sounds within an orally transmitted tradition becomes blurred.

Ḍhol Sāgar as an oral entity

The preceding discussion points to a parallel tradition of literary documents and oral tradition. The coexistence of written and oral 'texts' in numerous performance traditions throughout South Asia is well documented. However, classical and folk Hindu epics, as well as the performative and ritual traditions that surround them have inspired researchers to view the oral-written dichotomy with some suspicion. As Blackburn states:

The boundary between written text and oral performance is particularly obscure in a culture like India that has produced (and continues to produce) epics in all shapes and sizes, and has transmitted them by every possible combination of oral and written media. (1999: 105)

Though Blackburn examines only epic repertoire, his comments are relevant to texts such as the *Ḍhol Sāgar* that are not epic in nature. The *Ḍhol Sāgar*'s nebulous character as a largely oral text for which some written documentation exists provides useful comparison to other research on oral and written texts in South Asia.

Interpretation and analysis of epics such as the *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* have often focused on the identification of structures that illustrate an oral origin for present-day written editions. Brockington for instance, provides analyses of *Mahābhārata* and *Rāmāyaṇa* texts to illustrate that they "represent a culmination of a lengthy tradition of oral poetry (2000: 193)." Though he acknowledges the very real part that writing has played in the transmission of the classical epics, Brockington points to various formulae and text structures all of which suggest an original oral creation (2000: 194). By contrast, Hiltebeitel focuses on the *Mahābhārata* as a literary text within which meaning may be 'excavated' through analysis. Emphasizing the significance of writing for the history of the *Mahābhārata*, Hiltebeitel suggests that his research:

...promote[s] not a single but a double argument about the origins of classical epics on the one hand, and those of India's regional oral martial epics on the other. Rather than positing analogous origins for both in oral epic, I will argue that while Sanskrit epics do generate a new kind of oral tradition, orality *in* [emphasis original] these epics is above all a literary trope that should be understood against a background of redaction and above all writing: the activities that went into the making of these two Sanskrit epics. (1999: 4)[6]

Thus, the *Mahābhārata* contains structures within it that allow Brockington to point to an original tradition of oral poetry. At the same time it provides a fruitful literary source for Hiltebeitl to use textual analysis to trace the ascendance of the Draupadī cult.

Ritual performance of texts in ceremonial occasions, theatrical renditions, dance-drama performances, or shadow puppetry adds a further layer of complexity to the coexistence of oral and written sources in many parts of South Asia. As Honko (2000: 217) and Höfer (1981: 39-41) both note, the researcher's role in determining or identifying the actual text under investigation is often extremely problematic. As Honko states: "...traditional performance strategies and scholarly documentation strategies do not work for similar ends (*ibid.*)."

Even in the absence of scholarly text construction, performance traditions such as shadow puppet performances of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in Karnataka and *Paṇḍava līlā* in Garhwal provide examples of differing combinations of both oral and literate practices. As Blackburn notes, the accuracy of puppeteers' performances in Karnataka "...suggests a reliance on written records (1991: 109)." Furthermore, he documents the use of hand written notebooks as mnemonic aids to recitation. By contrast however, the *Paṇḍava līlā* of Garhwal is a localized dramatic rendition of the *Mahābhārata* in which performers are completely amateur, and no written scripts are used (Sax 2002: 47). Thus, bardic recitations, learned as a part of an oral poetic tradition, accompany renditions of scenes to form a localized dance-drama of the *Mahābhārata*.

In this context Doniger's comments on orality and writing in South Asia are particularly relevant:

> The forms taken by the classics of India challenge our Western assumptions about permanence and impermanence as well as the corollary distinctions we make between written and oral texts. In India, we encounter more oral traditions than written ones, and more fluid traditions than frozen ones. More than that, we also find a reversal of the link we assume exists between what is written and fixed, on the one hand, and what is oral and fluid, on the other. (1991: 31)

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[6] See also Hiltebeitel (2001: 4).

Thus, just as the oral tradition of the Rig Veda is frozen, the so-called manuscript tradition of the Mahabharata is hopelessly fluid, in part because of the interaction in India between living oral variants and empty written variants. (1991: 33)

As a result of the difficulty in identifying a clear distinction between oral and written texts in India, Doniger suggests that it is more useful to examine texts on the basis of their use and not on their oral or written nature (*ibid.*: 32). She suggests that the 'inside' of a text, whether oral or written, may be defined as the meaning behind the text; that is, segments of text may be isolated and their inside explained through exegesis. Examples of this in India are the many types of ritual circumstances within which officiates and/or performers take time to explain segments of text (amongst others, see Blackburn 1991: 107; Narayanan 1995: 182). By contrast, some texts are used primarily for the words themselves, without any direct reference to textual meaning. As Doniger suggests, recitation of *Ṛg Vedā* texts occurs in a completely fixed form and is used in circumstances where meaning may not even be understood (*ibid.*: 33).

Clearly, *Ḍhol Sāgar* is another 'text' that contributes to our understanding of the complex nature of orality and writing in India. Though it bears some resemblance to other oral-written texts, it is unique in a number of fundamental ways. Foremost amongst the unique features of *Ḍhol Sāgar* is its existence as both text and as drum repertoire.

A few musicians with whom I spoke were able to recite memorized segments of verses which they stated to be *Ḍhol Sāgar*. Others more commonly used the term *Ḍhol Sāgar* as a general reference to their drum knowledge. Consequently, there is no single entity that may be referred to as *the Ḍhol Sāgar*. Its identity is partly contained within written sources such as those printed by Dabral. However, it remains partly the performed knowledge of drummers, and partly the memorized texts that link the power of sound to the power of the gods. Many musicians believe there to be an *ur text* of the *Ḍhol Sāgar*, but it would appear unlikely that any such original document exists. Though written sources are fragmentary, incomplete, and scarce, faith in their existence amongst musicians contributes to a mythical source of authenticity.

Notwithstanding the prestige that writing lends to *Ḍhol Sāgar*, its essence is based on the oral-aural world of sound as performed on drums. The connection between orality, writing, words, sound and drumming becomes even more fascinating when considering the relationships that exist between spoken words and 'sounded' drum strokes. Perhaps it is equally valid to speak of sounded words and spoken drum strokes.[7]

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[7] Chandola argues for the creation of a discipline of musicolinguistics in which these issues could be the focus of study. His discussion of issues similar to those raised here is, unfortunately, only cursory and he never directly tackles the issue of esoteric meaning.

Esoteric meaning and drum knowledge

I recorded many hours of drum repertoire throughout several periods of fieldwork that I undertook in Garhwal in 1996, 1999, and 2001. I reached a critical point in my research in November of 1996 when I met Jog Das of Budha Kedar village in central Garhwal. Jog Das had brought no drums to our first meeting, but had come simply to discuss drum repertoire associated with the main festival event (*melā*) held in the village each year. During our discussions, he recited vocable syllables to illustrate the drum sounds and to explain the normal procedure of events. His description showed how segments of drum repertoire are attached to specific episodes within the ritual action undertaken each year at the *melā*.

Jog Das' vocable patterns were onomatopoeic equivalents for the combined sounds of the *ḍhol* and *damauṃ*. Though they relate most directly to the *ḍhol*'s strokes, each stroke is not necessarily symbolized by a specific syllable. In spite of the fact that no exact correlation between syllable and drum stroke appears to exist, these syllables are a means to remember the rhythmic patterns associated with specific events. They represent a mnemonic aid, which relates combined drum stroke patterns to particular phenomena and ritual activity. For instance, a particular repertoire item called *Baḍhai* is used at the beginning of ritual segments to create auspiciousness. Another called *Ghāya* is used to accompany specific processions that hold symbolic reference to historical events. Another called *Hanūmānī Madhyānī* is used to awaken the local deity before his form (a trident) is paraded through the village (see further Alter 2000: 244-61).

After I became aware of the use of syllables by musicians such as Jog Das, I made it a regular part of my research to ask musicians to recite their repertoire in addition to playing it. My questions elicited a variety of responses that were often more confusing than illuminating.

I frequently used the term '*bol*' to refer to drum strokes. It was the term used by Jog Das and is also the term used by classical musicians in India today. However, invariably when I asked drummers to recite the *bol*s of a particular repertoire item, they would not recite drum strokes. Rather, they would either begin to sing particular songs (the *bol*s) associated with repertoire, or they would just play their drums, assuming the *bol*s (drum strokes) to have been 'sounded' as required. Thus, some musicians assumed my reference to *bol*s was in fact to the words of songs while others assumed the sounded drum strokes were all I needed to hear. Recitation of vocable syllables as Jog Das had demonstrated earlier was either haphazard or simply considered to be a part of an esoteric drum knowledge that only drummers would understand. Furthermore, the link between vocable syllables and actual drum repertoire was not obvious.

The situation I found myself in raised numerous questions about the nature of drum knowledge and the esoteric meaning/understanding inherent in some aspects of repertoire. Moreover, the frequent reference by musicians to a time in the past when drum repertoire incorporated lexical meaning like words, continued to inspire my curiosity. Jog Das and other drummers whom I met, often told stories of how their forefathers would use their drumming to put a curse on a fellow drummer. References to communication with drums across mountain valleys during processions or military campaigns were also frequent. Thus, it became clear during the course of my research that the distinction between drum stroke syllables and word syllables was not as great as I had initially assumed. In the past, drummers may have used their drum repertoire as a communication medium and spoken to each other in ways that resembled verbal discourse. However, interpretation of the sounds remained an esoteric knowledge known only to drummers.

Wegner has presented documentation of drum repertoire in Bhaktapur, Nepal, which is similar to my own (1986 and 1988). His documentation of drum strokes and vocable syllables appears to demonstrate similar sound structures to those I heard in Garhwal. Curiously, Wegner also describes a series of repertoire items for which direct lexical meaning is attached (1986: 28-30). Drummers in Bhaktapur use these items to tease or taunt one another in ways that only other drummers understand. Though I found no similar repertoire items in Garhwal, the stories of a past tradition of drum communication, in addition to the obvious confusion between 'sounded words' and 'spoken syllables', has led me to assume that drummers clearly consider their repertoire to contain esoteric meaning known only to themselves. Whether this meaning is simply a part of drum knowledge through which specific repertoire items are associated with specific ritual actions, or whether the knowledge encompasses more lexical meaning as is said to have occurred in the past, such drum knowledge is all a part of musicians' perceptions of *Ḍhol Sāgar*.

Written segments of *Ḍhol Sāgar* do exist as evidenced by Dabral's scholarship. However, the true *Ocean of Drumming*, is as much an oral tradition as a literate one. It is a sea of knowledge, ambiguously defined by mystical texts, authenticated by the prestige of writing, and maintained within an oral tradition of fragmented text recitation and memorized drumming. In the same way that Śiva sounded his drum to create the universe, the drummers of Garhwal sound their drums as if to echo the original creative power of the spiritual world from which both language and drum repertoire emerge.

Acknowledgements

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CORRESPONDENCE, ANNOUNCEMENTS, REPORTS

Conference Report on The Agenda of Transformation: Inclusion in Nepali Democracy, Kathmandu, 24-26 April 2003

by Sara Shneiderman and Mark Turin

Organised by Social Science Baha, a newly-founded Nepali institution established to support social science research, *The Agenda of Transformation: Inclusion in Nepali Democracy* was the first academic conference of its kind held in Nepal.

The organising committee of the conference consisted of Deepak Thapa, Novel Kishore Rai, Kanak Mani Dixit, Rajendra Pradhan and Santa Bahadur Pun. They aimed to bring together Nepali, South Asian and overseas scholars to address diverse topics relating to the makeup of Nepali society, the structure of the polity, and the nature of political participation. The hope was that a "clear understanding [will] emerge on the way ahead for the country". The result was that for three days at the end of April 2003, scholars from a wide range of disciplines gathered to address matters of representation and pluralism in Nepal. The event was eagerly anticipated by those presenting papers, since the forum was explicitly designed to allow academics to share their thoughts with policy makers, politicians and interested members of the public.

The conference was designed with several elements in mind, including keynote addresses, plenary sessions and panels. The opening plenary was offered by Harka Gurung. Entitled *Trident and thunderbolt: Culture dynamics in Nepalese politics*, Gurung's lecture (the first in the Mahesh Chandra Regmi Lecture Series) was disappointing, being as stoic in delivery as it was predictable in content. Relying heavily on familiar and publicly-available statistical data, the speaker outlined clearly the structural inequalities on which modern Nepal is founded. Although this may have been useful for newcomers, either to Nepal or sociological discussion, Gurung did not provide a compelling or fresh vision to sufficiently engage the specialist audience present.

The working sessions, always two in parallel, started after the plenary. Their structure was well-conceived: three speakers presented for 20 minutes each, after which questions were collected and answered in batches. This format led to genuine, open discussion, often heated and always engaging. At all conferences, however, the parallel session structure invariably frustrates some of the participants. It is hard to evaluate the totality of a conference if one has only been able to attend, by definition, half of the sessions. Consequently, many participants used coffee and tea breaks to establish what they had missed next door. While a longer conference with no parallel sessions would have permitted all attendees to hear each paper, a six-day event of this kind would have been

harder for many scholars to justify.

Panel and plenary themes included social, cultural and economic exclusion, theoretical perspectives, structures and visions, inclusion at the grassroots, politics of language, inclusion in regional space, women in Nepali democracy, and institutional exclusion. We cannot review all of the contributions here, but suffice it to say that a wide range of important and controversial topics were addressed.

The integrity and inclusiveness of several previous academic conferences on Nepal has been undermined by the absence of a representative number of local scholars. To the credit of the organisers of *Agenda of Transformation*, South Asian scholars presented in every working session and significantly outnumbered international contributors. While the originality of the content and the quality of presentation were naturally mixed, nevertheless all participants should be commended for genuinely attempting to grapple with the problem at hand: how to expand inclusion in the Nepali polity.

Panel discussions often continued outside during lunch hour on the lawn of the conference centre. It was clear that the international, interdisciplinary connections imagined by the organisers were not only initiated, but strengthened in ways that would extend beyond the conference itself. This collegial atmosphere was emphasised by an evening showing of Toni Hagen's film, *Uhile ko Nepāl*. Re-edited by members of Himal Association, this delightful journey through 1950s Nepal was received with laughter and good spirit.

The closing plenary was a memorable event, with three of Nepal's most articulate and formidable voices: Anup Pahari, Seira Tamang and Hari Roka. All three spoke with clarity and comfort (although only Roka spoke in Nepali) of their visions for a more inclusive Nepal. The presence of more political activists-cum-scholars, not to mentions active politicians, would have been appreciated, given that they are often better versed in public speaking than cautious academics.

Although an overall success, it would not be right to conclude this report without mentioning a few notable failings. It is lamentable that a conference on 'inclusion' should be limited to a small group of established commentators, and held in a building as overbearing as the Birendra International Convention Centre, when a more intimate and collegial setting would have been more suitable. Furthermore, the lack of systematic translation into Nepali of papers delivered in English (in fact, only Nepali papers were translated into English), combined with the absence of more women, young scholars, and radical or unconventional voices - both Nepali and foreign - paradoxically made the conference quite exclusive.

Nevertheless, the conference and its organisers must be loudly applauded for staging the first event of its kind in Nepal: an open forum for sharing information and debating controversial issues across disciplinary boundaries.

