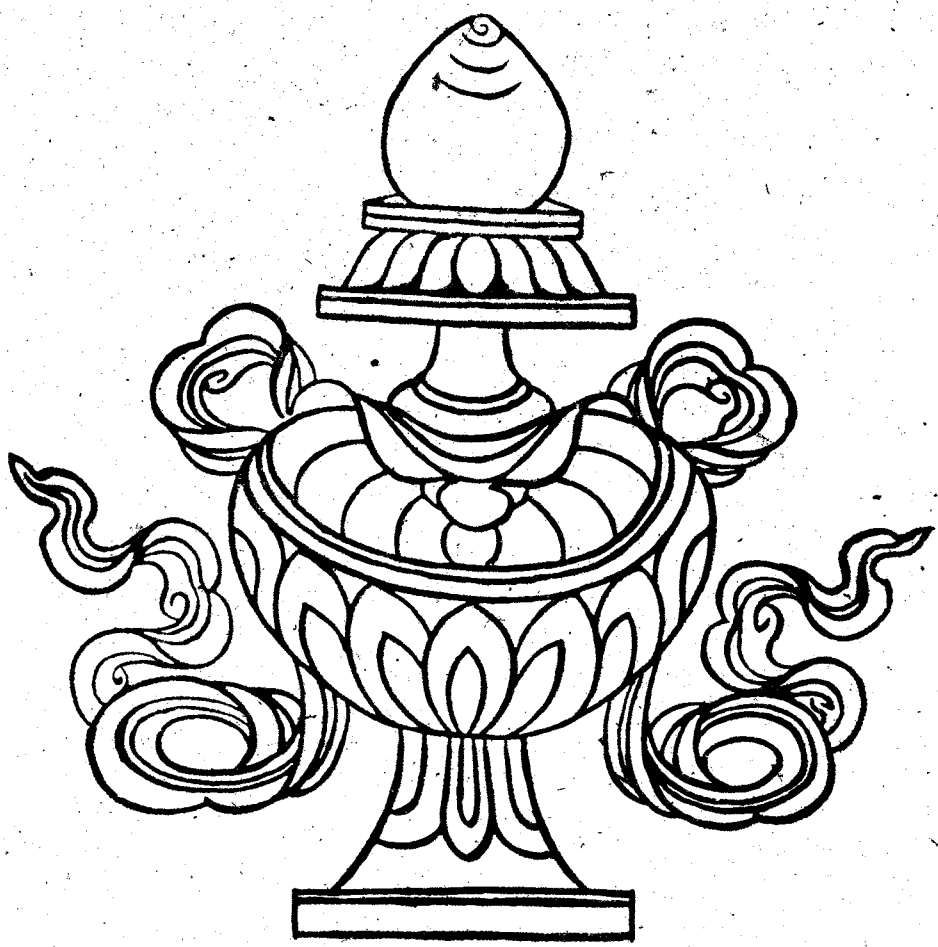
KAILASH

A JOURNAL OF HIMALAYAN STUDIES



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CONTENTS

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Editorial Note

The Editors of Kailash apologise for the long hiatus in the appearance of Kailash due to the lack of suitable materials and delays in the press. You will notice that this issue is Nos. 1 and 2 of Volume VIII, 1981. All subscribers who have a subscription for 1980 will receive Volume VIII.

LINGUISTIC ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE NEPAL VALLEY
A PRELIMINARY REPORT

Kamal P. Malla
Kathmandu, Nepal

1. Introduction

This paper attempts to present a preliminary analysis of the non-Sanskritic nominals attested in ancient Nepalese epigraphy. The corpus of the epigraphy consists of 190 inscriptions in Sanskrit inscribed on stone in Gupta script--a syllabic alphabet. Most of them are dated. The earlier set is dated in Śaka Era (founded in A.D. 78); the later, in Mānadeva Era (founded in A.D. 576). The chronological span of the epigraphy is between A.D. 464 - A.D. 877. Its provenance is mainly the Nepal Valley, inhabited until recently by the Tibeto-Burman speaking Newars. Although the language of the inscriptions is Sanskrit, some 246 non-Sanskrit nominals have so far been identified in their running text. Most of these are place-names, the names of rivers, canals, springs, and other water-sources. Some nominals are the names of tax offices, taxes in kind. There are also a few assorted names of objects and persons.

The aim of the paper is limited. It attempts to assign the non-Sanskritic nominals to the Tibeto-Burman sub-family of the Sino-Tibetan family of languages, mainly by tracing some of the roots to the Bodic division. The paper also attempts to show the relationship between these nominals and the modern Newari language. The second major aim of the paper is to explore the possibilities of using linguistics as an instrument of the prehistory of the Nepal Valley. The non-Sanskrit nominals are documented here as substantial evidence of the "Kirāta Period" in ancient Nepalese history, for which there is as yet no archaeological evidence other than the statement of the medieval chronicler.

In attempting the preliminary analysis of the data, we are conscious of the limitations set by the nature of the material. For one thing, there are variant readings by different authorities, particularly of the non-Sanskritic nominals. The non-Aryan words in Gupta syllabic script is evidently an unsatisfactory system of transcription. A number of inscriptions are in a state of preservation or readability which is not ideal. We have drawn all our data from Vajrācārya (1973). Although it is not a critical edition, the volume is considered the most authoritative edition of ancient Nepalese epigraphy.

2. Ancient History and Ethnography of the Nepal Valley: A Background Note

The early history of the Nepal Valley is obscure and legendary. The archaeological excavations at a couple of sites have not lent any evidence datable beyond the early centuries A.D. (Deo, 1968). The earliest inscription is dated A.D. 464. The ancient inscriptions of the valley were issued by the ruling house of the Licchavis--a clan of the north Indian origin whose antiquity dates back to the days of the Buddha. The advent of the Licchavis in the Nepal Valley is ascribed by the chronicler to conquest over the aboriginals of the valley--generically described in Sanskrit as *kirāta*. The *Gopālarājavaṃśāvali*, a chronicle in Sanskrit and Newari compiled in *ca.* A.D. 1387-1390, mentions two pastoral dynasties--the *Gopālas* (the cowherds) and the *Mahiṣapālas* (the buffalo-herds)--as the earliest settlers of the valley. The chronicle then lists 32 *kirāta* kings who ruled over the valley for a total period of 1903 years and 8 months. Then the Solar Licchavis arrived and overthrew the *kirātas* who ultimately retreated to the east of the valley. The chronicle specifically mentions that they now live in the river valleys of the Aruṇ and the Tāmākosi. Most scholars tend to identify the Kirātas of antiquity with the modern Rais and Limbūs who call themselves *kirātis* and their homeland in eastern Nepal, *Kirānt* (Levi, 1905; Chatterjee, 1950; Shafer, 1954).

