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***Other Worlds: Notions of self and emotion among the Lohorung Rai* by Charlotte E. Hardman. Oxford/New York: Berg, 2000. ISBN 1859731554 (pbk), ISBN 1859731503 (hbk), xix + 315 pp.**

Reviewed by Mark Turin, Ithaca

Other Worlds addresses the *Weltanschauung* of the Lohorung Rai, with specific emphasis on what it means to be a socialised person in their culture. The book follows in part Hardman's doctoral dissertation of 1990, itself based on fieldwork conducted between 1976 and 1980. The Lohorung, conventionally grouped under the Rai ethno-linguistic division of Himalayan peoples, number 3,000 and live slightly north-west of Khandbari in eastern Nepal.

Hardman draws on "ethno-psychological" notions, such as Lohorung concepts of self and articulations of emotions, to elucidate the values and codes of social behaviour she witnessed during her fieldwork. To contextualise this chosen frame of reference, the author explains how she turned to ethno-psychology much "the same way that some anthropologists have

looked to subsurface or deep structure as a form of explanation” and stresses that “what characterizes these psychological concepts has ramifications in all kinds of areas of life ... not just rituals” (p. 15). In a charming chapter entitled “Theories in my boots”, Hardman describes her arrival and immersion in Lohorung life and her concomitant emphasis on the participants’ point of view: “to accept on faith Lohorung descriptions and explanations of their own experiences and to accept that their meanings could not be grasped if I applied too many rationalist explanations” (p. 9).

Having established the theoretical and analytical framework for her study, Hardman embarks on a detailed exposition of the various ancestral influences that dominate and shape the daily lives and rituals of the Lohorung with whom she lived and worked. “There was no escaping the daily situations involving superhuman beings in Pangma”, she writes, “superhuman beings have emotions and needs which have to be met” (p. 42). In particular, we learn of the importance of *sammang*, ‘ancestor’, ‘spirits of powerful ancestors’ and the salience of *saya*, ‘internal link with the ancestors’, ‘vital principle’, ‘ancestor within’, for grasping “aspects of the alternative reality within which notions of ‘self’ and ‘emotion’ are embedded” (p. 43).

The author is at her best when illustrating how the communication between living Lohorung and their *sammang* ancestors is dominated by attempts to control these same relationships. Hardman conveys with considerable nuance the Lohorung understanding of illness, which, she argues, may be “understood better if we see them as the attachment to the body of ancestors’ desires and anger” (p. 48). While the ancestors “themselves don’t penetrate the body”, she continues, “their desires and emotions can” (p. 49). Unsurprisingly then, given that illness in Lohorung culture is as much about individual physical malaise as it is about the “unwanted anger and hunger, desires and feelings of ancestors and spirits,... those who know how to communicate with these supernatural beings” are key figures in Lohorung society. With careful reasoning and sophisticated examples, Hardman convincingly illustrates both that there is often no distinction between physiological and mental or emotional pain, and that “happiness and sociability are closely linked to health” (p. 55).

Hardman demonstrates an impressive linguistic aptitude for Lohorung, and translates indigenous words with care. George van Driem, a Dutch linguist who has published a study of the complex Lohorung verbal agreement system and is presently working on a grammar of the language, credits Hardman with having a “good working command of the language, which is amply manifest in her work” (2001: 691). The three appendices to the book all have interesting linguistic content: an overview of the language, kinship terminology and unglossed Lohorung texts. Given the author’s linguistic precision and accuracy, then, it is all the more regrettable that Berg publishers failed to employ a skilled copy editor and then farmed out the

layout of this important book to JS Typesetting in Wellingborough, Northamptonshire, who were clearly unfit for the task. The countless typographical and orthographical errors — including a widespread absence of spaces after commas and periods — significantly reduce the reader's pleasure.

In all, Charlotte Hardman succeeds in demonstrating how notions of self, person and emotion among the Lohorung, which have a physiological or biological basis, are also constructed by people's own personal and cultural understandings. As a reader and reviewer, though, I am left with an unanswered question. How much of what she describes is specific to the Lohorung community? In other words, where is the comparative data from neighbouring groups? It is entirely possible that complex understandings of illness and possession, as illustrated in this case by the Lohorung example, may be a general cultural feature of other Himalayan peoples.

The strength of an approach so focused on a particular topic — in this case Lohorung notions of self and emotion — may also be its undoing. On completing this 300-page book, the reader will have been led through many of the experiential aspects of Lohorung social life and also be well versed in how this experience is culturally constructed, but will know relatively little of the wider socio-economic aspects of Lohorung culture. What Hardman achieves in depth she sacrifices in breadth. The result is that much of the cultural glue which contributes to social life between households — land use, economic alliances, kinship — is not discussed in any detail. We must hope that Hardman will apply her analytical care and ethnographic precision to produce equally compelling narratives of other aspects of Lohorung society.

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