The publication promises to be an important contribution, and a Nepali language edition would be very worthwhile. Finally, a well-designed website houses the abstracts of all the papers presented as well as further information on the conference and the Social Science Baha. It can be found at:

www.himalassociation.org/baha/nepalidemocracy

Report on the Conference *Nepal — Current State of Research and Perspectives* held in memory of Prof. Bernhard Kölver in June 2003 in Leipzig

By Alexander von Rospatt

A conference on Nepalese studies was held at Leipzig, Germany from June 19th to 22nd, 2003. It was organized by the Institute of Indian and Central Asian Studies at the University of Leipzig in commemoration of Prof. Bernhard Kölver (1938-2001), who had been chair of that Institute until 2001. Prof. Kölver has been one of the foremost scholars in Nepalese studies since 1970 when he came to Nepal as the first director of the Nepal German Manuscript Preservation Project. As coordinator of the Nepal research programme (Forschungs-schwerpunkt) funded by the German Research Council (DFG) from 1980 to 1990 he was one of the key figures to promote inter-disciplinary approaches to research on Nepal. The agenda of the Leipzig conference was very much in accordance with the kind of studies he supported and to which he dedicated so much of his life. Moreover, the organizers felt that after the dramatic changes undergone by Nepal during the years since the establishment of democracy in 1990, the time had come to take account of these changes and assess how they have affected Nepalese studies. The conference was especially meant to serve as a platform for discussing ideas and experiences and for developing new perspectives of inter-disciplinary cooperation on an international level.

The Conference brought together indologists, anthropologists, historians, geographers, linguists, art historians, sociologists, ethno-musicologists and tibetologists from Nepal, Europe and the U.S. While many of the invited scholars had participated in the aforementioned Nepal research programme of the DFG, there were also numerous other scholars, most of them representing a new generation who were drawn into the field of Nepalese studies more recently. In addition to the 29 scholars who read papers, there were 13 further official participants, among them Dr Ulrike Kölver, the wife of the late Prof. Kölver, who herself is a renowned scholar of Newari lexicography and linguistics. Furthermore, a small but enthusiastic group of students from Leipzig and other parts of Germany had congregated for the event. The venue of

the conference, a stately villa belonging to the University, turned out to be an ideal setting. It did not only accommodate all participants in one lecture hall, but also created a congenial atmosphere that was conducive to the many fruitful informal exchanges that took place alongside the talks.

The conference was opened with a lecture by Siegfried Lienhard in which he recalled his "way to Newari." The following two and a half days were divided into sections dedicated to particular topics. The first section was on the "Changing Social Structure and Identity among the Newars." Gérard Toffin looked at the ethnicisation of caste, focusing on the *jyāpu* agriculturists of Kathmandu, while David Gellner reflected more broadly on the study of the Newars and the recent ethnicisation and politicisation of Newar Buddhism. Todd Lewis dealt with the localisation of the Buddha's life story among the Newars in Chittadhar Hridaya´s epic poem Sugat Saurabh, while Nutan Sharma examined the "social topography of the Rājopādhyāyas in Patan." The next section took stock of the dramatic political changes of the last years. Anne de Sales and Gaby Tautscher treated aspects of the Maoist movement, while Diwakar Acharya addressed the contested status of Sanskrit in Nepal, and Elvira Graner examined patterns of Nepalese labour migration. In the following section papers were read that reflected on the current state of Nepalese Studies (Nirmal Tuladhar) and presented specific research projects, such as the initiatives of the Swiss National Centre of Competence in Research 'North-South' (Ulrike Müller-Böker), the survey of the Hodgson Manuscripts from the British Library (Ramesh Dhungel) and the Nepalese-German Manuscript Cataloguing Project (D. Dimitrov and Per Sörensen, with reference to a comparable project of the National Library in Bhutan).

The second main day was introduced by a section dedicated to the historiography of Nepal. Axel Michaels dealt with "the religious judge and rituals of purification" on the basis of the Muluki-Ain of 1854, while Heiko Frese examined the representation of Jayasthitimalla in the "Later Chronicles." Further papers in this section were read by Mahes Raj Pant who surveyed the varying categories of Brahmins under the Newar kings, by Kashinath Tamot who reassessed the boundaries of "Nepal Mandala" and by Marie Lecomte-Tilouine who studied the "Pancakoshi of Western Nepal." The subsequent Tibetological section drew together a survey of the "Tibetan varieties spoken in Nepal" by Roland Bielmeier and a presentation of "old and new Tibetan sources concerning Svayambhunath" by Franz-Karl Ehrhard. The afternoon was dominated by a section on "Religion and Ritual." After an ethno-musicological analysis of "spirit possession ceremonies in Kumaon" by Franck Bernède, there followed a paper on the planetary deities in the "ritual traditions of the Kathmandu Valley" by Marianna Kropf and a "first appraisal" of the "life-cycle rituals of old age among the Newars" by Alexander v. Rospatt. The section was rounded off by an overview of the "guthis and rituals in the town of Sankhu" by Balgopal Shrestha. The final section of the day brought together "ethno-historical reflections" by Martin Gaenszle on the "Nepali community in

Benares," and a paper by Michael Witzel in which he placed Nepal in a larger Himalayan context, relating it in particular to Kashmir.

The only section on the last day was dedicated to art history. Adalbert Gail examined mutual iconographic influences in "Buddhist and Hindu tantra art in Eastern India and Nepal," while Anne Vergati presented a Newar painting depicting Kathmandu Valley and the pilgrimage to Siluthi. The conference concluded with a final plenary session dedicated to a resume of the conference.

It is not in good style for someone involved with the organization to declare the conference a success. However, I feel that it was precisely this: densely packed programme with many excellent talks that demonstrated progress in the field of Nepalese Studies and showed that new vistas of research are opening up. There were lively discussions which demonstrated that despite their high degree of specialization the talks were of general interest for the inter-disciplinary audience. Most importantly, there was a relaxed and amicable atmosphere which aided the resumption of old contacts and the formation of new ones. The conference showed how useful and fruitful it can be to occasionally convene such interdisciplinary and international meetings of scholars dedicated to the study of Nepal, so it is comforting that there was talk of organizing a similar conference in France in a few years' time.

It is planned to publish the conference's proceedings in a joint Nepalese-German publication. Until then the homepage of the conference (http://www.uni-leipzig.de/~indzaw/indo/gemeinsam/nepalkonferenz/) may be consulted for precise details of the programme and abstracts of the talks. Thanks are due to the conveners of the conference, and most importantly to Adelheid Buschner from the Institute of Indian and Central Asian Studies who took care of all practical arrangements most competently. The conference would have been impossible without generous funding by the German Research Council (DFG) and the support of the Akademisches Begegnungszentrum Leipzig which provided the venue for the conference, the beautiful Villa Tillemanns, the traditional guest house of the University of Leipzig.

Research Report: Labour Migration from Far West Nepal to Delhi, India

By Susan Thieme, Michael Kollmair, Ulrike Müller-Böker

Labour migration from Far West Nepal to Delhi, India, is the topic of the ongoing PhD project from Susan Thieme at the Department of Geography at the University of Zurich. The thesis is part of the NCCR (National Centre of Competence in Research) North-South funded by the Swiss National Science

Foundation (SNF) and Swiss Development Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC).

Within the NCCR, the Department of Geography in Zurich focuses on institutional changes and livelihood strategies in marginal areas of South Asia. The PhD study draws upon research conducted since 1998 by the Department (Kollmair 2003; Müller-Böker 2003; Backhaus et al. 2001) and is supported by a series of master-level studies from Nepal and Switzerland. That international labour migration has been an important livelihood strategy for rural Nepalese families for generations has been shown in more recent studies (Gurung 2003; Müller-Böker & Thieme forthcoming; Wyss 2003; Blaikie et al. 2002; Gurung & Thieme 2002; Upreti 2002; Graner 2001; von der Heide & Hoffmann 2001; Yamanaka 2000, 2001; Seddon et al. 1998, 2001, 2002; Pfaff 1995, 2002).

The thesis will contribute to the further understanding of the social relations among individuals within the transnational migration process and the positive and negative effects of labour migration for the migrants. Furthermore, entry points will be identified to encourage people to become more resilient and better able to capitalise on the positive aspects of migration. An integral part of the thesis is the support of migrant organisations in collaboration with NGOs in Delhi and the Nepal Institute for Development Studies in Kathmandu.

From Bajhang and Bajura (Nepal) to Delhi (India)

Due to the free border agreement between Nepal and India, the majority of migrants are not documented in official statistics. However, the number of Nepalis working in India is estimated to be up to 1.3 million. Because of an earlier survey, migrants who work in Delhi, from the four villages of Gothpada, Singra, Seragau and Meltadi, are at the centre of attention in this PhD-study. The villages are situated in the Bajura and Bajhang districts, in the centre of the Far Western Development Region. This area shows the lowest Human Development and Gender Sensitive Development Index within Nepal (NESAC 1998; UNDP 2002) and was seriously affected by the internal political crisis. The daily life of these communities is governed by very strictly practised rules of interaction. The majority of the population belongs to the high Hindu castes, which are distinctly separated from the *low castes,* the so-called *untouchables* (Cameron 1998). In Singra, Seragau and Gothpada the whole population belongs to the Chetri caste*;* with the family clans Rawal and Rokaya. In Meltadi the people belong to the high castes of Bahun, Thakuri and Chetri as well as to the low castes of Sarki, Kami, Damai and Badi (Müller 2001: 54-55). The most important institution is the *riti-bhāgya* system – the traditional patron-client system between high-caste and low-caste families. Subsistence-oriented agriculture is an important livelihood pillar, but only a fraction of the people are able to produce enough food. Low caste people in particular do not own sufficient land to ensure their food security. Many people have to borrow grain or money at high interest rates of between 3 and 10 % per month. A crucial

problem is the high level of indebtedness of the majority of people. (Müller-Böker 2003)

At least two thirds of the households rely on remittances mainly from Delhi in India, which is therefore the main research site. The vast majority of the migrants are men and work as watchmen (Müller 2001; Müller-Böker 2003). Migrants rely on networks among their fellow-villagers in Delhi to get established, find work and reasonable accommodation. Jobs are arranged by friends or co-villagers, and some have to "buy" their job from a predecessor at a high price. Wealthier families are only prepared to give loans for the "seed capital" to those who have collateral, such as land. Being indebted is not only a risk for the migrant, but also for the migrant's family remaining in the village. In the worst case, migration might even lead to greater indebtedness.

Research objectives

The study emphasises the institutional arrangements through which migrants gain access to resources, how they determine the process of migration and shape the migrants' everyday life in Delhi. Specifically, these are institutions influencing the patterns of managing and sending home remittances, organising employment and shelter, and gender issues.

Managing and sending home remittances:

To support their families back home and to repay their debts, migrants often need greater amounts of money than they earn per month. Drinking and gambling are also important reasons why men need money urgently. Because none of them has access to a bank loan, they established a variety of financial self-help associations in Delhi. We will investigate why and how migrants invest money in financial self-help associations. A comparative analysis of the financial self-help associations used, their strengths and weaknesses, their accessibility, and the possibilities of benefits and losses for the migrants and their families will be provided. Furthermore, the process of the remittance transfer will be clarified.

Employment and shelter:

Nepalis have migrated to Delhi to work as watchmen for generations, and they continue to do so. The small number of accompanying women also have their jobs arranged by their husbands. Since the male migrants occupy the niche of working as watchmen, it will be clarified how their networks operate and what working and living conditions they face.

Gender:

Although predominantly men migrate, sometimes women follow. The foci are social relations among men and women, activities in productive and reproductive work, access and control over resources, services, and networks and distinct needs of men and women.

Conceptual Framework

To study labour migration from Far West Nepal to Delhi the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework was chosen as the analytical frame (Chambers et al. 1992, DFID 2001). Most rural families do not rely on agriculture alone but adopt a range of livelihood strategies, such as migration. This strategy is strongly linked with human, social and financial assets. Additionally, the Sustainable Livelihoods Framework covers the process of gaining and retaining access to resources and opportunities, dealing with risks and negotiating social relationships (DFID, 2001). It emphasises that migration is embedded and tightly structured by institutional arrangements like networks and kinship through which migrants gain access to resources and which determine the migration process (Boyd 1989; Castles & Millers 1993; de Haan et al. 2002: 38-39; de Haan 2002; Goss et al. 1995; Kritz et al. 1992; Massey 1990; Portes & Sensenbrenner 1993).

The concept of transnational migration facilitates an investigation of the extent to which this process leads to the emergence of transnational social spaces (Pries 1997, 1998, 2001). The patterns of obtaining employment and shelter, the ways in which migrants run financial self-help associations and how they transfer their money back home reflects the existence of transnational social spaces and help us to understand social structures and institutions are produced and reproduced (Pries 2001: 55-56). The individual and his/her supportive networks are the starting unit of analysis and the most efficient way of investigating the institutional underpinnings of transnationalism and its structural effects (Portes et al. 1999: 220).

At the outset of the project a combined qualitative study of the remaining migrants` families in Far West Nepal and the migrants in Delhi was planned. But due to the political upheaval and insecurity, fieldwork in Far West Nepal could not be carried out up to now. For the time being the main research site is Delhi.

Secondary data from the earlier household surveys serve as the base of the PhD study. In 2002 the migrants were visited in Delhi. Various research strategies, from Participatory Appraisal and in-depth interviews to group discussions and participatory observation have been implemented so far.

Preliminary Results

Impoverishment, indebtedness and unemployment in Bajura and Bajhang as well as job opportunities in Delhi and the long-standing tradition of migration have led to large-scale labour migration to India. For the migrants the urban environment of Delhi is very alien. They have to overcome the social distance between the rural society of origin and the urban centre and especially in the beginning have difficulties in coping with the increased complexity. To cover their living costs, travel expenses, payment for the job in Delhi and other extra expenditures such as marriages, they either take loans from wealthier families in the villages or they take loans from savings and credit associations in Delhi, which are run by the migrants from the villages. Two main kinds of savings and credit associations were identified, namely *chits* and *societies* (Müller-Böker & Thieme forthcoming). Both have money saving and lending as a primary function. But not all the migrants were aware of both kinds of associations. One main difference is that while chits are only used for private investments, societies are often used for collective investments in the home villages like school building and temple reconstruction. For a short time women have been starting to establish their own societies. Because of the specific character of the fund rotation in a chit, chits can also perpetuate debt and dependency. Therefore migration may not always improve income or security. On the other hand, chits seem to be more integrative in terms of caste and gender.

Remittances from India are transferred solely by the migrants themselves or by friends and mainly spent on consumer goods rather than on land purchase and livestock. Some migrants do not even send goods or money but only "eat outside" as another case study in a village of the district Bajhang confirms (Pfaff-Czarnecka 2002). Contrary to the findings in Delhi, a master's thesis from our department has shown that migrants from wealthier regions like Pokhara go predominantly to Gulf and Tiger States and send greater remittances (up to 960 US$) back to Nepal (Wyss 2003).

With their work as watchmen and their existing financial self-help groups in Delhi, the migrants have managed to find an economic and social niche. As the majority does not acquire new skills or attitudes, it seems that their marginality is manifested once more. The drastic differences between the urbanity in Delhi and rural life in remote mountains, along with the lack of basic infrastructure and social service, seem to be paralysing. On the other hand, traditional rules and regulations from the marginalized background in Nepal dissolve in Delhi to a certain extent.

Another crucial point is the fact that the migrants in Delhi lack bargaining power in negotiating with their employers due to the low awareness of general labour legislation and rights. The decisive development issue seems not to be how to reduce migration, but how to reduce its social and economic costs and increase its returns, especially for the poorest. Labour opportunities and wage earning capacity need to be gradually separated from debt, advanced sale of labour, and high interest repayments.

An important instrument within the NCCR is the implementation of research results to support the affected population. Based on first results of the ongoing PhD study, a NCCR-funded project with a NGO in Delhi regarding economic literacy, such as earning money, saving, spending and managing remittances started in May 2003.

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"The Categories of Nature and Culture in the Himalayas"

CNRS, Villejuif, France, 27-28 February 2004.
A workshop organized by M. Lecomte-Tilouine

Program:

Presentations

Part I.

Charles Malamoud (Directeur d'études honoraire à L'Ecole Pratique des hautes Etudes, Ve section): Les catégories de Nature et Culture dans l'Inde brahmanique (in French).

Roberte Hamayon (Directeur d'études à L'Ecole Pratique des hautes Etudes, Ve section): 'Culture' within 'Nature' in shamanic societies living on hunting in Siberia.