The Licchavi inscriptions were official and religious documents issued by the ruling elites--the Licchavi kings, the Thakuri Varmaṇas and Ābhira Guptas as their vassals. These three clans shared political power among themselves for four centuries between A.D. 464-879. Apart from these three, there are epigraphic evidences of the other immigrant clans of Indian origins such as the Vṛjjis, the Mallas, the Śākyas, the Kolīs. They must have migrated in small numbers and made

the valley their home. But the epigraphy as such is silent as to the incidence of conquest or immigration of the Indo-Aryan speakers. However, on a closer look at the inscriptions, it is evident that there were *at least* two linguistically and ethnically distinct groups of people comprising the ancient inhabitants of the Nepal Valley. By far the most revealing facts of ancient epigraphy are:

a. Nearly 80% of the place-names are non-Sanskrit.
b. As toponyms and hydronyms, the few Sanskrit place-names are general in nature. A few are mere Sanskritization of non-Sanskrit names.
c. Except for five or six non-Sanskrit personal names, all the personal names traced in the epigraphy are Indic and Sanskrit. Some typical surnames are: *--gupta, --pāla, --jīva, --sena, --dutta, --mitra, --varma, --varmā, --vardhana, --varmaṇa,* and *--gomi.*

The striking contrast between the linguistic sources of the *place-names* and those of the *personal names* suggests two different ethnic/linguistic affinities of the elites and the the aborigines, one supplying the personal names and the other, the place-names. The people supplying the place-names, unlike the ones supplying the personal names, must have been living in the valley

a. for a long time, possibly a millennium earlier than the arrival of the Indo-Aryan speaking southern immigrants;
b. in large numbers, at least in greater numbers than the Licchavis, the Ābhira Guptas and the Thakuri Varmaṇas; and
c. all over the valley, rather than in small colonies of recent settlers.

The internal evidence of the epigraphy shows a social structure already permeated with caste ideology. The epigraphy attests, not only to the existence of the fourfold division of the society into the castes of brāhmaṇa, kṣatriya, vaiśya, and śūdra, but also to a more significant stratification into *aṣṭādasa-prakṛti*, i.e., eighteen *tribal* groups who lived on the fringe of the classical model of the caste system. The earlier pastoral settlements at higher altitudes on the rim of the valley were slowly being deserted in favour of permanent civic settlements based on agriculture, animal husbandry, metal crafts, and trade, including long-distance trade. The river basin of the Bāgmati and Viṣṇumati was sprawling with nuclear settlements feeding the focal urban habitations of Pātan, Devapātan, Kathmandu, and Bhaktapur. Among the other surrounding settlements were:

a. North: Tokhā, Dharmasthali, Dhāpāsi, Tuśal, Phutuṇ, Buṛānilkaṇtha
b. North-East: Chāṅgu, Sānkhu, Gokarṇa, Bode
c. South-East: Thimi, Nālā, Sāṅgā, Banepā
d. West: Thānkot, Chowkitār, Mālātār, Kisipidi, Balambū, Satuṅgal, Phāsinkhel, Icaṅgu, Ādeswar
e. South: Lele, Chāpāgaon, Pharpiṅ, Buṅgamati, Sanāguthi, Tistuṅ, Chitlāṅ.

3. The Source Language of the Non-Sanskritic Nominals

Space does not permit listing *all* the 246 nominals here. For a preliminary inventory Malla (1973b) can be used. It is necessary to draw a basic distinction among these nominals between the non-Sanskrit nominals, i.e., the nominals which are *not* Sanskrit, but may be from Prakrit dialects, *and* the non-Sanskritic nominals, i.e., the nominals which are not Sanskirt in origin or descent. This paper is concerned with the non-Sanskritic nominals although some marginal comments are also made on the nominals (47 in all) which are not Sanskrit but may have been Prakrit. Hypothetically, the non-Sanskritic nominals in ancient Nepalese epigraphy can be assigned to the three pre-Aryan sources:

a. The Austroasiatic Languages/Dialects
b. The Dravidian Languages/Dialects
c. The Sino-Tibetan Languages/Dialects

Of the three, the Dravidian hypothesis is the least tenable one. So far no Dravidian language has been traced in the entire span of the Nepal Himalayas. Jhāṅgaḍ, a Dravidian language of the Northern Kurax Group, has been reported recently from Sunsari and Morang districts of the Nepal Terai. Our data seem to have no connection with the reported material. Among the Austroasiatic languages only two languages of the Muṇḍā group--Satār and Santhāli--are known to exist in Nepal. They too are reported from the southern edges of Jhāpā and Morang districts--geographically at some remove from the Nepal Valley. The nominals of non-Sanskritic origins traced in ancient Nepalese epigraphy cannot with any justification be assigned to the Austroasiatic sources. In the past, historians and anthropologists have postulated that the earliest stratum of human habitation in the Nepal Valley had come from the Austroasiatic sources. Among the first serious Nepalese scholars of the Newars, Regmi held the view that

> At the earliest time the Kathmandu Valley was the settlement of the people closely resembling the Austro-Asiatics, and those got mixed up with the Mongoloid immigrants from the south-east at the next stage... ... In its antiquity the Newar community was a mixture of three peoples (Austro-Asiatics mixed with Dravids and Mongoloids) before it came in contact with the Aryan settlers. The Austro-Asiatic elements in the Newars must be represented by the Jyapus who form the vast majority of the population in the valley. Their physiognomy is neither Mongoloid nor Aryan nor except in a few cases (do) they show an admixture.
>
> (Regmi, 1969: 15)

Gopal Singh Nepali also believed that some people allied to Austro-asians might be the autochthones of the valley, "who subsequently disappeared bequeathing their culture to other people who supplanted them" (Nepali, 1965: 32). Chatterjee too believed that

> In the Nepal Valley, in certain cases the Mongoloid dialects have apparently ousted Austric speeches; but the latter, while giving way, have managed in some matters to influence the former.
>
> (Chatterjee, 1950: 169)

However, Chatterjee did not elaborate how or where the Austric speeches "manage to influence" the Mongoloid dialects in the Nepal Valley. A more recent view on the Austric origins of the Newars is that of Nicolas J. Allen, a British anthropologist, who argues

> The Newar reliance on the digging stick recalls the paper by Furer-Haimendorf (1950) in which he proposes that in the late neolithic times there occured an extensive dispersal of Munda speakers from the region of Assam; with them they took a culture based on wet rice cultivation without plough or traction carried on from relatively large permanent villages with community houses... ... The Newar may in origin have belonged to this Munda migration... ... No other people seemed to have clung so exclusively as the Newar have to the digging stick.
>
> (Allen, 1969: 71-72)

The source language of the non-Sanskritic nominals has been a subject of speculation in the past. Ācaryā, the late Historian-Laureate of Nepal, assigned them to the dialect of the Nepāras--a people of the Austroasiatic origins--a hypothesis which he later on abandoned (Ācārya, 1953 and 1972). He speculated that the dialect was "pronominalized" in spite of the fact that there was no syntactic information available in the epigraphic data. Regmi assigned the nominals to the Newari language:

> The various names like dulung, khepung are pure Newari derivatives. The language of the inscriptions being Sanskrit, it may be inferred that Newari was then thrown into background as uptill now it is.
>
> (Regmi, 1960: 21)

Vajrācārya (1968: 8), while assigning the data to the Kirāta language family (i.e., Tibeto-Burman), is less committed:

> It is possible to assign the place-names in ancient Nepalese epigraphy to the Kirāta language family even on the basis of commonsense. Yet it is not possible to do so conclusively without analyzing the words on the basis of linguistic science.
>
> (My translation from Nepali)

Another Sanskritist is no more committed either:

> At the present state of our knowledge we can only say that these are local names, belonging to some unknown language. It may be early Newari, which otherwise is attested first in the 14th century. They may also belong to an older substratum which preceded the immigration of the Newars, the date of which is unknown. It is therefore too early to decide to which language these names belong. The syllabary structure of the many names of localities and persons mentioned in the Licchavi inscriptions does not conform with that of early Newari, but we do not know, of course, whether the structure of Newari had changed considerably or not between the 8th and the 14th centuries. For convenience sake the language of the names in the inscriptions will be called "Kirāti" here, without excluding the possibility that it represents an early form of Newari.
>
> (Witzel, 1980: 326)

We will attempt to analyze the morphological structure of the nominals later on in this paper since this appears to be the main consideration. However, at this point it must be stressed that the sooner we dismiss the Austroasiatic hypothesis the better. Few of the 246 non-Sanskrit nominals seem to have any verifiable formal similarity with a few well-documented Austroasiatic languages. The most sound argument for assigning the nominals to the Tibeto-Burman sources is that they make sense and that the data reveal *internal regularities* similar to Tibeto-Burman morphology and lexicon. Although a majority of the nominals can incontestably be traced back to a proto-form of the Newāri language, the data are much less homogeneous than one would have liked them to be. For one thing, the data come from an area in the culture zone already characterized by language-contact, racial interbreeding, social assimilation and cultural synthesis. It is, therefore, unrealistic to expect a set of data which are totally prestine and unaffected by contact situations. At any rate, we are

dealing with a very remote state or states of the language, separated from modern Newari by a gap of well over a millennium, with no connected data for the intervening period. When the earliest written Newari texts of some length begin to be available in the 14th century the language was already impregnated with the Indo-Aryan infiltration and heavy Sanskrit loans.

4. The Source of the Non-Sanskrit Nominals

Although the ruling elites promoted Sanskrit as the language of ritual, authority and epigraphy in the Nepal Valley, they themselves possibly spoke some dialects of Eastern Prākrit--presumably Māgadhi or Ardha Māgadhi as a colloquial language of everyday communication. This is evident from some 47 nominals, mostly place-names, attested in the Licchavi epigraphy. Although these words are *not* Sanskrit they betray formal characteristics (e.g., geminate and retroflex consonants) which are more akin to Prākrit dialects than to the Tibeto-Burman ones. Their presence in the epigraphy is significant. Their distribution in terms of time and space deserves a comment or two. These names are significantly concentrated in limited areas, and with a few exceptions they are, chronologically, much younger as cultural phenomena. The largest numbers have come from two inscriptions--one from Balambū dated A.D. 705 and another from Nāxāl Nārāyaṇchaur *ca.* mid-eighth century A.D. These two inscriptions contain 20 such place-names. the others are mostly isolated incidences in older settlements of Pātan, Sānkhū, Deopatān, Paśupati, and Kāthmandu (Lagan area). Eighteen place-names are sçattered among these five areas.

In the outlying areas the following settlements have each lent 1 such name: Bode, Nālā, Thimi, Chāpāgāon, Lele and Māligāon.

Given below is a list of these non-Sanskrit nominals:

1. uḍaṇehusa
2. utthima
3. upabhidhi
4. uparima
5. khātampalli
6. gaṇi
7. gamme
8. goṭana
9. jājje
10. daṭṭaṇadalpasa
11. dholavāsa
12. naḍapatā
13. nuppunna
14. pārigespullī
15. pālaṇa
16. puṃdaṭṭa
17. puṇḍi
18. puttī
19. punu
20. pondi
21. poulam
22. badra (ālī)
23. bilva
24. bemmā
25. bhukkuṇḍikā
26. bhumbhukkikā

27. bhoṭṭa
28. māśa
29. māśā
30. yavadu
31. reṭā
32. valasokṣi
33. vastum (?)
34. vāta
35. vilivikṣa
36. vaidya (?)
37. vaidyamadagudı
38. vottvorūṣo
39. vottrino
40. vodda
41. śaktavāṭa
42. sāṭammi
43. sālagambi
44. sistīkoṭṭà
45. svayapuropita
46. hasvīmavillī
47. helītila

5. The Morphology of the Non-Sanskritic Nominals: Some Notes

What is attempted here is a preliminary analysis of the structure of the non-Sanskritic nominals, mainly by identifying varifiable formal elements in the structure. It is hoped that, apart from appealing to the semantic criteria in the end, such an analysis can provide us with a safe clue to the nature of the data.

1. Stem +*-priṅ* suffix

cu-priṅ
yā-priṅ
kho-prṅ
mā-kho-prm
jol-priṅ
khūl-priṅ
kha-kam-priṅ
pu-ṭham-priṅ
tha-sam-prin
ka-dam-priṅ
mhu-priṅ
mhaṣ-priṅ
praṅ-priṅ

2. Stem + *-co* suffix

theñ-co
mi-di-co
kha-rhi-co
mo-gum-co
brem-gum-co
pa-hañ-co
lum-bañ-co
dhan-co
kha-re-val-gañ-co
(ardha) - co

3. Stem + *-khu* sūffix

teṅ-khū
japti-khū
hūḍi-khū
ca-lam-khū
pi-khū
lam-khū

4. Stem + *-gum* suffix

-- -gum
cho-gum
pā-gum
hārā-gum
ṇha-gum
daṇḍaṅ-gum

5. Stem +*-bū/brū* suffix

tham-bū
sa-lam-bū
nim-brū
pri-cchim-brū
pri-tum-bru
prom-jnam-bu
mit-tam-brū

6. Stem +*-ju* suffix

ta-lañ-ju
fa-lañ-ju
lul-ju

7. Stem +*-ko* suffix

a-śiṅ-ko
rip-śiṅ-ko
su-bram-ko
rhim-ko
koṅ-ko
miṅ-ko
saṅ-ko

8. Stem + *-dul* suffix

te-khum-dul
na-ti-dul
śā-tun-tī-dul
tham-bi-dul
me-kaṇ-ḍi-dul
bur-dum-bra-dul
sa-phan-dul
(sreṣṭhi) -ḍul

9 Stem + *-gval* suffix

te-gval
mā-gval
gī-gval
yū-gval
lin-gval
laṁ-ja-gval
mal-rha-gval
-- -gval

10. Stem + *-duṅ* suffix

kā-duṅ
gaṇi-duṅ
pha-va-duṅ
hus-prin-duṅ

11. Stem + *-diṅ* suffix

gam-pren-diṅ
joṁ-jon-diṅ

12. Stem + *-laṅ/lum/-lam* suffix

nā-laṅ
dum-laṅ
kaṅ-ku-laṅ
gāṅ-śu-laṅ
gol-lam
mā-kho-du-lam
lam-khu-lam

13. Stem + *-stuṅ* suffix

cu-stuṅ
te-stuṅ

14. Stem +*-tī* suffix

lem-ba-tī
śi-tā-tī
dhe-lan-tī
śā-tun-tī

15. Stem +*-bī* suffix

kom-pro-yam-bī
tham-bī
jam-yam-bī
dām-yam-bī

16. Stem + *-khā* suffix

ke-khā
śa-laṅ-khā
ta-ve-ce-khā
pra-yit-ti-khā
kaṅ-kā-vat-ti-khā

17. Stem + *-mhuṅ-m* suffix

hā-mhum
kū-mhum
bra-mhuṅ
śul-mhuṅ

18. Stem + *-maka/-laka* suffix

pā-gum-maka
gum-di-maka
ti-la-maka
kā-da-laka
pi-kaṅ-kū-laka
udal-ma-laka

19. Some other Nominals

e-taṅ
khṛ-puṅ
gi-nuṅ
gul-lam-taṅ
cu-hvaṅ
te-gvaṅ
du-praṅ
dum-praṅ
paṅ
proṅ-ni-praṅ
proṅ-pro-vāṅ
fe-raṅ
mā-thaṅ
mai-siṅ
mā-tiṅ
vil-hiṅ
saṅ-gā