Fernand Meyer (Directeur d'études à L'Ecole Pratique des hautes Etudes, IVe section): The categories of nature and culture in Tibetan traditions.

Marc Gaborieau (Directeur de recherches CNRS,/EHESS): Allah, Saints, men and the government of nature in Islam.

Part II.

Ben Campbell (PhD. Manchester University, G.B.): Beyond cultural models of Himalayan nature: the dwelling perspective and political ecology.

Janna Fortier (University of California, San Diego, E.U.) : The categories of living beings and the representation of the world among the Raute nomadic hunters.

Subhadra Channa (Professor, Delhi University, New Delhi, Inde) : Religion, Cosmology and Sacred landscape of the Jads, a pastoral community of Garhwal, India.

Stéphane Gros (PhD student, Paris X, Nanterre) : Cosmological order and ideas of species among the Drung of Northwest Yunnan (China).

Pascal Bouchery (lecturer, Université de Poitiers) : Impact of resource management on The Ani's conception of the environment (Yunan).

Rachel Guidoni (PhD student, Paris X, Nanterre): Some notes concerning natural and cultural Tibetan pearl-relics.

Chiara Laetizia (PhD, Roma, Italy): The sacred confluence: Between nature

and culture.

Peter Sutherland (Director, International Studies, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, E.U.): Power comes from outside: Competing cosmologies in west Himalayan myth.

Seira Tamang (PhD, Martin Chautari/Center for Social Research and Development, Kathmandu): Redefining Nature and Culture: Negotiating Homsexuality in Nepal.

Claus P. Zoller (Researcher, Südasien Institut, Heidelberg, Germany): Swinging between nature and culture: Lovers and their songs in Indus Kohistan (North Pakistan).

Harka Gurung (PhD, former Minister of Tourism, New Era, Kathmandu): Religious Transition among Three Tamang Peoples: Comparative description of shamanic groups that show processes of transition from Buddhism to Hinduism (Thakali), Shamanism to Buddhism (Gurung), and remaining faithful to Buddhism (Tamang).

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BOOK REVIEWS

On the Languages of the Himalayas and their Links (nearly) around the World.

Review Article by Roland Bielmeier

Languages of the Himalayas. An Ethnolinguistic Handbook of the Greater Himalayas, containing an Introduction to the Symbiotic Theory of Language. **By George van Driem.** Handbook of Oriental Studies. Section 2. India, edited by J. Bronkhorst. **Leiden Boston Köln: Brill, 2001. ISBN 0169-9377, ISBN 90 04 12062 9, ISBN 90 04 10390 2 (set). Vol. 10/1, p. I - XXVI, 1 - 462. Vol. 10/2, p. I - VIII, 463 - 1375.**

On about 1400 pages the author presents an impressive range of ethnolinguistic topics connected with the speakers and their languages spoken at present and in the past in the greater Himalayan region. He describes a long period of time by introducing us to a „symbiotic theory of language... which assumes that increasing encephalisation and neural interconnectivity in the prehistory of the hominid line were the developments which yielded a brain ripe and ready to be colonised by language before language arose" (p. 21) and covers an area from present-day western Iran to China, the Malay peninsula and Vietnam in the east and even beyond into the Pacific Ocean by touching the Austronesian languages. The reason for this very broad spatial concept lies in the fact that „many languages spoken in the Himalayas have ties to language stocks far beyond the region" (p. IX). The „book tells a tale of the languages spoken in the Himalayas and of the people who speak them" and „was written to give a student of Himalayan languages a panoramic view of the region and to provide a broader context of useful and relevant facts." I hope that this book will indeed excite the students' curiosity and encourage them to take part in the labour of contributing to our growing knowledge in this area. I hope that it will not give the students a feeling of being unable to master this huge amount of topics, leading to discouragement. „The book does not contain detailed grammatical descriptions of the languages discussed, but discusses these languages in their proper temporal and spatial context" (p. X). It goes without saying that it is impossible to give more or less detailed grammatical descriptions of all the hundreds of languages discussed or mentioned, provided grammatical descriptions actually exist. Usually the descriptions are confined to giving a list of the languages in question, to classifying them

if possible, to mentioning important recent publications and to sketching the research history. These sketches are often also very interesting to „insiders“, as they contain information not so easily accessible in other handbooks. A special feature is the continuous attempt to correlate not only cultural features to the languages but also archaeological findings and concepts. This approach to research has been familiar for some time in Indo-European studies as well. I consider it a completely legitimate and often fascinating approach. I just want the reader to recall the many methodological difficulties involved in this approach, especially in Indo-European studies, where they have been familiar for long time. The basic problem is to correlate systematically linguistic and prehistorical archaeological data. I think, the author is aware of this when he writes „....in addition to information on language communities, I present speculations about prehistory and the ethnolinguistic identity of cultural assemblages identifiable in the archaeological record“ (p. IX). And it is only natural that „This overview does not therefore pretend to be the last word on the subject. Much of the rich ethnolinguistic heritage of the Himalayas still awaits discovery, and what is written here will require enhancement and revision“ (p. X).

The book is divided into eight chapters. The first contains primarily an introduction to the symbiotic theory of language, and the second a sketch of the Austroasiatic language family and the Daic language communities. Chapters three to six, dealing with the Tibeto-Burman languages and their language communities, are the heart of the book. Many topics raised in chapters seven and eight are very interesting, but highly controversial. The author does not always succeed in presenting the controversial opinions with the required minuteness of detail and balance, and sometimes the presentation is not on the actual level of discussion. This is the case, for example, with the question of the homeland of Indo-European, controversial since the 19th century (cf. pp. 1051f.). The Indo-Hittite hypothesis is attractive, but not at all the *opino communis* it is presented to be (p. 1956f.). The question of a genetic relationship between Hattic and Caucasian languages is highly controversial.[1] The few „lexical Hattic-Kartvelian look-alikes“ are qualified correctly as unconvincing by the author himself (p. 1057, n. 5). The main problem in comparing Hattic with other languages, including with West Caucasian, is our ignorance of the Hattic lexicon, all transmitted through Hittite inscriptions.[2] Hattic is neither Indo-European nor Semitic, it is still genetically isolated. But Carian, once spoken in

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[1]On the problem of the genetic relationship of the Caucasian languages with each other and with other languages see the still fundamental review of Karl Bouda's *Baskisch-kaukasische Etymologien* (1949) by Gerhard Deeters 1952.

[2]This is the reason why Jörg Klinger in his important *Untersuchungen zur Rekonstruktion der hattischen Kultschicht* (1996) often refrains from giving translations. For a review of Klinger's book and a fair evaluation of the state of the art, including the question of genetic relations to Caucasian languages, see Soysal 1999.

southwestern Anatolia, which the author qualifies as having „no demonstrable relationship with any other known linguistic stock" (p. 365, n. 3) has been deciphered recently and belongs to the Luvian group of the Anatolian language family within Indo-European.[3] Chapter seven also contains a discussion of a possible genetic relationship between Elamite and the Dravidian languages. The genetic relationship of Elamite to other languages has not so far been established. The book takes up „Zagrosian" as cover term for Elamite and the Dravidian languages and relates the Indus script and Indus civilisation as well as the coming of the Indo-Europeans with it, including the question of the Indo-Aryan migration. Finally chapter eight attempts to present Burushaski and the Yenisseian languages as genetically related, forming the Greater Yenisseian or Karasuk language family. The linguistic arguments presented on p. 1199 ff., however, are very few and weak, exhibiting at best some structural correspondences. If, for example, the Burushaski second person singular patient-subject prefix *gu-/gó-* is considered to be etymologically cognate with the Ket second person agent or subject prefix *ku-/k-/gu-/ghu-,* why should we not add the Kartvelian second person singular object prefix **g-*? Or, the Georgian first person singular agent-subject prefix *w-* seems even closer to the Ket first person singular prefix *ba-/bo-/va-/vo-* than the Burushaski first person singular patient-subject prefix *a-/á*. On the other hand, Old Georgian aorist subject-object plural infix *-(e)n-* seems closer to the Burushaski plural agent-subject suffix *-en* than the „corresponding" Ket suffix or infix *-(V)n/-(V)ng*, etc. The idea of genetically connecting genetically isolated languages or subsuming as many languages as possible under the wing of a single macrofamily seems to fascinate people till today, as we can see from nostratic or omnicomparative approaches, to use a convenient term introduced by G. Doerfer. On the term „nostratic", described by the author briefly on page 1051 and defined by Pedersen „as a comprehensive designation for the families of languages which are related to Indo-European", cf. K. H. Schmidt's review of Aharon Dogopolsky, *The Nostratic Macrofamily and Linguistic Palaeontology* (1998).[4] There, the reviewer points to the principal difficulties of such an approach: 1. The present state of the art excludes the spatial and chronological limitations of the sound laws as the possibility of reconstructing subgroups still is very limited; 2. to rely on phonetic similarity presupposes that no or only little sound, semantic and lexical change has taken place on either sides. The comparison of more distant genetically related languages usually leads to word pairs which are similar but not cognate and word pairs which are not similar but cognate. And last but not least, we must eliminate all loans before beginning the comparison, a very difficult task, as we have to elaborate criteria to differentiate between loans and inherited cognates.

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[3]Cf., e.g., Michael Meier-Brügger 2000: 25 and for the history of its decipherment see especially Hajnal 1996.

4 Schmidt 2002. See also, e.g., Doerfer 1993.

As I cannot claim competence or even familiarity with the topics treated in the first two chapters, I will concentrate my remarks on Tibeto-Burman in chapters three to six. As an introduction to the Tibeto-Burman language family the author gives a detailed and learned sketch of the history of the classification of Tibeto-Burman in the first part of chapter three „From Turanian to Tibeto-Burman". The author shows convincingly Tibeto-Burman as one of the oldest theories about genetic relationship dating back to the 18th century and being well-defined by Klaproth in 1823, who pointed out the correspondences in the core vocabulary of Tibetan, Burmese and Chinese. „Yet in the same period, Tibeto-Burman became subsumed in grander designs by scholars who thought that virtually all languages spoken by what was impressionistically the ‚Mongoloid race' or the ‚Mongolian races' belonged to a single language family. Two of these ill-fated theories were Turanian and Indo-Chinese" (p. 335). The even older Indo-Chinese theory outlived the Turanian hypothesis, but the term was used in different ways, often to denote Tibeto-Burman plus Daic. August Conrady divided it into a western branch Tibeto-Burman (Tibeto-Barmanisch) and an eastern branch Sino-Daic (Siamesisch-Chinesisch) for which Jean Przyluski (1924) coined the term *sino-tibétain* which was adopted into English as *Sino-Tibetan* a few years later. This term was then used with different denotations by Robert Shafer and Paul Benedict and gradually came into general use. The author strongly advocates dropping the notion of Sino-Tibetan and returning to Tibeto-Burman at the top of the language family tree. An important reason for the weakness of the Sino-Tibetan hypothesis is that it implies the assumption that all Tibeto-Burman languages besides Chinese „have constituted a unity after Chinese split off, and that this must be demonstrable in the forms of shared isoglosses, sound laws or morphological developments which define Tibeto-Burman as a unity as opposed to Sinitic. The innovations purportedly shared by all Tibeto-Burman subgroups except Chinese have never been demonstrated" (p. 350). But now the basis of the evaluation is going to change as our knowledge of Old Chinese has grown dramatically in the last years. „Today, the various reconstructed models of Old Chinese resemble each other ever more closely, and the reconstructed language begun to look like a natural human language rather than an inventory of phonetic formulae as it still seemed in Karlgren's pioneering work. In fact, the ‚new' Old Chinese has turned out to look rather like just another Tibeto-Burman language" (van Driem 1997: 461). On the basis of these advances in the study of Old Chinese and also of the fact that we know much more about many contemporary Tibeto-Burman languages, especially about the Kiranti languages, the author presents the Sino-Bodic and the Sino-Kiranti hypotheses, which are compatible with the „new" Tibeto-Burman theory. The Sino-Bodic hypothesis, advanced by the author, „states that Sinitic is a branch within the Tibeto-Burman language family with its most intimate genetic affinity being with the languages of the Bodic group" (p. 352). The Sino-Kiranti hypothesis, advanced by Sergej A.

Starostin, basically states that Sinitic and Kiranti either formed a genetic unity after the break-up of common Tibeto-Burman or they were distinct branches which split off at an early stage from what Starostin calls „core Tibeto-Burman". „Though it is unclear whether either of the two hypotheses will stand the test of time, both Sino-Bodic and Sino-Kiranti propose that the closest relatives of Chinese may well be found in the Himalayas" (p. 388). If we follow the Sino-Bodic hypothesis with Tibeto-Burman on the top as shown in diagram 16 (p. 399), Tibeto-Burman is first divided into Western (Brahmaputran, etc.) and Eastern Tibeto-Burman, the Eastern branch being further divided into Northern (Sino-Bodic) and Southern Tibeto-Burman. This Southern Branch divides further into a Deep Southern branch (Burmic, Karenic), consisting of Lolo-Burmese and Karenic, and in a Central branch (Qiangic, Xifan).[5] The Northern (Sino-Bodic) branch divides into Northwestern (Bodic) and Northeastern (Sinitic), and the Northwestern branch divides further into Bodish and Himalayan. It seems important to note that the author does not consider the tree in diagram 16 „a *Stammbaum* in the proper sense. Instead it represents a model of prehistoric dispersals reflected by the geographical labels ‚Western', ‚Northern', ‚Northwestern' and so forth" (p. 398) and they „refer explicitly to the relative geographical positions of the groups at the time of branching" (p. 401, cf. also p. 408).

To prove the close genetic relationship of the Sino-Bodic languages within Tibeto-Burman we have to find exclusively shared innovations, at least exclusively shared cognates between Sinitic and Bodic. This is to a large extent in accordance with the author, who says „the Sino-Bodic hypothesis is based on shared lexical isoglosses and vestiges of a shared morphology and morphosyntax" (van Driem 1997: 461). Now defunct morphosyntactic processes, once operative in Old Chinese, can be found in Himalayan languages. As a typical Tibeto-Burman flexional feature of Old Chinese lost in the modern Chinese languages he adduces the original pronominal declension distinguishing full and clitic forms, which may point to a common Sino-Bodic verbal agreement system. Without calling the possibility of such a system for Sinitic or even Sino-Bodic into question, I do miss a discussion of Tibetan and other Bodish languages in this respect, where no vestiges of such a system can be found. Giving further examples, van Driem compares Middle Chinese polyphonic readings with the various classes of verb stem in Kiranti languages, especially in Limbu, and examples of reconstructed Old Chinese forms alongside with their Modern Mandarin pronunciations and mainly Limbu correspondences (pp. 367 - 384). Many

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[5] In van Driem 1997: 463 the two Southern branches are called South-western and South-eastern, the latter consisting of Qiangic and Rung. The author might have changed from Rung to Xifan „Western Barbarian" (p. 443) in the present book because „The original proposer (1984) of the ‚Rungic' group, Graham Thurgood, has recently repudiated it altogether" (Matisoff 2000: 357 and footnote 7). A different concept of a „Rung branch" has now been introduced by Thurgood in Thurgood/LaPolla 2003: 14ff.

examples are clearly cognates which can be verified on the basis of the Old Chinese reconstructions, not on the basis of the Modern Mandarin pronunciations. Most of these examples were already presented in van Driem 1997 and critically scrutinized by Matisoff 2000, who pointed out that many of van Driem's examples are unsatisfactory due to different reasons. In my opinion the most important is that many shared phenomena seem to be not exclusive „Sino-Bodic" phenomena, thus weakening this hypothesis considerably. To summarize, we can say that we have the Sino-Tibetan hypothesis, weakened by the necessary but unproved assumption on the innovations shared by all Tibeto-Burman subgroups except Chinese,[6] and the Sino-Bodic hypothesis, weakened by the empirically not sufficiently demonstrated shared exclusive innovations. I think, in this situation, we have to draw the conclusion to intensify the building up of subgrouping from below. This means intensifying the descriptive work as well the as historical comparison on a low level in order to work out as many regular correspondences as possible for a few supposedly genetically closely related Tibeto-Burman languages before going on to a higher level, where the number of regular correspondences naturally will be reduced. As mentioned above, the tree in diagram 16 and its branches do not represent a *Stammbaum* in the proper sense, but a model of prehistoric dispersals reflected by the geographical labels. Consequently, the author concludes chapter three with the corresponding archaeological record entitled „Neolithic and Bronze Age *Völkerwanderungen*", having stressed earlier that it is essential to keep the archaeological model distinct from the linguistic theory of genetic relationship and subgroup hypotheses (cf. p. 398). But within this part the author also touches upon many Tibeto-Burman languages from west to east and from north to south, providing an abundance of valuable information not on the particular grammars but on the cultural and language history of all the many different peoples speaking a Tibeto-Burman language.