20. Given below are some examples of prefixed elements:

i. Prefix *mā* + stem

mā-thaṅ
mā-naṅ
mā-gval
mā-kho-prm
mā-kho-dul

ii. Prefix *te* + stem

te-gvaṅ
te-gval
te-khum
te-pula

iii. Prefix *cu* + stem

cu-stuṅ
cu-priṅ
cu-hvaṅ

iv. Prefix *tham* + stem

tham-bi-dul
tham-sam-priṅ
tham-bū
tham-tum-ri

v. Prefix *du/dum* + stem

du-praṅ
dum-praṅ
dum-laṅ

vi. Prefix *proṅ* + stem

proṅ-jña-praṅ
proṅ-ni-praṅ
proṅ-jñam-bu
proṅ-pro-vāṅ

The above analysis reveals that the source language of these nominals has a morphology consisting of monosyllabic roots and affixes (prefixes and suffixes). According to Benedict (1972: 96), "The study of Tibeto-Burman morphology is in large measure simply the study of those prefixed and suffixed elements which can be shown to be of some antiquity". As for the grammar, Shafer writes:

> The "grammar" of a Sino-Tibetan language consists largely of certain words or syllables that are added to a noun or verb or pronoun... They are usually postposed... ... This word is always a monosyllable in the four main literary Sino-Tibetan languages and in many other, such as Lusei or Newari. So that Sino-Tibetan languages are generally described as monosyllabic... There are Sino-Tibetan languages... ... that have disyllabic and even trisyllabic words... This represents the primitive condition, the present monosyllabism being due to degeneration. The primitive polysyllabism was due to "prefixes" which were not actually prefixes.
>
> (Shafer, 1966: 11)

Polysyllabism can undoubtedly be deceptive in Tibeto-Burman languages. Take, for instance, two modern Newari place-names:

pākopukhuldyāṅ
netāpāco

The first place-name is merely a compound of *pā* (slope), *ko* (beneath), *pu-khul* (pond), *dyāṅ* (terrace); the second, of the following elements: *ne* (main, focal, central), *tā* (hillock), *pā* (slope), and *co* (peak). Among our data also there are striking polysyllabic nominals such as the following:

yabramkharo (place-name)
gecchimdhāka (court-bearer's name)
āṅglābakasapitā (name of an administrative unit)
kedumbāṭa (personal name)
gumpadbrim (place-name)

6. The Semantics of the Nominals

The nominals fall into specific lexical areas such as the following:

1. Toponyms	a. Names of hillocks	nominals with suffix-*co*
	b. Names of fields	nominals with suffix-*bū/brū*
	c. Names of forests	nominals with suffix-*gum*
	d. Names of slopes	nominals with suffix-*ko*
	e. Names of elevated lands	nominals with suffix-*duṅ/diṅ*
	f. Names of pathways	nominals with suffix-*khā*
	g. Place-names with house/houses as landmarks	nominals with suffix-*gval*
	h. Names of places in general	nominals with suffix-*priṅ*
2. Hydronyms	a. Names of canals/water sources	nominals with suffix-*dul*
	b. Names of rivers	nominals with suffix-*khū*
3. Tax Administration Terms	a. Tax Offices	
	b. Taxes in kind	
	c. Tax Officers	
4. Personal Names		
5. Grants		

a. Tax Offices

lingval
kūthera
māpcoka
sulī

b. Taxes in kind

kasaṣṭhi
cokhparā
bhoṭṭa
phalañju
daṅkhuṭṭarthā
sim

c. Tax Officers

tepula
tēstum
pīṭaljā
bramhuṅ
śulmhuṅ

4. Personal Names

kedumbāṭa
sindrira
gecchimdhāka
rogamācau
khaḍuka
vottrino

5. Grants

gīnuṅ
digvāra

6. Objects

kūmhum (ritual seed)
bhukkuṇḍikā (a species of fish)
yatisā (money)
hāmhum (ritual seed)
cho (wheat)
kica (worm)

Suffixes such as *-co, -bu, -gum, -ko, -bi, -duṅ, -khā, -khu,* or a number of roots such as *sim, cho, kica, hāmhum, lam, cu, tham, ko, ti, dum,* are authentically Tibeto-Burman. A number of these are still is use in Newari and cognate languages in the same sense.

7. Historical Evidence of the Evolution

There are historical evidences of the evolution of ancient non-Sanskrit place-names into modern Newari place-names which are still in use.

kho-priṅ	kho-pa
mhas-priṅ	mhya-pi
praṅ-priṅ	pham-pi
khai-naṣ-pu	khad-pu

Some of the other ancient place-names surviving in modern Newari are given below:

Ancient	Modern Newari
teṅkhu	tekhu
kicapriciṅ	kisipidi
būgāyūmi	buṅga
mākhopriṅ	khopa
khoprṅ	khopa
khṛpuṅ	khopa
sāṅgā	sāṅgā
nālaṅ	nālā
kurpāsi	khopāsi
lembatī	lele
gullamtam	guita
phutuṅ	phutuṅ
satvaumālambā	satuṅgal/balambu
testuṅ	tistuṅ
tuñcatcatu	capali
jamayambī	jamal/yam (bū)
theñco	theco
thambū	thainbū
tegval	tyagal
māthaṅ	makhan

The long gap of time and the lack of intermediate data between ancient place-names and modern Newari forms make significant generalizations on the *actual stages* of phonological or morphological changes

difficult. However, some trends are evident: the loss of consonants and syllabification are the outstanding landmarks. But whereas *-priṅ* in *kho-priṅ* has survived as *pa* in *kho-pa*, it has come down to us as *pi* in *mhas-priṅ* and *praṅ-priṅ*. The motivations for these changes appear to be different depending perhaps upon dialectal, regional, social-cultural, and language-contact factors. In any case, the contact with the Indo-Aryan speakers is historically evident. This must have been one of the major factors affecting the changes.

8. The Relationship of the Data with the Newari Language

In relating the data to the Newari language scholars have shown two responses: cautious and committed--both without going into the detailed analysis of the data in totality. If Vajrācārya and Witzel represent one end of the spectrum Regmi and Doherty (1978) represent another end. Witzel is willing to assign the data to "some unknown language", at most to "Kirāti language". He does not rule out the possibility that the data "represent an early form of Newari". For him the main problem in relating the data with the Newari language is that

> The syllabary structure of the many names of localities and persons mentioned in the Licchavi inscriptions does not confirm with that of early Newari.