A further genetic hypothesis involved in the „new look" of Tibeto-Burman is the author's Brahmaputran hypothesis, which claims a closer genetic relationship of Konyak, Bodo-Koch, Dhimalish and Kachinic (p. 501). „The Brahmaputran branch is one taxon within the geographic constellation of primary taxa collectively called Western Tibeto-Burman" (p. 398). But „opposed to the Sino-Bodic and Brahmaputran hypotheses, Western Tibeto-Burman is not a hypothesis about genetic subgroups" (p. 399).[7] The Brahmaputran hypothesis is discussed among other Tibeto-

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[6] The individual opinions may vary to a considerable extent. In a recent contribution on the subgrouping of the Sino-Tibetan languages, Graham Thurgood simply states: „The Sino-Tibetan family consists of two major subgroups, Chinese and Tibeto-Burman. By and large the distinction between the two is unambiguous and widely accepted, despite a dwindling number of older scholars who still see the connection as not yet proven" (Thurgood/LaPolla 2003: 6).

[7] In van Driem 1997: 462f. this hypothesis was called Western Tibeto-Burman hypothesis, comprising Baric, Sal and Kamarupan, and was first suggested to van Driem by Benedict, „who wrote that Kachin, Konyak and Bodo-Garo make up a group" (ibid.). This statement has been

Burman subgrouping proposals (pp. 388ff., 396ff.) and compared with two
„rival subgrouping hypotheses,... Jim Matisoff 's ‚Jiburish' and Graham
Thurgood's ‚Rung'" (p. 390). An important difference lies in the fact that van
Driem has added Dhimalish (including Toto and Dhimal) to the Bodo-
Konyak-Jinghpaw group. The evidence, the languages involved as well as
their speakers and communities are presented at some length in chapter
four „The Brahmaputra and Beyond". Other new concepts are the
Mahakiranti and the Newaric hypotheses in chapter five. According to the
author's concept, the speakers of the ancient North-western Tibeto-Burman
dialects reached the Himalayan region by at least two distinct routes. One
wave „reached both the western and eastern Himalayas and spread across
their northern flank and the Tibetan plateau" (p. 826), yielding the Bodish,
West Himalayish and Tamangic language communities of today, with which
the author deals in chapter six. Another wave crossed the Himalayas
somewhere in the east and spread in a westerly direction across the
southern flank, yielding Bodic language communities which today speak
languages of the Mahakiranti group. In this concept the author has „related
Newar both to Thangmi and Baram... These three languages together form a
subgroup which I call Newaric or para-Kiranti and which, together with the
Kiranti languages proper, make up a hypothetical subgroup which I have
christened Mahakiranti, ‚Greater Kiranti'" (p. 397). Therefore, the
Mahakiranti concept comprises the numerous Kiranti or Rai languages and
the Newaric languages Newar, Baram and Thangmi, constituting the
„Himalayan" subgroup, in which the author also included Lepcha, whose
genetic position is unclear, Lhokpu and the Magaric languages Magar,
Kham, Chepang including the Bhujeli dialect, possibly Raute or Raji, and the
now extinct Dura. But in two papers with nearly the same text (van Driem
2003, 2004) the author has now withdrawn the Mahakiranti hypothesis,
originally based on two specific morphological traits that Newar shares with
the Kiranti languages, since it had turned out in his further research that
these traits also occur in Gongduk and therefore are not exclusively shared
by Newar and Kiranti, „but would appear to be the shared retention of a far
older trait of the Proto-Tibeto-Burman verbal agreement system" (van
Driem 2003: 24). However, „whilst the evidence for Mahakiranti has waned,
the evidence for Newaric or Mahanevari has grown" (van Driem 2003: 25).
This is not reflected in Bradley's classification (Bradley 1997: 15ff.) who
subsumes under his label „Himalayan" the „Kiranti or Rai languages" and
the „Central Himalayan languages" Magar, Kham, Chepang, Raute/Raji and
Newari. But Bhramu (Baram) and Thami (Thangmi) are listed under „West
Himalayish" together with Kinnauri, etc., and Lepcha under „Central Tibeto-

commented on by Matisoff (2000: 357 including note 7) who states that this grouping goes back to
the Linguistic Survey of India, that the term „Sal languages" originated in Burling and that the term
Kamarupan was coined by himself.

Burman“.[8] He classifies Dura under „Western Bodish“, together with Gurung, etc. For Tshangla, Lhokpu and Gongduk he has an extra branch within „Western Tibeto-Burman or Bodic“. As for this last language, spoken by a dwindling population of about 1000 speakers in a remote enclave along the Kurichu in east-central Bhutan, van Driem, who discovered it in 1991, has tentatively classified it as an independent subgroup within Tibeto-Burman. „When the Tshangla and Dzongkha loans are eliminated from consideration, the underlying substrate of Gongduk may in fact not even be Tibeto-Burman at all“ (p. 465). Even if so, to speculate about a genetic relationship with Proto-North-Caucasian remains not only „premature until the grammar and lexicon of the Gongduk language have been documented in greater detail“ (p. 467), but also until a Proto-North-Caucasian genetic unity has been established. The only languages established in the North Caucasus as genetic unities are the North West Caucasian languages, the Nakh languages and certain groups within the Daghestan languages. And despite N. S. Trubetzkoy's *Nordkaukasische Wortgleichungen* (Trubetzkoy 1930), the genetic relationship among these groups is not at all clear or even probable. For example, no one so far has convincingly shown on a broad empirical basis that the North West Caucasian languages and the Nakh languages, widely accepted genetic unities in themselves, are mutually genetically related. But these are the sort of proofs we need prior to higher level comparisons.[9]

The author has dedicated chapter six to the Bodish, West Himalayish and Tamangic language communities, whose ancestors, according to the author, reached both the western and eastern Himalayas, as mentioned above, and spread across their northern flank and the Tibetan plateau. In diagram 16, the languages they speak are collectively called „Bodish“.[10] The terminology is a bit confusing. On the one hand the West Himalayish languages do not belong to the Himalayan languages group, but to the Bodish languages group. On the other hand the label „Bodish“ is used in three different ways. First, as a cover term for all Bodic languages except the

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[8] A subgroup of his „North-eastern“ group (cf. Bradley 1997: 2); the label „North-eastern India“ on p. 2, line 9 from below is a misprint, see line 26 from below (correct in Bradley 1994: 60f.). Bradley's presentation of his classification in the introduction of his paper is a bit confusing. It is not clear whether he differentiates four or six immediate subgroups of Tibeto-Burman. The diagram on p. 2 gives only four, as does the text of the introduction that follows, where a fifth „Central subgroup“ is mentioned under the „North-eastern“ (not „North-eastern India“!) subgroup, and a sixth subgroup, „Kuki-Chin“, is named under the „South-eastern“ subgroup. In Bradley 1994: 60ff. we find the same four subgroups, and the languages of the Central subgroup are listed under the North-eastern subgroup and Kuki-Chin under the North-eastern India subgroup. The problem involved in calling two immediate subgroups „North-eastern India“ and „North-eastern“ respectively, is evidenced by the misprint mentioned above.

[9] On Nikolajev/Starostin 1994 see Schulze 1997.

[10] Unfortunately Tshangla is not included in diagram 16, but according „to our present state of knowledge Tshangla appears to constitute an independent linguistic subgroup within Bodic. Here the provisional term ‚para-Bodish‘ has been introduced for Tshangla merely to indicate that the relationship between Tshangla and Bodish is more obvious at the present time than the relationship with Tshangla to other Tibeto-Burman groups“ (p. 991).

Himalayan languages group and Tshangla. Second, on a lower subgrouping level for Tibetan alone as opposed to the West Himalayish and Tamangic languages (cf. p. 826). The presentation of the position occupied by the East Bodish languages remains somewhat unclear, which is the third example of the use of the term. Despite of what the label may suggest, the East Bodish languages are genetically not a subgroup of the Bodish languages in the sense of the second usage (= Tibetan), but a subgroup of the Bodish languages in the sense of the first usage (= Tibetan, West Himalayish, Tamangic, East Bodish). Thus the label is unsatisfactory and confusing from the terminological point of view. This third point is due to Shafer's confusing the Tibetan dialect Dwags-po with the Tibeto-Burman, but non-Tibetan language Dag-pa. The author is aware of this,[11] but says that it poses no problem to him and that he has therefore adopted the term for the whole subgroup (cf. p. 916). As we have seen, however, it has posed a problem for the classification of the Bodish languages group as well as for the internal classification of Tibetan, because the label „Bodish" is used on different levels, precisely what Shafer was trying to avoid by introducing his terminology. And due to his error, he had no choice but to abandon his own terminology, as I have shown elsewhere,[12] and clearly we should not perpetuate his mistake. We could restrict the notion „Bodish" to the higher level, which would permit us to keep „East Bodish" on the level below. This possibility is discussed by Bradley 1997: 3ff., and perhaps also alluded to by van Driem 1994: 609f. Thus we could retain „East Bodish" for the Bumthang group, „Central Bodish" for Tibetan, and „West Bodish" for the Tamangic group. The disadvantage of these labels, however, is that they are in competition with Shafer's notions „West Bodish unit, Central Bodish unit, South Bodish unit, East Bodish unit" to characterize the different groups of Tibetan dialects. Therefore I found it easier and clearer to drop the abstract labels on this level, where specific single languages are beginning to be recognised, and to use „sounding" labels like „Tibetan", „Bumthang languages group", „Tamang or Gurung languages group", „Kinnaur languages group", etc. A distinction still remains between „Tibetan" and the other groups, for example, the „Bumthang languages group", because the label „Tibetan" usually refers to „varieties" or „dialects", whereas van Driem applies the label „Bumthang languages group" to differentiate between „dialects" and „languages" (cf. p. 908, 910). As we know from Dutch, however, a former dialect can rise to the status of a language, mainly due to extralinguistic reasons. Therefore I have no objection to speak of Dzongkha as a South Bodish language (p. 891) or better as a South Tibetan language.[13] From a linguistic point of view it has been regarded since the Linguistic Survey of India as a South Tibetan dialect or better as a South Tibetan

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[11]See also van Driem 1994: 609f.

[12]Cf. Bielmeier 2004: 398ff.

[13]In the case of the variety of Tromowa in Tsang, i.e. in Tibet/China, van Driem speaks correctly of „Tibetan sister language" (p. 903) probably due to extralinguistic reasons.

variety with its closest relatives on the same linguistic level, namely the three sister varieties: Drenjongke in Sikkim, Tromowa in Tsang, and Chocangacakha in Bhutan (cf. p. 891).

On Tibetan, the author first gives a short but to our present state of knowledge accurate classification of the dialects followed by a brief sketch of Tibetan history including the contacts with the West since the 17th century, that is, since the Christian mission and the documentation of the Tibetan language beginning with a Tibetan word list provided by the mayor of Amsterdam Nicolaes Witsen in 1692. Nicolaes Witsen had been a close confidant of czar Peter I and had been travelling several times in Russia in the years between 1666 and 1677.[14] But van Driem's notes on the early documentation of Tibetan by westerners after Witsen are short and not very balanced. He underestimates Csoma's role and achievements and overestimates that of I. J. Schmidt. Csoma's understanding of the Tibetan verbal system following native conceptions is remarkable till today. And it is Csoma, to whom we owe the first classification of Tibetan tribes and dialects.[15] On I. J. Schmidt, who simply adapted Csoma's dictionary for a German public, and on Csoma, whose work „is that of an original investigator and the fruit of an almost unparalleled determination and patience“ it is best to read Jäschke's preface to his famous *Tibetan-English Dictionary* of 1881 and the „Vorrede“ in the first German version of his *Handwörterbuch der Tibetischen Sprache* of 1871.[16]

Turning to the modern Tibetan dialects and to the work which has been done on them in the recent years the author is very brief if we consider the numerous present varieties of linguistic Tibet as a whole, varieties spoken from the K2 in Pakistan to the Blue Lake in Amdo. He is concentrating on the Tibetan varieties spoken by the „cis-Himalayan Tibetans“, as he calls them (p. 855 and elsewhere), who live mainly in Himachal Pradesh, Nepal, Sikkim and Bhutan. On this part I would like to add a few minor corrections and comments. Despite the perhaps misleading title of K. Rangan's *Balti phonetic reader* (1975), Rangan is not describing Balti in this booklet but Purik (cf. p. 850). The error is probably due to the meaning of the term „Balti“ which refers to the Shia Muslims on both sides of the cease fire line, while the Sunni Muslims are usually called Khache, a term which orginally referred to the inhabitants of Kashmir. And since most of the people in the Purik area of Ladakh are Shia Muslims, they are also referred to as Balti. If they are asked after their area and language, however, they clearly refer to

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[14]Witsen published material on many then unknown or very little known Asiatic languages in a revised form in two volumes „Noord en Oost-Tartarye, ofte bondig...“ in 1672 and 1705. Among this material, e.g., are the first samples of Circassian and Ossetic. At least the Ossetic material was collected by the German physician Dresscher, who accompanied the Imeretian king Archil II. (1647-1713) on his trip from Moscow to Georgia through Cabardia and Ossetia (cf. Bielmeier 1979).
[15]Cf. Róna-Tas 1985, especially pp. 78-91, 185-242; p. 223 on the first classification of the Tibetan dialects.
[16]Cf. Jäschke 1881: v and Jäschke 1871: 4.

themselves as „Purikpa" (person of the Purik area) and to their language as „Purikpe skat." Rangan corrected this mistake in his *Purki grammar* (1979).[17] On p. 851 the author mentions the western (?) Brokpa dialect spoken in the villages Da, Garkhon, etc. and D. D. Sharma's book (Sharma 1998) dealing with it. Despite the Tibetan names „Brokpa" and „Brokskat", bestowed by the Ladakhis on the people and their language, these people are immigrants and speak a variety of Indo-Aryan Shina, close to the language of Gilgit. Brokskat is traditionally placed among the so-called „Dardic langugages". Its lexicon is indeed heavily influenced by lower Ladakhi and Purik, but not by Balti. Among other recent linguistic works one should at least mention N. Ramaswami's *Brokskat Phonetic Reader* (1975), *Brokskat Grammar* (1982) and *Brokskat-Urdu-Hindi-English Dictionary* (1989) and André Carrée's *Phonologie du dialecte Shina de Da-Hanu* (1989).[18]

Describing the varieties of Tibetan spoken in the northern areas of Nepal, the author lists them from west to east. He states, correctly, that „Most of these cis-Himalayan Tibetan dialects have not been studied or have been investigated only cursorily" (p. 856). Therefore, the linguistic information that he can give must be regarded as preliminary. I will try to add a few more preliminary information on some of the varieties we have been able to discover in the meantime and which has not yet been published elsewhere. All these varieties spoken in Nepal can be subsumed under the overall label „Central Tibetan". Nevertheless there are considerable differences among them. Nothing has been published on the Central Tibetan variety spoken in Limi or Limirong. In 1999 Brigitte Huber recorded a short word list with the help of three informants from that area, one from Sangra, one from Nyinba north and northwest of Simikot, and one from Limi further northwest of Simikot close to the Nepali-Tibetan border. According to the judgement of native speakers, the Sangra and Nyinba varieties are more or less the same, whereas the Limirong variety is described as being a bit different. In their opinion, the Tibetan variety spoken in the neighbouring areas of Mugu and Karmarong, however, differs from their own and is more similar to the Tibetan language spoken in Dolpo. Some information on the Nyinba is given in Levine 1976. Their language is spoken in four villages

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[17]Purki is an Urdu-like adjective for Purik, the name for the area, formed according to the Urdu grammar with the final -*i*.