How Witzel came to this conclusion is not particularly clear; but the earliest available written texts of some length in Newari can be consulted, and the syllabic structure of the native Newari stems can be compared with the syllabic structure of the non-Sanskritic nominals found in the Licchavi epigraphy for varifying Witzel's contention.

Many of the roots and suffixes that we have identified in the data are still in use in modern Newari, e.g., *co, ko, du, gal, gum, khu, thaṁ, khā, laṅ/laṁ, ti, bi, kica, siṁ, mi*, etc. These roots and affixes are still used in modern Newari in the same sense as they were in ancient epigraphy. All this is not to deny that the Newari language changed in the last two thousand years. Like any other natural language it must have changed a great deal, particularly because it was spoken in a most active contact zone. What is not yet clear to us is the exact nature of change or changes and their different phases and causes. On the basis of the available formal, lexical and diachronic evidence (such as the evolution of several ancient place-names in modern Newari), we can safely postulate that the source language of *most* of these nominals is proto-Newari.

9. Apropos of the "Origins" of the Newars

We do not know who the aboriginals of the Nepal Valley were, nor do we know anything about their ethnic or linguistic affinities. In the past, scholars have tended to believe that the Newars were the aborigines of the valley. For example, Furer-Haimendorf wrote:

> Immigrants from India as well as from Tibet have at times exerted a considerable influence on Newar culture, and some of them have ultimately been absorbed into Newar society, but there is every reason to believe that the bulk of Newar people has been settled in the Nepal Valley since prehistoric times.
>
> (Furer-Haimendorf, 1956: 15)

The people known today as Newars are a mixed racial stock, consisting of several layers of immigrants from the north as well as the south who arrived in the Nepal Valley at different times in the last two millennia and were ultimately absorbed into the matrix of the social structure and culture system that evolved in the valley. The modern Newars are related to one another, *not* by descent or race, but by a common culture and language; they are related to one another by the place and function they have in Newar social structure. Already by the end of the first millennium A.D., the ancient clans of the pastoral Nepalās (herdsmen), the Kirātas, the Vṛjjis, the Śākyas, the Kolis, the Mallas, the ruling families of the Licchavis, the Ābhira Guptas, and the Thakuri Varmaṇas--all were lost among the aboriginals of the valley in the making of the Newars.

When scholars debate "the origins" of the Newars, they are--apart from promoting seductive hypotheses--presumably, trying to isolate the *earliest stratum* in the ethnic composite called the Newars. Some day historians and ethnographers may come up with more convincing evidence in favour of the Austroasiatic, the Dravidian, or the Muṇḍa "substratum" in the language, race, culture or society of the Newars. But the non-Sanskritic nominals, particularly the places-names in Licchavi epigraphy, provide us with an irrefutable set of evidence for the Mongoloid ethnic and Tibeto-Burman linguistic affinities of the aborigines of the valley. They fully substantiate the statement of the medieval chronicler who assigns a long Kirāta rule over the valley before the arrival of the Solar Licchavis.

The deceptively Sanskrit-sounding place-name *Nepāla* (singular, the country; plural, the people Nepāla) is an important clue to

the origins of the Newars. The word *newāra* has evolved from *nepāla-nebāla-newāla-newāra*. But as we have tried to show in Malla (1980), the place-name *Nepāla*, like so many place-names in South Asia, is derived from the name of the people who inhabited it. The word *Nepāla* is *not* an Indo-Aryan word. The Licchavi epigraphy is replete with non-Sanskritic place-names. There are also some interesting examples of Sanskritization of non-Sanskritic place-names, such as Newari *yala-sim* becoming Sanskrit *yūpa-grāma*, Newari *nhwa-khu* becoming Sanskrit *Vāgvati*, Newari *caṅ-gum* becoming Sanskrit *dolā-śikhara* and so on. The nominal *Nepāla*, too, appears to be a Sanskritization of the Tibeto-Burman roots *ṅhet* (cattle) + *pā* (man), i.e., herdsman. In support of this hypothesis there is first the internal evidence of Licchivi epigraphy itself. As late as A.D. 512-607 there still was a distinct clan called the *Nepāla* who were addressed to in the epigraphy as *swasti naipalevyah*, i.e., greetings to the Nepālas. The members of this clan lived in the Tistung-Citlāng valley during the 6th-7th centuries A.D. Even now the small valley beyond the ridge of the Candrāgiri hill continues to be the settlement of cowherds and buffalo-herds. The other substantial evidence for this hypothesis comes from two medieval sources: 1. the Cambridge University Library *Amarakośa*, a Sanskrit-Newari lexicon dated A.D. 1386, defines the Sanskrit word *Ābhīrī* in Newari as, "the daughters and wives of the cowherds of the *Nepa* clan". (folio 58a). 2. *Gopālarāja-vaṃśāvalī*, the medieval chronicle compiled in ca. A.D. 1387-1390, also mentions *Nepa* as a primeval cowherd of the valley. (folio 17a). The word *Nepāla*, thus, appears to be a Sanskritization on the analogy of *Gopāla*, except that whereas *Gopāla* can be interpreted in terms of Sanskrit etymology, *Nepāla* cannot mean "cowherd" in Sanskrit. Although the Nepālas were known as Ābhīras to the Indo-Aryan speakers, they were a non-Aryan racial stock who slowly came under the fold of the Aryan culture, religion and social structure. The medieval chronicler mentions eight cowherd and three buffalo-herd kings before they were overrun by the Mongoloid Kirātas. The origins of the Newars appear to go back to this racial/linguistic encounter between the ancient pastoral Nepālas and the Tibeto-Burman speaking Mongoloid Kirātas. Although *originally* the word *Nepāla*<*Ṅhet-pā* signified a specific clan of herdsmen, in course of time all the people who came to live in the Nepal valley came to be known as *Newāra*<*Newāla*<*Nebāla*<*Nepāla*. In the long run all the inhabitants of the valley who spoke the Newari language came to be known as the Newars.

10. Conclusion

The main interest of the data we have analyzed lies in their historicity. The non-Sanskritic nominals are valuable materials for the reconstruction of the Tibeto-Burman sub-family, the comparative study of the Sino-Tibetan family of languages in which there are only five literary languages with written records of some age. Above all, the data are valuable for diachronic study of the Newari language. Finally, the data lend much needed support, particularly from the archaeological point of view, to the statement of the medieval chronicler who assigns a long Kirāta rule over the valley. At the same time, the nominals are an important index to the ethnography of the ancient valley, providing us with the most valuable clue to the origins of such a complex racial type as the Newars. Where archaeology has hitherto failed the historian, linguistics may serve him as an instrument of prehistory.

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TIBETAN g-YUNG-DRUNG BON MONSATERY AT DOLANJI

I. The Tibetan Bonpo Foundation

Before and in greater numbers after the Lhasa uprising on the 10th March 1959, large groups of Tibetans, men, women and children fled Tibet and came to India. With the help of the Indian Government and several international organizations, a number of refugee camps were established in different places along the Himalayan Range and as far south as the State of Karanataka. It is estimated that the present number of Tibetan refugees in India and Nepal is about one hundred thousand. Approximately one per cent of this total are the Tibetans who profess the Bon Religion and are known to other Tibetans as Bonpos.