[18]Through all three booklets (Ramaswami 1975, Ramaswami 1982, Ramaswami 1989) the author translates Brok as ,rock' instead of ,high pasture'. This mistake is apparently due to the confusion of the Written Tibetan *brag* ,rock' and *'brog* ,high pasture'. Unfortunately, Carrée's *Phonologie* seems not to have been published. It was finished in November 1989 for his Diplôme d'études approfondies. The anthropologist Rohit Vohra also has published works on the Buddhist Dards of Ladakh. Among these publications are the two books: *The Religion of the Dards in Ladakh* (Vohra 1989a) and *An Ethnography. The Buddhist Dards of Ladakh* (Vohra 1989b), in which he presents transcriptions and translations of songs or hymns mostly performed during important festivals. These songs contain a mixture of Ladakhi, Purik, Brokskat and unidentified linguistic elements. Vohra's transcriptions and translations of the songs are not reliable. I tried to interpret a few of the songs in Bielmeier 1994. The conventional name „Dards of Da-Hanu" is no longer correct, since today the people in Hanu speak a variety of Purik.

north of the confluence of the Dozam and the Humla Khola. In Nepali the area is known as Barthapale and its inhabitants as Barthapalya. Levine has the following to say concerning the language of Nyinba: „The inhabitants of these villages claim to have migrated from Tibet in the distant past, they speak a dialect of western Tibetan and are adherents of Tibetan Buddhism" (Levine 1976: 57). According to a text on their origin, their ancestors came from *sKu mkhar stod* in Purang, and it is said that there is still a village with this name existing in the Purang valley. As regards phonology, these varieties of Limirong are indeed quite close to the variety of Purang as described in Qu/Tan 1982. An important difference lies in the fact that voicedness still seems to play a phonemic role, just as in most Tibetan varieties of Nepal. As in the variety of Purang and other Tibetan varieties, the original labial nasal *m* between vowels has disappeared and led to nasalisation of the second vowel. It seems to be a Tö-dialect inasmuch as an original initial bilabial stop followed by *r* has led to a retroflex stop. An original bilabial stop followed by *y* and a back vowel (*a, u, o*) led to an affricate, but was retained as bilabial stop if the original bilabial stop was followed by *y* and a front vowel (*i, e*). Original *-n, -r, -l* in final position are retained, only original final *-s* is dropped, palatalising the preceding vowel, primarily in Limi and Sangra, but usually not in Nyinba.

Nearly nothing is known, let alone published, on the Tibetan varieties of Mugu and Karmarong. I have no additional information on the variety spoken by the Karmarong Tibetans. The only scholar to have published linguistic material on the Mugu variety, collected in Mugu village, is Stephen A. Watters (Watters 2002). He kindly put his unpublished word list on six Tibetan varieties, four of them spoken in Nepal (Dzongkha, Drenjongke, Sherpa, Lhomi, Dolpo, Mugu), at my disposal. Thus I was able to use a limited amount of Mugu language material for my own evaluations. This material does not confirm van Driem's impression: „The fact that the degree of mutual intelligibility between Mugu and Central Tibetan is negligeably small warrants considering Mugu to be a distinct language..." (p. 857). On the contrary, the variety fits quite well into the Tibetan speech environment and is definitely a „conservative" Central Tibetan dialect. The same seems to be true of the dialect of Dolpo as well. Despite the fact that Dolpo is quite well known and has often been the object of various studies, practically nothing has been published on the Tibetan variety spoken in Dolpo. The only language material so far published comes once more from Watters 2002. In addition to that I have the Dolpo material from his unpublished word list, and in 1998 Michael Kollmair, at my request, recorded a Dolpo word list with the help of an informant from Saldang in the Nepal Research Centre in Kathmandu. The Dolpo variety does not seem to be specifically close to the neighbouring Mugu variety. With a few exceptions, they all share many of the sound-change phenomena to be met with in Ngari. In the Dolpo variety as well as in that of Mugu we find the retention of final *-n, -r, -l,* but not of final *-s.* An original initial bilabial stop is retained, provided it is

followed by *y* and a front vowel. Original initial *s-* followed by *r* led to initial *s-* in Dolpo as well as in Mugu. This is a development typical of Kham, but also encountered in Kyirong for example, and in other languages. A peculiarity of Dolpo and Mugu, however, is the change of the original initial clusters *skr-* and *spr-* resulting in an initial palatal fricative *sh-* in Dolpo and in an initial *s-* in Mugu.[19]

There is little to be added concerning the Tibetan varieties of Mustang. The author refers to the comprehensive description of the Southern Mustang or Lower Mustang variety, published by Monika Kretschmar 1995.[20] It clearly supersedes the word list collected and published by Nagano 1982a. One should add, however, that Nagano in the same year also published a word list of the variety of Upper Mustang or Lo, accompanied by a historical discussion (Nagano 1982b).[21] Nothing at all has been published on the dialect of Nubri or Nupri in a phonemic rendering.[22] But in 1987 M. Kretschmar collected a long word list from two areas in Nubri, namely Rö and Trok, and has placed it at my disposal. We have integrated this material into the *Comparative Dictionary of Tibetan Dialects*.[23] The Nubri variety seems to be closer to the varieties spoken in the north beyond the border in Tibet than to its western neighbouring varieties in Nepal. There are clear differences to its eastern neighbouring variety in Tsum, as regards the sound level. In Nubri voicedness is not phonemic, similar to the varieties of Ngari, Tsang and western Ü in Tibet.

Speaking of Tsum, I shall first point out that we find a very distinctive common historical phonological feature in the varieties of Tsum, Kyirong, Langtang, Yolmo, Kagate, and also in the Tibetan varieties spoken in a few villages in the Bhote Kosi and Langtang Khola valleys in Nepal near the Tibet-Nepal border, where the main population and language is Tamang. Despite the fact that the Kagate speakers live today in a mountain area between the Likhu and Khimti Khola in the northeastern part of Ramechap District, their variety is considered especially close to that of the people of

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[19]Because of this general picture we can hardly consider the Mugu variety to be „a distinct language just as Dzongkha is manifestly a distinct language from Tibetan despite the shared liturgical tradition" (p. 857). The Mugu variety is a Central Tibetan dialect with only a few peculiarities, at least on the sound level. For Dzongkha, due to extralinguistic reasons, we may claim the status of a language, but Dzongkha is not a distinct language from Tibetan, but a South Bodish language (p. 891) or a South Bodish dialect or variety, if we understand „Bodish" as a synonym of „Tibetan", cf. note 13.

[20]One of the twelve villages of Southern Mustang is called Pura in the local variety, translated by M. Kretschmar as Purang. This might well be misleading, because it is not at all clear that we have here the same place name as „Purang" in Ngari.

[21]Unfortunately no further help was to be found in the booklet of Kitamura 1977, containing a word list of 456 items and dialogues in Modern Written Tibetan and in the Upper Mustang variety, because the material of the Upper Mustang variety is written in Tibetan script giving thus very little information on the actual pronunciation.

[22]The Literary Tibetan form is *nub ris* and not *nub ri*, as given by van Driem.

[23]For more details on the *Comparative Dictionary of Tibetan Dialects* see my short report in Bielmeier 2002. On the area and history of Nubri and other Tibetan speaking areas in Nepal and beyond the border in Tibet see Clarke 1980 and now Everding 2000: 290ff. and Childs 2001.

Yolmo, also called Helambu Sherpas (cf. Hoehlig/Hari 1976: 1). This is linguistically correct and confirmed by the fact that, according to their own tradition, they originally came from the Helambu or Yolmo area (Hoehlig/Hari 1976: 1). All these varieties share the retention of the original cluster consisting of an initial bilabial stop, with or without prefix, followed by *r*. Only the prefix of the original cluster is omitted. This is definitely a shared archaism and not a shared innovation. But it is nevertheless very remarkable, for this retention can also be found only in a part of Western Archaic Tibetan, i.e., in Balti, Purik and Lower Ladakhi as far as Khalatse. This is one important feature among many others that distinguishes the variety of the Helambu Sherpas clearly from the varieties of the Solu-Khumbu Sherpas. Despite the common name, the varieties are not really very close to each other. Both diverge from the „typical" Central Tibetan type quite a bit, but in different directions. Nothing has been published on the variety of Tsum. But during my work on Kyirong Tibetan in a refugee camp in Syabru Besi in the eighties, I was informed by locals that the language of Tsum seems to be quite close to Kyirong Tibetan. The same seems to be valid for the Tibetan varieties spoken in Langtang and in the above-mentioned few villages in the Bhote Kosi valley between Syabru Besi and Rasua near the Tibetan border on the way to Kyirong and in the few villages in the Langtang Khola valley on the way to Langtang.[24] In 1998 Brigitte Huber, who has written a comprehensive grammar on Kyirong Tibetan (Huber 2002), recorded a short word list compiled with an informant from Tsum in Kathmandu. This is the only linguistic material that we have so far. During my above-mentioned stay in Syabru Besi I also visited Langtang and collected some linguistic material. A few years ago Christoph Cüppers, at my request, recorded some few words with the help of a Helambu Sherpa speaker in Kathmandu. And in 2000 Brigitte Huber again recorded a word list with an informant from that area in Kathmandu. My evaluations on Helambu Sherpa or Yolmo Tibetan based on these two wordlists are now confirmed by a comprehensive *Yohlmo-Nepali-English Dictionary* recently compiled by the Swiss scholar Anna Maria Hari which hopefully will go to press very soon and was put at our disposal by the author. Kagate was briefly described as early as 1909 in the Linguistic Survey of India, where it is also mentioned that its speakers live in East Nepal and Darjeeling (no further authorities are quoted). As mentioned above, Monika Hoehlig and Maria Hari published a *Kagate Phonemic Summary* (1976) and have compiled a comprehensive *Kagate-English-Nepali Dictionary* that includes an English-Kagate index in the seventies; unfortunately, this has not been published as yet, but was put at our disposal by the authors. A further paper is Höhlig 1978.

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[24]In Bielmeier 1982: 411f. I have already pointed out that the Tibetan dialects of Kyirong, Kagate, the Helambu Sherpas and Langtang are closely related. I have never heard of a cis-Himalayan Tibetan community „locally known by the derogatory name Khaccaḍ Bhoṭe, 'mule Tibetan', whereby mule more or less carries the sense of ‚mongrel'" (p. 862).

As regards the Jirel the author invites his readers to examine the Sunwar influence, stating that „the Jirel language, though apparently similar to the Sherpa dialects, might show vestiges of Sunwar provenance. Until the language is adequately documented, there will be no way of testing this hypothesis" (p. 863). Jirel is indeed similar in several respects to Solu-Khumbu Sherpa, but not to Helambu Sherpa. And the documentation of the Jirel dialect is relatively poor. But the four publications quoted by the author are not the only more recent studies on Jirel. Further publications are Hale 1973, Maibaum 1978, Strahm and Maibaum 1971 and Strahm 1978. The main point, though, is that Esther Strahm has completed a comprehensive *Jirel-Nepali-English Dictionary* which will go into press very soon. We have integrated the Jirel material from the published sources into our *Comparative Dictionary of Tibetan Dialects* and we are grateful to Esther Strahm, who put a revised draft of the dictionary at our disposal. Under these circumstances, the proposed comparison with Sunwar should become more promising.

Although the Sherpas are well known in the west and there is quite a lot of literature on them, even on linguistic topics since the brief description in the *Linguistic Survey of India* of 1909, we do not have a comprehensive grammatical description of their language. According to Sang Yong Lee's recently published sociolinguistic survey of Sherpa (Lee 2003), the Sherpa as an ethnic group live primarily in the district of Solu-Khumbu, which can be divided into the three regions of Khumbu, Pharak and Solu. Correctly, Lee does not include the Helambu Sherpas. The variety the latter speak, as noted above, is quite different from the variety spoken by the Sherpas in Solu-Khumbu. Therefore it is quite in order when these Sherpas „stress that they are genuine Sherpas and maintain that the Sherpas of Helambu are not true Sherpas" (p. 865). „While it is generally agreed that the Sherpa people migrated from the Kham area of Tibet, according to Oppitz in the 16th century, it remains unclear whether they translocated to the present location at one time and in one direction only, or rather moved gradually and entered Nepal through different portals" (Lee 2003: 81). Judging from a linguistic point of view, the Sherpa varieties seem to fit quite well into the surrounding Central-Tibetan-like varieties with the exception that Jirel and Sherpa and probably Khumbo verbs as well, have different stem forms, a linguistic phenomenon observed chiefly in Classical Tibetan and in modern Amdo varieties. An exclusive sound change discovered only recently for Sherpa and Khumbo (but not for Jirel) is the development of the original initial cluster *lt-* into initial voiceless *lh-*. The Khumbos are not mentioned by van Driem. According to Hildegard Diemberger the Khumbo people, also known as Nawa, are a small Tibetan speaking community in the Upper Arun valley, in close vicinity to the Lhomi people. They are divided into the Khumbo Tema or Upper Khumbo, in Khemathanka right at the Tibet-Nepal border, south

of the Tibetans of Kharta, and the Khumbo Ongma or Lower Khumbo living in some dozen villages around Sepa (Nep. Shedua). The Tibetan variety they speak is not close to that of the Lhomis, but to that of the Sherpas. This becomes understandable when we look at their history. „Historically the Khumbo stem from a migration from Tibet via Khumbu (probably some 300 years ago) which combining with other Tibetan clans originated a number of communities in the upper Arun valley" (Diemberger 1996: 220). Nothing has been published on their language so far. But I can base my linguistic evaluations on language material which Diemberger has collected in the eighties during her fieldwork for her PhD dissertation and has placed at my disposal.