Soon after the Tibetans came to India, a group of Bonpo Lamas *(bla-ma)*, monks and laymen gathered in Kulu-Manali where they were employed mainly as road workers. Due to climatic differences between India and Tibet, and the very little help they received from charitable organizations, their circumstances were very difficult. A fair number of them died including Sherab Lodro *(Shes-rab blo-gros* 1935-1963), the abbot of Menri *(sMan-ri)* the chief Bonpo monastery in Tibet. From the mid seventies a determined effort was made to establish a proper refugee settlement. The task of finding the land and funds was entrusted to Tendzin Namdak *(bsTan-'dzin rnam-dag)*, the chief tutor *(dPon-slob)* of Menri monastery. With help and sponsorship from the Catholic Relief Service, he found and bought a piece of land at Dolanji, near Solan in Himachal Pradesh. In 1967 the settlement was formally established and registered with the Indian Government under the name of the 'Tibetan Bonpo Foundation'. About seventy families transferred from Manali and each received a house and a small piece of land, the size of which depended on family size.

The Tibetan Bonpo Foundation from the time of its founding had its own constitution and a group of men elected to handle administration, the abbot of the monastery acting as president. Their main concerns are the distribution of land, housing, family problems, disputes between neighbours, helping the poor and sick, and the education of children. The new settlement at Dolanji has been named Thobgyel Sarpa *(Thob-rgyal gsar-pa)* after the village Thobgyel which was near the monastery of Menri in Tsang Province *(gTsang)*, Tibet. Most of the Tibetans in the settlement come from the area of Mount Kailash, Upper Tsang, Hor, Kongpo *(rKong-po)*, Dege *(sDe-dge)*, Amdo *(A-mdo)* and Gyarong *(rGya-rong)*.

After the death of Sherab Lodro of Menri, the abbot of Yungdrung Ling *(gYung-drung-gling)*, the second most important monastery in Tibet, became the spiritual head of the Bonpo community in India. He came to Dolanji with a group of monks to found a new monastic community. He built several small houses for the monks and a small chapel for religious observances. In 1969 he arranged a ceremony to elect the successor of the deceased abbot of Menri. The names of all the Bonpo geshes *(dGe-bshes)* were written on paper and placed in a vase. At the end of the ceremony which consisted mainly of prayers and invocations to the Bonpo deities, the vase was churned until one name fell out. The lot fell upon Sangye Tendzin *(Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin)* Jongdong *(lJong-ldong)*, born 1928, and at the time of his election working at the University of Oslo, Norway. Soon after his election he was installed as 33rd abbot of Menri and received the name Lungtog Tenpe Nyima *(Lung-rtogs bstan-pa'i nyi-ma)*. For one year, he and the abbot of Yungdrung Ling worked together.

Since the death of the abbot of Yungdrung Ling in 1969, Sangye Tendzin (who continues to use his former name) assumed the spiritual leadership of all the exiled Bonpos. As abbot of Menri monastery in Tibet, he is also spiritual head of the Bonpo monasteries in Tibet and Nepal. From the time he took charge of Dolanji monastic community, he erected more houses for monks, built a new library, the abbot's residence *(bla-brang)*, new premises for the monastery kitchen and organized the monks into a full scale religious community, based on the monastic rules *('dul-ba)* as outline in the Bonpo Canon and described in detail in the rules of Menri monastery. The main temple, the foundations of which

were laid in 1969 was completed in 1978 and named Pelshenton Menri Ling *(dPal gShen-ston sMan-ri-gling)*.

The whole monastic complex is embraced under the name of 'Bonpo Monastic Centre' and forms a part of the Tibetan Bonpo Foundation. The main purpose of the Monastic Centre is the pursual of a strict monastic life, education of monks, and performance of religious ceremonies. Additional activities include publishing Bonpo texts, painting thangkas *(thang-ka)*, running two medical dispensaries, one based on traditional Tibetan and one on modern Western medicines, cultivating their small piece of land, continuing the construction of accomodation and sending monks to help other Bonpo groups in India and Nepal with their spiritual needs. The Monastic Centre is maintained solely by voluntary donations and offerings received for the performance of religious ceremonies. The small profit from book publishing is used to publish the books required for teaching.

This monastic community, in fact the only Bonpo monastery in India, consists of three groups of men. The first group consists of twenty lamas and monks who came from Tibet. Their main activities are the religious ceremonies in the houses of laymen, private religious practices, and participation in all the rituals which take place in the monastery. Among this group are several monks who in their lifetime have followed the special methods of spiritual perfection according to the Dzogchen *(rDzogs-chen)* and Cho *(gCod)* traditions.

The second group consists of 35 young men who took their religious vows in this monastery. They are being educated in the Bonpo doctrines and trained to live according to Bonpo monastic rules. If they attend to all their duties, the monastery provides them with a mid-day meal, afternoon tea, and soup *(thug-pa)* in the evening. Clothes and morning tea they provide for themselves. The fundamental education lasts for eight years and concludes with the geshes *(dGe-bshes)* examinations. If successful they are awarded the geshes degree, approximate to a doctorate in religion in the western universities. They syllabus consists of dialectics *(mTshan-nyid)*, logic *(Tshad-ma)*, wisdom texts *(phar-phyin)*, basic and gradual stages of inner progress *(Sa-lam)*, philosophy of the Middle Path *(dBu-ma)*, cosmology and

metaphysics *(mDzod-phug)*, monastic discipline *('Dul-ba)*, *tantras (rGyud)*, Great Perfection *(rDzogs-chen)*, history *(Chos-'byung)*, poetry *(sDeb-sbyor)*, astrology *(rTsis)*, and Tibetan grammar.

In 1967 when the first monks came to Dolanji, the teaching was done by Pönlob Sangye Tendzin *(dPon-slob Sangs-rgyas bstan-'dzin)*, the former grand tutor of Menri, and his successor Pönlob Tendzin Namdak, the founder of the settlement. Due to various difficulties, especially the lack of basic books, the teaching was partial and consisted mainly of training the young monks in the practices of the Dzogchen traditions, especially the Zhangzhung Nyengyü *(Zhang-zhung sNyan-rgyud)*, which is considered of prime importance. One year later Pönlob Sangye Tendzin died and Pönlob Tendzing Namdak assumed full responsibilities for the education of the younger generation of monks. By 1978 a sufficient number of basic books was published and premises for use as a classroom were usuable. In that year the full training in all the Bon doctrines began. The first group of monks will finish the cycle of studies by 1986.

The third group of monastery residents consists of boys between seven and fourteen years old. They receive primary education at the Central Government School in the village near the monastery. As well as the normal school syllabus including Hindi and English language, they also study Tibetan grammar and history. Outside school hours they take part in all ceremonies in the temple, receive instructions in religion, Tibetan calligraphy, painting, and music for religious use such as learning to play cymbals, drums and shawms. During the long winter-vacations they receive instructions which serve as a general preparation for the studies pursued by the second group of monks.

They have a separate kitchen and take responsibility for collecting wood and preparing their own meals. All boys, whether orphaned or not are maintained by the monastery. The parants are not obliged to pay for their sons' subsistence but contributions are welcomed. When a boy joins the community he has his head shaved and receives a new name in a short ceremony called *Tshe-ring*, which is a ritual for his wellbeing. After this ceremony he wears monastic robes when he attends ceremonies,

and ordinary clothes for school and daily life outside the temple. This group is not bound by vows until the age of eighteen when they must either take religious vows or leave the monastery to continue life in the world. They are however free to take vows before eighteen if they personally wish.

II. A SHORT HISTORICAL OUTLINE OF BON RELIGION

THE ORIGIN OF BON

The Bonpos maintain that Bon originated in the land of Olmo Lungring *('Ol-mo lung-ring)*, a part of a larger country called Tazig *(rTag-gzigs)*. 'Ol symbolizes the unborn; Mo the undiminishing; Lung the prophetic words of Tonpa Shenrab *(sTon-pa gShen-rab)* the founder of Bon; and Ring his everlasting compassion. Olmo Lungring constitutes one third of the existing world and is situated to the west of Tibet. It is described as an eight petalled lotus under a sky which appears like an eight spoked wheel. In the centre rises Mount Yungdrung Gutseg *(gYung-drung dgu-brtsegs)*, 'Pyramid of Nine Svastikas'. The svastika is the symbol of permanence and indestructability. The nine svastikas piled up represent the Nine Ways of Bon. At the base of Mount Yungdrung spring four rivers, flowing towards the four cardinal directions. The mountain is surrounded by temples, cities and parks. To the south is the palace Barpo Sogye *(Bar-po so-brgyad)* where Tonpa Shenrab was born. To the west and north are the palaces in which lived the wives and children of Tonpa Shenrab. A temple named Shampo Lhatse *(Sham-po lha-rtse)* is to the east. The complex of palaces, rivers and parks with Mount Yungdrung in the centre constitutes the inner region *(Nang-gling)* of Olmo Lungring. The intermediate region *(Bar-gling)* consists of twelve cities, four of which are towards the cardinal directions. The third region includes the outer lands *(mTha'-gling)*. These three regions are encircled by an ocean and again by a range of snowy mountains. The access to Olmo Lungring is gained by the so called arrow way *(mDa'-lam)*. Before his visit to Tibet, Tonpa Shenrab shot an arrow thus creating a passage through the mountain range.

This very sophisticated description of Olmo Lungring has been tentatively related by some scholars to different geographical locations. Some see it as a description of Mount Kailash *(Mt Ti-se)* and

the four great rivers that spring from its base; China being the land to the east, India to the south, Orgyan to the west, and Khotan to the north. To other scholars the description seems to resemble the geography of the Middle East and Persia in the time of Cyrus the Great. To a believing Bonpo the question of the geographic identification of Olmo Lungring does not come so much to the foreground as does its symbology which is clearly made use of to indicate the supramandane origin of his religion. Symbolic descriptions which combine history, geography and mythology are well known phenomena in ancient scriptures. The description of the universe with Mount Meru supporting the sky and the Four Chief Continents to the four cardinal points and this earth as the southern continent *(Jaṃbudvīpa)* is another similar example.

THE FOUNDER AND HIS TEACHINGS

The founder of Bon religion is the Lord Shenrab Mibo *(gShen-rab mi-bo)*. In past ages there were three brothers, Dagpa *(Dag-pa)*, Salba *(gSal-ba)*, and Shepa *(Shes-pa)*, who studied the Bon doctrines in the heaven named Sridpa *(Srid-pa)* Yesang *(Ye-sangs)*, under the Bon sage Bumtri Loqi Chechan *('Bum-khri glog-gi-lce-can)*. When their studies were completed, they visited the God of Compassion, Shenlha Ökar *(gShen-lha 'od-dkar)* and asked him how they could help the living beings submerged in the misery and sorrow of suffering. He advised them to act as guides to mankind in three successive ages of the world. To follow his advice the eldest brother Dagpa completed his work in the past world-age. The second brother Salba took the name Shenrab and became the teacher and guide of the present world-age. The youngest brother Shepa will come to teach in the next world-age.

The Lord Shenrab was born in the Barpo Sogye Palace to the south of Mount Yungdrung. He was born a prince, married while young and had children. At the age of 31 he renounced the world and lived in austerity, teaching the doctrine. During his whole life his efforts to propagate the Bon religion were obstructed by the demon Khyabpa *(Khyab-pa)* Lagring *(Lag-ring)*. This demon fought to destroy or impede the work of Tonpa Shenrab until he was eventually converted and became his disciple. Once, pursuing the demon to regain his stolen horses, Tonpa Shenrab arrived in Tibet; it was his only visit to Tibet. There he imparted some instructions concerning the performance of rituals but, on the whole, found the land unprepared to receive fuller teachings.

Before leaving Tibet he prophesied that all his teachings would flourish in Tibet when the time was ripe. Tonpa Shenrab departed this life at the age of 82.

There are three written accounts of the life of Tonpa Shenrab. The earliest and shortest one is known as Dodu *(mDo-'dus)* - 'Epitome of Aphorisms'. The second which is in two volumes is called Zermik *(gZer-mig)* - 'Piercing Eye'. These two accounts date from the 10th and 11th centuries respectively. The third and largest is in twelve volumes known shortly as Zhiji *(gZhi-brjid)* - 'The Glorious'. It belongs to the category of scriptures known as 'spiritual transmission' *(bsNyan-rgyud)*. It is believed to have been dictated to Loden Nyingpo *(bLo-ldan snying-po)* who lived in the 14th century.

The doctrines which were taught by Lord Shenrab and recorded in these three accounts are divided into two systems. One classification is called Gozhi Dzönga *(sGo-bzhi mdzod-lnga)*, 'The Four Portals and the Treasury as Fifth'. These are:

1. Chabkar *(Chab-dkar)* - White Waters; it contains the esoteric or higher tantric practices.

2. Chabnag *(Chab-nag)* - Black Waters; it includes narratives and various rites, magic and ordinary, such as death, funeral, illness and ransom rituals.

3. Phanyul *('Phan-yul)* - The Land of Phan; it explains the monastic rules and gives exposition of philosophical concepts.

4. Ponse *(dPon-gsas)* - The Lordly Guide; it contains the Great Perfection practices *(rDzogs-chen)*.

5. Thothog *(mTho-thog)* - The Treasury; it comprises the essential aspects of all the Four Portals.

The second classification is called Thegpa Rimgu'i Bon *(Theg-pa rim-dgu'i Bon)*, 'The Bon of the Nine Successive Stages' or simply 'The Nine Ways of Bon'. The first four are the ways of cause *(rGyud kyi theg-pa)*, the next four are the ways of result *('Bras-bu'i theg-pa)*, and the ninth is the Great Perfection *(rDzogs-chen)*. Examined individually their subject matter is as follows:

1. The Way of the Shen of Prediction *(Phyva-gshen theg-pa)*; it

describes four different ways of prediction: sortilege *(mo)*, astrology *(rTsis)*, ritual *(gTo)* and examination of causes *(dPyad)*.