Concerning the Lhomi people and their language, the impression of the author that „the language seems rather unlike a Tibetan dialect" (p. 865) is definitely wrong. He also says that Lhomi „is, I believe, not a dialect of Tibetan, but this conjecture can only be tested by detailed grammatical and lexical documentation" (p. 866). There is no comprehensive grammatical description of Lhomi yet,[25] but we have enough lexical material and detailed information on its phonetics and phonology. Thus we can evaluate the number of basic lexical items that are shared and we can sketch a diachronic phonology for Classical Tibetan as well as for the neighbouring Tibetan dialects. We have not only the two accounts by Vesalainen and Vesalainen 1976 and Vesalainen and Vesalainen 1980, both quoted by van Driem, but also Nishi 1979, Nishi 1983, Watters 2002, Watters 2003 and Watters's above-mentioned unpublished word list. Definitely wrong again is the statement by Vesalainen and Vesalainen to the effect that Helambu Sherpa is the closest language to Lhomi (Vesalainen and Vesalainen 1976: 1). They compared Lhomi with only three varieties, namely Helambu Sherpa, Solu-Khumbu Sherpa and Tichurong Tibetan (southern Dolpo). We have no information on the Tichurong variety, but both, Helambu Sherpa and Solu-Khumbu Sherpa, are relatively distant from Lhomi. In other words this comparison is of no help in determining the position of Lhomi. The idea that Lhomi is quite different from Tibetan may go back to a statement by Ch. von Fürer-Haimendorf in his book *Himalayan Traders* (1975), which has been very correctly criticised by Nishi, who states „von Fürer-Haimendorf (1975), referring to this dialect, observes that it is a ‚language very different from Standard Tibetan', suspecting that it contains elements which cannot be derived from the languages of the adjoining regions of Tibet (p. 117). By ‚standard' Tibetan he probably means Lhasa or Central Tibetan... However, so far as its phonological features are concerned, we may well conclude that it is more likely a Central Tibetan dialect than Sherpa and Kagate. Thus it is tonal, has only simplex initials, and did not undergo the change *-r- to -y-. Besides, the patterns of changes of *initial voiced stops and affricates are exactly like Lhasa Tibetan" (Nishi 1983: 59). To establish the genetic

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[25]But see Vesalainen and Vesalainen 1980.

position of Lhomi we must compare it with the neighbouring varieties and with Classical Tibetan and establish the regular sound correspondences. This is easy and it renders a very clear picture, one which largely coincides with Nishi's evaluation. Even just the phonetic forms in Watters's word list, for example, of the numerals *nyi* with high tone for ,two' and *dün* with low tone for ,seven' demonstrate the Tibetan character of Lhomi. Today we can even determine the position of Lhomi in a bit more detail, and state that the closest relatives of this Tibetan dialect are the varieties spoken north of it in Tsang west of Lhartse, of which at present the dialects of the western Drokpas, of Dingri and of Shigatse are known best due to the works of Monika Kretschmar (Kretschmar 1986), Silke Herrmann (Herrmann 1989) and Felix Haller (Haller 2000). Comparing the clause patterns of Lhomi described by Vesalainen and Vesalainen 1980 with the corresponding phenomena in Shigatse Tibetan, we even find grammatical correspondences. There is a small settlement of Lhomis in Darjeeling and the name used for them there is Shingsapa. But this name is apparently used by the Lhomis in Nepal as well. Because the exact pronunciation is not known, it remains unclear to me whether *shing-sa* refers to ,field' or to ,wood'. The Nepali designation *Kāṭh-Bhoṭe*, lit. ,wood-Tibetan', points to the latter[26]. On the other hand, according to Bista 1980: 169, „the Lhomis subsist almost entirely on field agriculture". Their self-designation Lhomi, just like the name of „the speakers of Lhokpu, known in Dzongkha as Lhop", is often interpreted as meaning ,southerners' (cf. p. 802). In my opinion, however, we should be a bit careful with this interpretation. We should not forget the self-designation *lo* (with high tone) for Mustang, referred to in the Tibetan literature as *glo*, or *glo stod* for Upper Mustang and *glo smad* for Lower Mustang respectively.[27]

Finally, there are the Tibetan speaking communities of Halung or Walung at the far north-east border of Nepal in Thudam, Tokpe Gola, and Walungchung Gola. In Bista 1980: 173ff. we find some information on the Thudam and Tokpe Gola[28] people as well as on the people of Olangchung (better Walungchung). Nothing has been published so far on the Tibetan varieties spoken by these peoples. But at present Nancy Caplow (St. Barbara, California) is preparing a comprehensive grammatical description of the language of the Tokpe Gola people as her PhD dissertation. All the quoted information in this and the following paragraphs come from her. Her „TG [Tokpe Gola] consultants do believe they are culturally, historically, and linguistically close to the Walungchung Gola community (and there has been

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[26]Note also Sanskrit *śiṁśapā-*, the tree 'Dalbergia sissoo', cf. Turner 1966, No.12424 and Mayrhofer 1996: 633.

[27]Cf., e.g., Everding 2000: 417f. The question remains whether *glo* can be connected with Old Tibetan *glo ba nye* ,loyal', and *glo ba rings* ,disloyal', preserved on the south face of the Zhol inscription of the 8th c. (cf., e.g., Li/Coblin 1987: 161).

[28]According to Caplow the name is pronounced with an initial aspirated retroflex stop. The spelling Topke Gola in Bista 1980: 173 is a misprint which crept into literature and maps, also in the present book, p. 866.

intermarriage between them, which does not occur with Limbus or Lhomis). However, they say that the TG people originally came from Tibet, and the WG [Walungchung Gola] people also originally came from Tibet. They do not say that the TG people moved from WG. This makes sense geographically, given the location of steep ridges separating the TG and WG settlements, and separate remote passes connection TG and Tibet, and WG and Tibet." Her TG language consultants also told her that Lhomi is quite different from Tokpe Gola and Walungchung Gola. „The village of Thudam is in the same valley as the Lhomi villages, but the Thudam people are considered by the locals to speak Tokpe Gola, and to be distinct culturally and linguistically from the Lhomi."

In his description of the Bodish languages, van Driem proceeds eastward, leaving Nepal and going on into Bhutan. His discussion includes the Tibetan varieties of Sikkim and of the Chumbi valley, as these two languages are closely related to Dzongkha constituing together with Chocangacakha, a further variety in Bhutan, the Southern Tibetan group, as mentioned above. The author is certainly a leading expert on the languages of Bhutan, and the information he gives on Bhutan and its languages is most valuable.

The book, consisting as it does of so many heterogeneous topics and approaches, certainly cannot be evaluated as a whole. The main section of the book, as is also shown by its title, is concerned with the Tibeto-Burman languages. In this part of his book the author presents an excellent introduction on the research history and classification of Tibeto-Burman and Sino-Tibetan and tries to promote his Sino-Bodic hypothesis at the expense of the Sino-Tibetan hypothesis. But both hypotheses seem to have weak points. He puts forward the Brahmaputran hypothesis as applicable to Western Tibeto-Burman, and the Mahakiranti-Newaric to the Himalayan languages. In two recent papers, however, he has withdrawn the Mahakiranti hypothesis. At any rate he often gives a fascinating picture of the languages concerned, their speakers and cultures, their history and archaeology, particularly for the Kiranti language communities. This also holds true for some of the Bodhish languages, especially of the non-Tibetan East Bodish languages in Bhutan and east of it. Within Tibetan, Dzongkha occupies a strong position in his analysis, whereas the presentations of the many other Tibetan varieties are somewhat short, concentrating mainly on the cis-Himalayan varieties. But in view of the author's research preference for the Kiranti languages (particularly Limbu) in Nepal and the many languages in Bhutan, especially Dzongkha, it is only natural that he should emphasize these languages and culture areas. Due to the high standard of his research work, readers cannot but benefit highly. Unfortunately, I cannot extend this evaluation to the last two chapters, in which very fragile (re)constructions are erected with the help of too many speculations, unproved assumptions and hypotheses. To give them a firm basis, we must

improve the (re)constructions from below. I can only underline the author's own words, namely that „priority must be given to descriptive work over historical comparison" (van Driem 1997: 484 and cited by Matisoff 2000: 368) in Tibeto-Burman historical linguistics and even more with the topics touched upon in chapters seven and eight. In some respects the book seems to me like a kind of general store, with wonderful titbits and non-sellers consisting of speculative approaches. I am not certain whether it was really a good idea to put this huge amount of facts, ideas and hypotheses under one cover.

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***Trans-Himalayan Caravans: Merchant princes and peasant traders in Ladakh* by Janet Rizvi. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1999. ISBN 019 564855 2, bibliography, 20 black-and-white and 13 colour plates, 4 maps, 359 pp.**

Reviewed by Nicky Grist

I am reviewing my second copy of this book. The first was not lost in some fast-flowing glacial stream or over the edge of an unimaginably high

precipice, as Rizvi reports was the fate of many a box or bale of trade goods in Ladakh. Rather, having purchased it in Leh bazaar and returned to my hosts' house nearby, a cursory reading revealed that it recounted their grandfather's life in great detail. Therefore, it was an ideal gift to leave for them. He had been an initially poor man who made his fortune by trading between Ladakh and its neighbours in India, but sadly had been dead for several years. Fortunately, when he was still living, Rizvi had interviewed him as part of her work to gather as many memories as she could of the now (mainly) discontinued trade of Ladakh. Many of the others whom she interviewed are now also dead, but their fascinating accounts provide the core of the invaluable contribution made by this book.

Until the middle of the last century, Ladakh was the centre of a cosmopolitan and complex set of trade routes which extended all over Central Asia, the Himalayan region and sometimes beyond. The trade routes were without roads or even necessarily a navigable path. They crossed some of the highest passes in the world and inhospitable deserts in conditions of extreme heat or cold. On them travelled caravans of traders, servants, and animals who risked daily hardships and sometimes death. Hence, there is a wonderful story to tell, which Rizvi does in this meticulously researched and beautifully written book.

The author points out that Ladakh does not seem an ideal place to travel through, as it is cut off from its neighbours by difficult high passes. However, for political and other reasons, it was an important centre of trade and an entrepôt for centuries. The long distance trade linked Yarkand and Central Asia with Tibet and British India and involved mainly luxury goods. For part of the 19th century, both charas and opium were also staples of the business. From the time of partition until the early 1960s the international trade came to an almost complete halt with the closing of India's borders with Pakistan, China, and Tibet.

The long distance traders were predominantly from other areas such as Yarkand and Hoshiarpur in the Punjab, but there were also a number of Ladakhi (mainly but not exclusively Muslim) trading families. They dominated the trade between Tibet and Kashmir in particular, and usually had family houses in all the major centres. These people are the merchant princes of the title. The peasant traders are the Ladakhi villagers who traded both within Ladakh and with its immediate neighbours, mainly in subsistence goods.

An important product for a significant number of these traders was pashm-wool produced by goats living in the high-altitude plateaus of Chang Thang, that borders eastern Ladakh and western Tibet, and in parts Chinese Turkestan. Pashm was used for the manufacture of pashmina shawls in the Kashmir valley and latterly by shawl manufacturers in the Indian plains. By the early part of the last century, Ladakhi peasant traders, who had exchange relationships with the Tibetan nomads who owned the goats,

collected much of the shawl wool from the Chang Thang area. They would travel to Chang Thang once a year and also usually make trading trips to Skardu in Baltistan, possibly Kashmir and other areas in the region, engaging in exchange of subsistence goods by barter as well as the more commercial pashm trade. There were also many peasant traders from other parts of Ladakh, most of whom traded with neighbouring regions on a smaller scale and more exclusively in subsistence items. One of the strengths of Rizvi's book is that she has given equal weight to interviewing peasant traders in areas such as Suru near Kargil, who had been engaged in less glamorous, but essential subsistence trade.

The peasant traders, for the most part were from the ranks of the wealthier (although rich would be an exaggeration) peasant farmers who had sufficient land and animals of their own to produce a surplus, and carriage animals (mainly donkeys) with which to start trading. As Rizvi describes, poorer Ladakhis were often involved in the trade as servants and carriers; or, particularly on the main long distant route to Yarkand and Srinagar, as pony men who hired out horses to large commercial traders.

The picture that Rizvi paints of the trade and the life of the traders is one that was extremely hard, but at the same time frequently enjoyable. It seems likely that adventure was sought out by some of the (almost entirely) men who made a career in trade. This may seem absurdly romantic to some, but as she herself points out, Ghulam Rassool Galwan, who was a worker on many large European expeditions travelling these routes, in the only first-hand account from a century ago, has left a first-hand account of his experiences in which he describes his life as highly sociable and interesting. In her writing Rizvi manages to capture the excitement and sense of adventure and achievement which seems to have been a part of the enterprise.

Nevertheless, the majority of Ladakhis' role in the trade was as load carriers, servants, and pony men. These people were mainly from poorer families, who may often have taken part less enthusiastically, and many of whom were in a client relationship to a richer landowner. This landowner could be a monastery, a wealthier peasant or a traditionally "noble" family and the relationship often involved working for the patron in return for what was often a basic subsistence. I did feel that one weakness of the book was that little use was made of the now extensive literature on Ladakhi village society, which would have thrown more light on the relationship between the trading economy and other aspects of society, particularly in respect of social differentiation. For example, in the 1980s and 1990s there were still very many older people in Ladakh who talked quite bitterly of their lives prior to Independence.

Since Rizvi has transcribed all her interviews it would have been helpful if she had included more quotes from the traders themselves, and I hope that she might consider publishing their own accounts in the future.

Nevertheless, she has performed a huge service by providing an annotated historical account of the trade routes, traders, and economy of the trade itself, which will be essential reading for anyone interested in the area, or trade in general. I do have a criticism of the production, which is that there is such a wealth of information and detail in the book that I would have found it useful to have more detailed maps and tables to summarise some of the information. However, she has managed to present the story in such a readable way that I believe that the book will be of interest even to those unfamiliar with Ladakh. But it is likely that her most appreciative readers will be in Ladakh itself.

***Party Building in Nepal: Organization, leadership and people*. *A comparative study of the Nepali Congress and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist)* by Krishna Hachhethu. Kathmandu: Mandala Book Point, 2002. ISBN 99933-10-13-1, 25 tables, 2 appendices, index, 311 pp.**

Reviewed by Karl-Heinz Krämer

Democratic experiments in the 1950s saw political parties in Nepal as a rather weak agent compared to the monarchy which managed to regain more and more of the traditional power it had lost to the Ranas in mid 19th century. For lack of constitutional regulations, the political parties of the 1950s had few arguments for greater power sharing besides the late King Tribhuvan's vague promises of 18th February 1951. Even King Mahendra's constitution of 1959 left little doubt that parties were only tools in the monarch's hands to manage state powers. King Mahendra finally outlawed parties alltogether and introduced his partyless *pancāyat* system of government.

It took another 30 years before a western democratic system with a constitutional monarch was introduced in 1990. The people have now become sovereign and use party politicians as their democratically elected representatives to exercise executive and legislative powers.

Two parties stand out as the most important ones right from the beginning of this new political system: the Nepali Congress [NC] and the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist-Leninist) [CPN-UML]. There may have been other books on Nepali parties before, but Hachhethu's book

is the first attempt in English language to analyse the structure and working style of both leading parties of Nepal before and after 1990 in a comparative way. The book explains the parties' transformation from illegal, underground, cadre-based, elitist and ideology-oriented organisations to legitimate, competitive, mass-based, heterogeneous and power seeking parties.

Even before 1990, both parties played vital roles as agents of change, whether as democratic or as progressive forces. The NC has been the most important force in bringing down the erstwhile Rana system and introducing the aspect of party based democracy in the late 1940s and early 1950s, while the CPN-UML's forerunner organisation, the Communist Party of Nepal (Marxist-Leninist) [CPN-ML], originated against the background of landlord-peasant cleavages in eastern Nepal in the early 1970s. Both parties' cooperation in early 1990 made the success of the *Jana Āndolan* (people's movement) possible and guaranteed their popularity in the early 1990s.

But euphoria soon gave way to disillusionment when party politics more and more degenerated into a power game for the self-aggrandizement of the power elites. Especially during the days without single-party majorities (1994-99), bribery, horse trading, blackmail, abduction of MPs and ministers, conspiracy, manipulation of constitutional loopholes, violation of parliamentary norms and practices, party splits, etc. continuously occurred. Within four and a half years, Nepal faced seven different governments: two minority governments of CPN-UML and NC respectively, two coalition governments with the NC as dominating factor, and one coalition government dominated by the CPN-UML. The remaining two governments were coalitions of the NC with the CPN-UML each with its own splinter group CPN-ML.

The NC was involved in five of these seven governments and thus became identified with the deterioration of democratic morality and ideology while, at the same time, popular support for the CPN-UML was steadily growing. Both parties experienced inner power struggles, but while the NC could evade formal splits time and again, the CPN-UML could not settle these conflicts and formally split in early 1998 when the party was just on its way to pass the NC as most popular parliamentary party. In the 1999 parliamentary elections, the CPN-ML did not win a single seat, but it took away about 6% of the popular votes and thus prevented the CPN-UML from becoming the strongest party by seats and votes for the first time and winning a clear majority of seats in the 1999 House of Representatives even though at that time the NC had regained its unity.

Many Nepali parties have difficulties with the implementation of inner party democracy. The NC is one of the major examples on this, with its strong presidential system that gives quasi-absolute powers to the central level and especially to the party president. It was only in 2001 that some changes were introduced during the national party convention. For the first

time, the delegates elected half the members of the Central Committee (CC) of the party, while the other half was still nominated by the party president. Hachhethu sees this as a breakthrough against the old NC tradition of using compromise or forced consensus as a formula for the management of internal competition for leadership (p.263).

But the NC is still far from democratic participation of local representatives in the central decisions of the party, and this is not ameliorated by the fact that the NC claims to aim at a balanced gender, area, caste and ethnic representation in the party apparatus, with reservations for Dalits and women. G.P. Koirala's key agenda for strengthening the party, propagated by him when he became party president in 1996, has never been implemented. This proves that the NC still follows its traditional style of functioning, guided by indiscipline and the domination of personality and not by the letter and spirit of its programmes.

The CPN-UML is far better organised and managed. Party committee members are democratically elected at all levels. Nevertheless, Hachhethu sees problems in translating this rational structure into an effective mechanism. The CPN-UML may propagate a system of party control over government, but there has been rather conflict among and resistance by party leaders when the party was in power. Another shortcoming of the CPN-UML mentioned by Hachhethu is the fact that the party has been used as a powerful state organisation when it was in power, though this has been true for the NC as well.

The author sees the issue of unity vs. division as the main determinant for the parties' position and strength in national politics. The struggle for power, position and patronage, and the clash of interests, ego and personalities are the root causes for conflicts within Nepali parties. Hachhethu mentions four common features leading to the weakening of internal cohesion with NC and CPN-UML: growth in party size, de-ideologization, clash of interests, and erosion of leadership authority. Lack of consensus among leaders and proliferation of power centres are additional reasons for CPN-UML disintegration.

When the book was written, the NC had still avoided a split despite numerous internal divisions. Hachhethu values this as a proof for the NC's greater capacity to absorb internal conflicts, compared to the CPN-UML which had split in 1998 after years of internal power fighting between the Madhav Kumar Nepal / K.P. Oli and the Bam Dev Gautam / C.P. Mainali factions. But recent months have proved the opposite: While the CPN-UML reunited in early 2002, the NC split, and it was not Koirala and Bhattarai but the former and Deuba who were responsible, with both of them applying disciplinary measures against each other.

Post 1990, the NC appeared to be a party without clear vision, perspective, or programme. It has not been able to formulate policies for the

solution of the socio-economic problems the country has been facing after the introduction of democracy, like gender issues, minority problems, grievances of disadvantaged groups, poverty, unemployment, corruption, etc. Thus, it has become more a conservative force than an agent of change. One example is the adoption of the principles of privatisation and market economy, which Hacchethu sees as a result of international pressure dictated by donors' priorities.

On the first view, the CPN-UML with its self-identity as protector of the poor, minority groups, and backward communities may appear more people-oriented and progressive than the NC. But Hacchethu hints at the CPN-UML's ideological ambiguity and policy inconsistency, because of which the party suffers from "a lack of clear vision and perspective for the development of the people and the country."

Hacchethu's book provides a comparative overview of the parties' evolution, but its highest value lies in the evaluation of the period after 1990. The study contains an impressively detailed analysis of historical events, organizational structures, and ideological statements, as well as leadership behaviour and power struggle. Even the most critical readers will find few, if any, factual errors, which are in any case of no importance for the substance of the book. It must be emphasized that the book provides a neutral analytical picture of Nepal's leading political parties that is free of any personal attitudes. Finally, the numerous tables with their detailed comparative information are another highlight of the book. Hacchethu's book is a must for all who want to get an insight into the working and structure of Nepal's party political system.

Policy in High Places: Environment and development in the Himalayan region **edited by P.M. Blaikie & S. Z. Sadeque. Kathmandu, Nepal: ICIMOD (International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development), 2000. ISBN 92911523-3-1, 209 pp.**

Reviewed by Ulrike Müller-Böker

'Policy in High Places' is first of all a report of an ICIMOD project – without any doubts, a very ambitious one – intended as policy recommendation. If a reader of this publication expects a theory-guided contribution of the well-known author Piers M. Blaikie he/she may become disappointed.

The main goal of this ICIMOD project was 'the evaluation of the impact of land policy on land management by resource users and its subsequent effects on environmental outcomes and livelihoods' (p. 11). P.M. Blaikie and S. Z. Sadeque summarise the findings of seven studies carried out by ICIMOD teams in six countries (Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar, Nepal and Pakistan). Out of the wide range of areas dealing with land policy, the study addresses forest policy, national parks and wildlife, agriculture, property rights and national environmental policy. These sectoral aspects of land policies are summarised in chapters 4 to 7, referring to the investigated countries and case studies. Chapter 3 gives an overview of international and national frameworks for land policy.

Strategic and theoretical aspects of environmental policy are to be found in chapters written by the two editors - 1, 2 and 8. These chapters contain a great deal of information. The present debates on land policy-related issues are introduced in a condensed form and the mainstream approaches dismantled. (Scientists will note the absence of citations and the explicit use of analytical concepts, but perhaps this is not common for policy-makers, the target group of this report.) If one reads between the lines, one sees that it is Blaikie's Political Ecology approach that lies behind the statements. The Sustainable Livelihood and the Environmental Entitlements Approach have also influenced the way the study is written and the country studies were analysed.

More questions than answers are raised regarding on the interface between policies and land use. At the beginning stands the question: How – if at all – can land policy effects be proven? With a few evidence-based exceptions the authors realise the methodological difficulties of providing unambiguous, empirical proof of the effects on environmental outcomes, last but not least because it is impossible to disentangle from such policy effects the wider socio-economic change that operates in the same area.

Another statement, namely that policy is often a 'shadowy process', provokes the authors to a discussion of the so-called 'Rational Model of Policy-Making'. They sketch under this label what policy-makers claim to do: implement scientific expert knowledge, "usually wielded by a policy elite of scientists, a handful senior professionals from the departments of agriculture, forestry or wildlife, and international consultants" (p. 19). But policy – and here everybody who witnessed this contested field will agree with the authors - simply does not happen like this. The study therefore develops a new approach formed around three related ideas.

The first is to understand policy as an often messy and diffuse process one with frequent unintended outcomes, shaped by bureaucratic regimes and other political and commercial interests, but also by powerful environmental 'narratives'. (Here the authors identify a link to the post-modern criticism on the environmental crisis and land degradation scenarios.) Consequently the second idea is to introduce a stakeholder

analysis in order to identify who makes policy and how the political power of the stakeholders is distributed. Thirdly, a clear normative statement is made: the idea of access to resources is treated as a material necessity and as a right of the (140 million) resource users.

The idea that entitlements are a fundamental right is brought up again in the chapter 'strategic outputs'. "The principle of environmental entitlements to natural capital as an essential part of livelihood should be recognised officially" (p. 202); and more concretely – a "social audit" (and not only an environmental impact statement) that forces policy-makers to confront the implications for livelihoods should be introduced. I hope that the authors are aware that this congenial message is first of all an expert recommendation. How this could be translated into a policy process remains open, and it would be naive to believe that the 140 million resource users mentioned would be able to join forces, to become a powerful stakeholder group in the policy process.

Not only are the so-called resource users a very heterogeneous group, but so are the countries studied with their different political landscapes and land planning approaches, and diverse sub-national administrations, with a huge number of projects and programmes shaping land policy. The only common feature is that they are located in the Hindukush-Himalayan range.

This complexity becomes obvious while reading the results of the sectoral studies. The information collected about the different countries remains very general and the selection of examples seems to be quite arbitrary, the method for reducing complexity is often a sheer listing of facts. But time and again some interesting critical reflections come across. For example the chapter on national parks, biodiversity and wildlife starts off like a typical report on this topic (high landscape quality, high biodiversity, many species etc.), but in the second paragraph the biodiversity paradigm is critically discussed.

To appraise the whole book it is not an easy task. Certainly it is an untypical report and a courageous experiment to translate and transmit ongoing important scientific debates to policy-makers. At the same time it seems that it was necessary to reduce the complexity of very different contexts, especially with respect to strategic conclusions.

The authors have attempted to communicate the substance of academic debates to policy-makers, which is certainly a great challenge. Have they succeeded? Only policy makers can answer that question!

The Kings of Nepal & the Tharu of the Tarai (The Panjiar Collection of Fifty Royal Documents issued from 1726 to 1971) edited by **Gisèle Krauskopff and Pamela Deuel Meyer** (review and commentary by Tek Bahadur Shrestha, Gisèle Krauskopff, Kurt Meyer and Tej Panjiar). Second Volume of the three volume series *A Tharu Trilogy*. **Los Angeles: *rusca press* / Kirtipur: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, 2000. ISBN 0-9666742-3-5, facsimiles, 191 pp.**

Simultaneously published in Nepali entitled as: ***Nepālakā Rājāharū Tathā Tarāīkā Thārū*** **edited by Tek Bahadur Shrestha. Kirtipur: Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, 2058 BS (2000 AD), facsimiles, 210 pp.**

Reviewed by Nutandhar Sharma

This book which deals with the ethnohistory of the Tharu - one of the earliest indigenous peoples of the Nepal Tarai as declared by the Nepalese Government - is the result of team work by different Nepali and Euroamerican scholars. Tej Narayan Panjiar (Tharu chronicler), Tek Bahadur Shrestha (historian), Gisèle Krauskopff (anthropologist), Kurt Meyer (art-historian) and Pamela Deuel Meyer (journalist) have presented this book in two different languages: in English and Nepali. The content of the two parallel volumes, however, is not entirely identical as there are some slight editorial differences. For example, in the Nepali volume „the story of drinking partnership" from Tej Narayan Panjiar's chapter is omitted. In any case, it is laudable that the publication addresses a large audience inside and outside Nepal.

The book is divided into five main sections. Kurt W. Meyer writes in his introduction that the volume explores various aspects of the Tharu life and their history, such as the human conditions which shaped the Tharu, the harsh environment of the Tarai, the role of the monarchy, the social order and economy of the Tharu. The commentary by Gisèle Krauskopff, one of the most readable chapters of the book, is titled „From Jungle to Farms: A Look at Tharu History" and deals with the Tharu and their history by focusing on their role as pioneer cultivators of the Tarai, their status as sacred masters of the forests, and their relation to the Hindu Kings. The author associates the Tharu with Mithila or Tirhut as their major dwelling place citing Muslim scholar Alberuni's geographical presentation of India written in 1033 AD. In this regard, it is also tempting to associate the Tharu with „Stharu draṅga", the name of a Licchavi settlement in 7th century

Nepal. But this assumption is based only on the names' similarity. These chapters and the revealing new facts on the Tharu they contain make this book interesting reading.

The main subject of this book is „The Panjiar Collection", a set of royal documents which are reproduced in 51 coloured facsimiles. This collection consists of *lālamohara*s (orders issued by the Shah kings with a red seal), *syāhamohara*s (orders issued by the Sen and Shah kings with a black seal), *rukkā*s (orders form the court of the Shah kings) and a letter with the signs of the officeholders. Many of those documents are concerned with the appointments of the Tharu as tax collectors (*jimdāra*), village priests, elephant trainer and attorney general. Some of them deal with land grants of the Tarai and its cultivation. Some documents are about contracts for tax, timber logging and also timber grants. Others are concerned with settlement on barren land in the Tarai and the traditional rights and customs of the Tharu. And some are about the gift of an elephant and elephant management. In other words, the documents are important for the study of land tenure and taxation in the Nepal Tarai and the history of the Tharu. The documents presented cover the time between 1726 and 1971. Most of them were collected from Dang Deukhuri in the west to Chaudandi in the east of Nepal. Some of them were also collected from the Gorakhpur area of India. This rich material is presenting an exciting history of the Tharu from a new angle. As there is a debate among Nepali historians (started first by Svāmī Prapannācārya) on the claim that there are some fake Shah *lālamohara*s (royal documents), the idea of presenting the documents in the colour facsimiles has to be welcomed. The readers now can judge the authenticity of the documents by themselves.

At the time which is documented here, it was a problem for the kings in Nepal to cultivate the vast area of fertile land in the Tarai without getting support of the local Tharu people. The consequence was clear – the kings of Nepal had to negotiate with the Tharu chiefs. The collection indicates how such negotiations were done in the past. As Kurt W. Meyer writes: „Local Tharu leaders received ‚development grants' throughout the 18th and the first half of the 19th century. The grants of our documents were given to the Tharu because they were known to be excellent cultivators. To obtain these privileges to cultivate, the Tharu leaders had to stay in close contact with the court." Similarly, Krauskopff points out: „A headman could also decide to abandon the land, taking his village tenants with him, and letting the fields return to wilderness. They could leave because of crop failure, but also to escape any type of new levy or encroachment from the central Government." Thus the book presents some nice examples of power conflicts between the Tharu chiefs and the local administrators.

Over the centuries the Tharu of the Tarai developed a substantial resistance to malaria in this unique habitat where other people from the hilly areas were not able to settle permanently - until DDT against malaria

was introduced in the middle of 20ᵗʰ century. They had been living there like the kings of the jungle, taming big animals, such as elephants. Yet our studies in the field of Tharu ethnohistory are still in the beginnings. Therefore, this book shall be taken as a big step forward. It has now opened a broad horizon in the modern study of Tharu ethnohistory.

The reviewer, on this occasion, would like to draw attention to some of the references to the Tharu and their places as mentioned in the Nepali chronicles, which this book does not discuss. For example, the *Gopālarāja Vaṃśāvalī*, written in the 14ᵗʰ century, mentions the place name called „Tari" located between the Kathmandu Valley and Simaraungadha. This represents present-day „Mahottari" and „Saptari" of Nepal which have been the major settlements of the Tharu. The word „*mtha-ru*" mentioned by the Tibetan Taranatha in 1605 AD may be linked with „Mahottari". Similarly, another 19ᵗʰ century Nepali chronicle, the *Bhāṣā Vaṃśāvalī*, tells us a story about the Tharu of *Thārubaṭa* (Tirabhukti or *Tilvaṭ* or Tirhut or Mithila?) and their relation to the Newar Malla king, Mahindra Simha of Kathmandu in the first half of the 18ᵗʰ century. In this regard, the relation in the past between the Tharu and Newars appears to deserve further study.

As a matter of fact, the authors do not come up with one final view in their interpretation of Tharu history. This creates some confusion to the reader. For example: Tej Narayan Panjiar interprets the Tharu term „*bhatakhuāi māpha*" by „given a position within the royal family" whereas Tek Bahadur Shrestha and Gisèle Krauskopff translate it as „an exemption of the fee on the occasion of the *annaprasanna* (rice-feeding ceremony) of the crown prince or other member of the royal family". Similarly, the date given in the transliteration of the document no. 38 in the Nepali book as „*jeṭha vadi || 11 roja 5*" which is translated into English as „1ˢᵗ day of the dark fortnight of *Jestha*" should be translated as „11ᵗʰ day of the dark fortnight of Jeṣṭha". Furthermore, the word „*āśīṣa*" or „*āsiṣa*" from the documents is translated as „greetings" in English. I suggest that one should render this word simply by „blessing". The book published in Nepali has repetitions of the same footnotes – at the end of every page and at the end of every chapter. The book presented in English lacks a standardized transliteration of the texts of the documents. Expressing this kind of minor criticism is not to deny the scientific quality of the work as a whole.

In any case, the book shall be taken as an important contribution to the field of ethnohistory in Nepal. It is of great interest for scholars and students of Nepali history in general. The editors' work will be valued for their many new findings and, in particular, their new approach to the field of Tharu history.

***Fluid Boundaries: Forming and transforming identity in Nepal* by William F. Fisher. New York, Columbia: University Press, 2001. ISBN 0-231-11086-3 (cloth), 0-231-11087-1 (paper), illustr., tables, bibliogr., 256 pp.**

Reviewed by Sara Shneiderman

Thakali identity is like the Kali Gandaki river that flows through the putative Thakali homeland of Thaksatsae: made up of several ever-changing, interlinked strands of various breadth and strength, which appear differently depending on the season and the subjective perspective of the observer. William Fisher's long-awaited monograph both begins and ends with this metaphor, which provides the conceptual framework for his richly-textured discussions of the cultural, religious, economic, and political strands that come together in the historical process of Thakali identity formation. Even the book's structure itself echoes Fisher's metaphor of choice, with each of nine chapters forming a current in the narrative river, better approached as a multi-faceted set of essays which complement and in some cases overlap (or even contradict each other), rather than a linear argument which builds to a unified crescendo. Each chapter engages in detail with a different aspect of Himalayan anthropology's history, taking an important step away from the single-village/single-culture approach to offer an incisive yet respectful critique of the sub-discipline's founding assumptions. As a whole, the book constitutes a valuable ethnographic contribution to the broader anthropological study of ethnicity, reaffirming Nepal's traditional image as a prime location for the study of such issues, but for new reasons.

Fisher's central propositions, as articulated in the introductory chapter, are that past scholarly approaches to the diverse array of peoples who call themselves 'Thakali' have overemphasized (1) the homogeneity of the group; (2) their economic success; and (3) their dramatic cultural metamorphosis. To counter these misrepresentations, he argues that the Thakali are actually a heterogeneous collection of people more divided than united by descent, residence and religion; belonging to several different class and social strata; and in touch with their past as much as they are transformed by the present. "My aim is to account for both change and continuity" (p. 7) Fisher writes, which he does by refocusing on ethnicity as process rather than product, or to put it more precisely, as a "social construction" forged by indigenous agents through historical processes. Fisher admits openly that this theoretical perspective was not always welcomed by his Thakali friends, and one of the most laudable aspects of the book is Fisher's honest

documentation of the tension between his own academic goals and his informants' political ones.

Chapter 2 provides an overview of the different types of boundaries which both Thakalis and scholars have used to define the group. Geographically, the Thakali are usually described as inhabitants of the Thak Khola region of Mustang District along the Kali Gandaki river, but Fisher shows that neither the borders of this region nor the Thakali association with it are clearcut. The Thakali have always been a mobile group, and even during the early 1950s-1960s period during which definitive studies were conducted by Tucci, Kawakita, Snellgrove, and Fürer-Haimendorf, there were substantial and economically important migrant populations in parts of Myagdi and Baglung districts, as well as in the Terai. The criteria for Thakali membership are equally blurry, as demonstrated by Fisher's review of clan histories and the tension between culture and descent in establishing group membership. Finally, the author challenges the Hindu/Buddhist dichotomy which underlies the generally accepted image of the Thakali as shrewd manipulators of their own religious identity by showing how religious reforms made in theory were not necessarily implemented in practice.

Fisher's pedigree as a Nepal specialist is most evident in Chapter 3, where he situates Thakali narratives about their own history within the larger historical process of Nepali state formation. Drawing upon Tibetan and Nepali language materials (both filtered through secondary English sources), he describes Thaksatsae as a "true border area" (p. 54) which shifted from an earlier northwards orientation to a more southern one as the Gurkha [sic] dynasty established hegemonic rule through tools such as tax collection and the Legal Code Muluki Ain. Early scholars added their own preconceptions to the ethnic categories codified therein, becoming "coartificers with the people themselves" (p. 76) in the production of ethnic identities.

In Chapter 4, entitled "Separation and Integration", Fisher himself dons a more traditional anthropological hat. He describes three different levels of "social integration"—local, regional, and national—as represented by the three meanings of *samāj*, a Nepali term typically translated as both "community" and "association", but which the author defines as, "a circle of social intercourse, social identity, life in association with others, or a body of individuals" (p.84). We are then treated to an extremely detailed description of the Thakali *ḍhikur*, or rotating credit fund, as evidence of the constant "tension between internal competition and community solidarity"(p. 77) with which Fisher characterizes Thakali life. One wonders why much of this important information about the *ḍhikur* is relegated to two awkwardly boxed sections. Chapter 5 returns to the fundamental question of religion as a marker of Thakali cultural identity. Concluding that the Thakali practice an "eclectic religious pluralism" (p. 110), dependent on individual location,

beliefs and social status, Fisher hints at a more complex analytical framework that goes beyond the outmoded "syncretism" concept, but does not develop this enticing idea further.

The author then charts the sometimes parallel, sometimes divergent "codification of culture" by the Thakali themselves and by scholars. Tracing the development of the national Thakali *samāj* from its inception in 1983 to its affiliation with the Janajati Mahasangh in 1990 and beyond, Chapter 6 provides a rare insight into the inner workings of early *janajāti* politics. Chapter 7 revisits many themes introduced earlier to critically engage with past scholarly approaches to the Thakali in particular, and ethnicity in general. Fisher's call to "distinguish between religious belief and religious practice" (p. 179) and to balance our observations of both continuity and change is well-heeded, but he appears rather too concerned with debunking Andrew Manzardo's instrumentalist theories of Thakali "image management" and "recurrent adaptation".

Each chapter begins with one or two provocative quotes from intellectual greats, often from beyond the anthropological sphere (such as Dostoyevsky, Derrida, Ortega y Gasset, Wittgenstein, and Cervantes). This device highlights the theoretical issues implicit in that chapter's discussion, while keeping the text accessible and free of dense argumentation. However, one gets the feeling that the author is holding back his theoretical best, and the final two chapters drop the pretence to pile on several welcome analytical insights for area studies and anthropology as a whole. Fisher demonstrates how a series of parallel dichotomies—most notably caste/tribe and Hindu/Buddhist—continue to colour contemporary scholarship, and suggests a move from "fixed boundaries" to "vulnerable frontiers" (p. 195) as a focus of analysis. Alluding to the book's title, Fisher explains that, "fluid boundaries emerge at the frontier of cultural nationalism, a frontier between mainstream and peripheral categorical units of the emerging imagined community"(p. 196), and asks scholars "to avoid making their conceptual boundaries more rigid than those of the people they study" (p. 195). Most importantly, the author seriously calls into question the "Sanskritization" model for cultural change in South Asia. For Fisher, a process-oriented approach that acknowledges Thakali hybridity challenges the "loose assumption of unilinear processes of cultural change" (p. 197) underlying assertions that Thakali history represents a textbook case of Sanskritization.

Despite his well-crafted critiques, Fisher respectfully acknowledges his own position within the lineages of Himalayan anthropology: "Building on the work of others, it has become increasingly possible to conduct ethnographic studies that foreground the ways in which individuals and groups have acted to forge their own histories and identities with the context set up by the processes of Nepali state formation" (p. 168). Leaving aside its somewhat uneven style, *Fluid Boundaries* itself contains several important

ethnographic and theoretical building blocks for future generations of Himalayan anthropologists.

Ancestral Voices: Oral ritual texts and their social contexts among the Mewahang Rai of east Nepal **by Martin Gaenszle,** (Performanzen: Interkulturelle Studien zu Ritual, Spiel und Theater, Band 4). **Münster: LIT Verlag, 2002. ISBN 3-8258-5891-x, 12 figures, 13 photographs, index, 338 pp.**

Reviewed by Mark Turin

This important contribution to Himalayan anthropology and linguistics commences with a personal tale: during his first visit to the Mewahang Rai area of Eastern Nepal, Gaenszle witnessed a festive autumn season ritual. The author was so moved by this "strange expression of a different dimension" (p. 2) that he devotes over 300 pages to describing, analysing and understanding these particular speech acts. *Ancestral voices*, in the author's own words, "explores the properties of the textual tradition as well as its role in Mewahang social life" (p. 2). In so doing, it embodies the best of European social science: applying rigorous analysis to a wealth of descriptive detail, and reaching careful but weighty conclusions.

Much of the material which informs the present study was collected in the village of Bala in Sankhuwa Sabha district, during the mid-1980s and early 1990s. In the course of his doctoral research on Mewahang Rai kinship and mythology along the western reaches of the Arun Valley, six days walk from the nearest road, the author was exposed to the "rich and living ritual tradition" (p. 21) of the *muddum* which he encountered almost daily. The *muddum*, variously translated by Gaenszle as a "living, entirely oral 'tribal' tradition which forms the basis of Mewahang cultural identity" (p. 3) and as a "tradition of speaking, consisting of different kinds of speech events" (p. 4), is performed in a ritual language. Already struggling with colloquial Mewahang, Gaenszle found this important ritual language to be "totally different, archaic and largely untranslatable" (p. 21). It is a credit to Gaenszle's commitment to learning, analysing and finally disseminating these findings that this monograph should be published some fifteen years after the commencement of his initial research.

The book is divided into two parts. Part One offers a holistic analysis of Mewahang ritual texts by situating them within their social context. The author rightly considers the ritual speech tradition he describes as "a linguistic resource which can be studied as a complex social institution" (p. 20). All too often, descriptive linguists are so wary of accusations of extreme Sapir-Whorfism that they jettison social analysis and eschew engagement with the spoken linguistic narrative. Instead, Gaenszle focuses directly on the oral ritual texts by placing them in their ethnographic context. Part Two of the book is a detailed corpus of ritual texts together with interlinear translations and linguistic and interpretive commentaries, which while impossible to cover thoroughly in this short review article, provide the flesh and bones for the sophisticated analyses which Gaenszle deploys. The separation works well, allowing the texts in the documentary section to speak for themselves while similarly allowing the reader to engage with the "overall significance of the ritual speech tradition" without being submerged by the data (p. 20). The 200 pages of meticulous analysis which characterise the first section are similarly free of dense linguistic explication.

The author contends that among the Mewahang Rai, rituals are essentially speech acts, and these "speech acts do not differ in a fundamental way from those in ordinary life" (p. 2). The differences that do exist are marked by a ritual language distinct from the modern colloquial language. Distinguishing and defining the salient features of ritual speech and understanding their enduring power in Mewahang social life thus become the focus of the study. The strength of Gaenszle's approach lies in his ability to blend textual and contextual approaches. The nuanced analysis which results shows Mewahang ritual speech to be a resource for both constructing meanings and engaging in social action. Having situated himself within the wider academic discourses on ritual and performance, the author provides a lucid introductory overview to anthropological analyses of ritual and speech, subdividing his discussion with subtitles such as 'formality', 'poetics', 'performance' and 'competence and authority'. Gaenszle's cogent presentation of these academic debates will be of particular utility to students and scholars interested in textuality and the anthropology of performance. As Gaenszle rightly concludes in his introduction, "oral texts are no longer viewed exclusively as a symbolical expression of culture (or ideology), but are seen as embedded in social and ritual praxis" (p. 20).

The author is careful to pay homage to András Höfer and Nicholas Allen, both accomplished anthropologists of Nepal known for what Gaenszle terms their 'ethno-philological' approaches. While the homage is well-deserved, I would feel more comfortable with the label 'linguistic anthropology' or 'ethno-linguistics' to describe their work, since the character and aims of Allen and Höfer's writings directly address the issues driving these under-represented and often misunderstood subdisciplines. As befits a study of this nature, Gaenszle is transparent about his research methodology. When

discussing the dialogue between the ethnographer and his interlocutors, the author shows both sides to have their own perspectives and agendas, "sometimes approaching each other but nevertheless retaining their differences" (p. 22). There are tensions in such an approach, as Gaenszle notes: "the ethnographic representation of a lived reality...is an audacious - some say presumptuous – undertaking" (p. 20), and many Mewahang were initially suspicious of his motives, fearing that he was on an information-gathering mission for the Nepali state with the aim of increasing taxation.

The book comprises six engaging analytical chapters. In Chapter One, Gaenszle addresses the issue of indigenous exegesis and assesses "how the Mewahang view the significance of their oral tradition" (p. 25). Drawing on testimonies provided by local experts and village elders, Gaenszle offers an interpretive analysis by presenting the Mewahang conception of the *muddum,* supplemented with comparative data from neighbouring Kiranti groups. The recitation of the Mewahang *muddum*, we learn, restores social order and harmony by facilitating contact with the ancestral world. The link between the present and the ancestral past is mitigated by ritual language, which is the "proper register of speech for dealing with matters that concern the ancestors" (p. 56).

Chapter Two focuses on issues of transmission and knowledge, and Gaenszle discusses the various ritual experts who are responsible for disseminating *muddum* and outlines the ways in which they do so. What emerges is the importance of *sakhau*, translated as 'inherited priestly competence', through which the voices of the ancestors transmit themselves. The continuity of *sakhau* ensures that the tradition remains essentially the same across generations, "even though individual performers have their idiosyncratic styles and the texts are subject to considerable variation" (p. 84). Chapter Three, entitled *Genres of Dialogue,* is central to Gaenszle's hypothesis. In it, he offers a systematic description of the range of ritual texts discussed in the book and suggests that invocations, recitations and priestly chants may be classed along a "continuum of style", to borrow a term from Joel Kuipers. Pragmatic as well as formal factors are decisive in determining where speech acts lie in the heterogeneous continuum of ritual speech.

The fourth chapter, aptly entitled *Discursive Universe*, concentrates primarily on the content of the texts and imagery which they contain. Time and space are important leitmotifs, as are the manifold concepts of personhood. Gaenszle enriches his theoretical discussions with illuminating examples and vivid data, bringing alive the "major features of Mewahang cosmology as constituted in the ritual texts" (p. 26). Chapter Five is devoted to a focussed 'micro-analysis' of the poetic and rhetorical properties of the texts under discussion. The particular strength of this section is Gaenszle's concentration on the "linguistic strategies through which speakers relate to their addressees" (p. 26) which include the sophisticated manipulation of

figurative speech and syntactical structures by ritual performers. Issues of 'text' and 'context' are central to Gaenszle's argument, both of which can be "variously emphasized in the speech performance itself" (p. 17). Mewahang spoken texts are as much slotted into their contextual setting by specific performers as they are detached from the contingencies of the 'here and now' in specific performances, and it becomes clear that ritual speech is not a 'homogenous idiom' but is a 'continuum of style' which is characterised by its degree of 'indexicality' or "anchoring within the context" (p. 172). The author concludes that among the Mewahang, the power or authority of ritual speech is linked in part with its degree of 'entextualization' (p. 170) and suggests that words are more than "simply denotative devices, [they] have intrinsic value and substance" (p. 171).

As a writer, Gaenszle is considerate to his readers: in Chapter Six he synthesises his own ethnographic understanding in original ways and demonstrates his skill at re-interpreting and recasting his own analyses on the unique power of Mewahang ritual speech. At the end of his analysis, the ethnographer returns to a central paradox of his work: that his desire to 'scripturalize' and archive Mewahang oral traditions in no way guarantees their continuity and survival. Easy answers to difficult questions are assiduously avoided, and Gaenszle neatly demonstrates that just as there are "highly liturgical elements in oral traditions", so too are there "performer-centred rituals in literate traditions" (p. 199). In short then, *Ancestral voices* is an intricate, advanced work brimming with detail and insight, and is a substantial addition to the growing corpus of performance studies within Himalayan anthropology.

Information for authors

Proposals for articles should in the first instance be sent to the managing editor, William S. Sax. All articles submitted are subject to a process of peer review.

Please use author-year citations in parentheses within the text, footnotes where necessary, and include a full bibliography. This is often called the 'Harvard' format.

In the body of your text:

It has been conclusively demonstrated (Sakya 1987, Smith 1992) in spite of objections (Miller 1988: 132-9) that the ostrich is rare in Nepal.

In the bibliography:

Sakya, G.D. 1987. *Nepalese Ostriches: A trivial myth*. Kathmandu: Mani Pustak Bhandar.

Miller, M.L. 1988. A comprehensive rebuttal of G. Sakya. *Kailash* 6(2): 121-83.

Smith, B.C. 1992. Looking for ostriches. In *Research Methodologies for the Himalayas*, edited by J. Pande, pp. 110-145. Shimla: Mountain Publishers.

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