2. The Way of the Shen of the Visual World *(sNang-gshen theg-pa)*; it explains the origin and nature of gods and demons living in this world, the methods of exorcisms and ransoms of various kinds.

3. The Way of the Shen of Illusion *('Phrul-gshen theg-pa)*; it contains the rites for the disposing of adverse powers.

4. The Way of the Shen of Existence *(Srid-gshen theg-pa)*; it is concerned with the state after death *(Bar-do)* and methods of guiding living beings towards the final liberation or a better rebirth.

5. The Way of the Virtuous Followers *(dGe-bsnyen theg-pa)*; it guides those who follow the ten virtues and ten perfections.

6. The Way of the Monkhood *(Drang-srong theg-pa)*; here are described the rules of monastic discipline.

7. The Way of Pure Sound *(A-dkar theg-pa)*; it gives an exposition of higher tantric practices, the theory of realization through the mystic circle *(mandala)* and the rituals which form an integral part of these practices.

8. The Way of Primeval Shen *(Ye-gshen theg-pa)*; it stresses the need for a suitable master, place and occasion for tantric practices. Here the layout of the mystic circle is described in detail together with instructions for meditation on particular deities.

9. The Supreme Way *(bLa-med theg-pa)*; it is the highest attainment of the Great Perfection *(rDzogs-chen)*.

THE PROPAGATION OF BON IN ZHANG-ZHUNG AND TIBET

The first Bon scriptures were brought to Zhang-zhung by six disciples of Mucho Demdrug *(Mu-cho ldem-drug)*, the successor of Tonpa Shenrab. They were first translated into Zhang-zhung language and then

later into Tibetan. The works included in the Bonpo Canon as we know it now are written in Tibetan language but a number of them, especially the older ones, retain the titles and at times whole passages in Zhang-zhung language.

Until the seventh century Zhang-zhung existed as a separate state which comprised the land to the west of the Central Tibetan Provinces of U *(dBus)* and Tsang *(gTsang)* and generally known as Western Tibet. The historical evidence is incomplete but there are some reliable indications that it may have extended over the vast area from Gilgit in the west to the lake of Namtsho *(gNam-mtsho)* in the east, and from Khotan in the north to Mustang in the south. The capital of Zhang-zhung was a place called Khyunglung Ngulkhar *(Khyung-lung dngul-mkhar)* - 'The Silver Palace of the Garuḍa Valley' - the ruins of which are to be found in the upper Sutlej Valley to the south-west of Mount Kailash. The people of Zhang-zhung spoke a language which is classified among the Tibeto-Burmese group of Sino-Tibetan languages.

The country seems to have been ruled by a dynasty of kings which ended in the eighth century when the last king Ligmirya *(Lig-myi-rhya* or *Lig-mi-rgya)* was assassinated and Zhang-zhung became an integral part of Tibet. Since the annexation Zhang-zhung became gradually Tibetanized and its language, culture and many beliefs were integrated into the general frame of Tibetan culture. Through Zhang-zhung, which was geographically situated near the great cultural centres of Central Asia such as Gilgit and Khotan, many religious and philosophical concepts infiltrated Tibet.

With the increasing interest in Buddhist religion, the founding of Samye *(bSam-yas)* monastery in 779 A.D., and the establishment of Buddhism as the principal religion, the Bon religion was generally discouraged and serious attempts were made to eradicate it. However, the adherents of Bon among the nobility and especially among the common people, who for generations had followed the Bon beliefs, retained their religious convictions and Bon survived. During the seventh and eighth centuries which were particularly difficult times, many Bonpo priests fled Central Tibet, having first concealled their scriptures for fear of their destruction, and to preserve them for the future generations. Drenpa Namkha *(Dran-pa nam-mkha')*, one of the greatest Bonpo personalities of that time, embraced Buddhist religion out of fear of being killed and for the sake of preserving in secret the Bonpo teachings.

From the eighth to the eleventh centuries we know practically nothing of the developments among the Bonpos. The revival of Bon began with the discovery of a number of important texts by Shenchen Luga *(gShen-chen klu-dga'* 996-1035) in the year 1017 A.D. With him the Bon religion emerged as a fully systematized religious system. Shenchen Luga was born in the clan of Shen, which descended from Kongtsha Wangden *(Kong-tsha dbang-ldan)*, one of the sons of Tonpa Shenrab. The descendants of this important Bonpo family still live in Tibet.

Shenchen Luga had a large following. To three of his disciples he entrusted the task of continuing three different traditions. To the first one, Druchen Namkha Yungdrung *('Bru-chen nam-mkha' g-yung-drung)*, born in the clan of Dru which migrated to Tibet from Druzha *('Bru-zha* is the Tibetan name for Gilgit), he entrusted the studies of cosmology and metaphysics *(mDzod-phug* and *Gab-pa)*. Namkha Yungdrung's disciple founded the monastery of Yeru Bensakha *(gYas-ru dben-sa-kha)* in 1072. This monastery remained a great centre of learning until 1386 when it was badly damaged by floods and later on was abandoned. With the decline of Yeru Bensakha the Dru family continued to sponsor the Bon religion but it came to extinction in the 19th century when, for the second time, a reincarnation on the Panchen Lama was found in this family. (The first reincarnation was the second Panchen Lama (b. 1663) and the second the fifth Panchen Lama (b. 1854)).

The second disciple, Zhuye Legpo *(Zhu-yas legs-po)*, was assigned to maintain the Dzogchen teachings and practices. He found the monastery of Kyikhar Rizhing *(sKyid-mkhar ri-zhing)*. The descendants of the Zhu family now live in India.

The third disciple, Paton Palchog *(sPa-ston dpal-mchog)*, took responsibility for upholding the tantric teachings. The members of the Pa family moved from Tsang to Khams where they still live.

Meukhepa Palchen *(rMe'u-mkhas-pa dpal-chen* b. 1052) who came from the Meu clan founded the Zangri *(bZang-ri)* monastery which also became a centre for philosophical studies. Thus during the period from the eleventh to the fourteenth centuries the Bonpos had four important centres of studies, all of which were in Tsang Province.

At the beginning of the 15th century the religious studies were strengthened by the founding of Menri monastery in 1405 by the great

Bonpo teacher, Nyamed Sherab Gyaltshan *(mNyam-med shes-rab rgyal-mtshan* 1356-1415). Menri monastery and the two mentioned below remained the most important centres of studies until the Chinese take over of Tibet in 1959. The monastery of Yungdrung Ling was founded in 1834 and, soon afterwards, the monastery of Kharna *(mKhar-sna)*, both in the vicinity of Menri. With these monasteries as centres of study and religious inspiration, many monasteries were establish throughout the whole of Tibet (except the Central Province of U), especially in Khyungpo, Khams, Amdo, Gyarong and Hor. By the beginning of the twentieth century there were three hundred and thirty Bonpo monasteries in Tibet.

THE BONPO SCRIPTURES

The Bonpo scriptures are divided into two major groups, Kanjur *(bKa' - 'gyur)* - the 'Word of Shenrab', and Katen *(bKa' -rten)* or the works dependent on the Kanjur, jointly referred to as the Canon. The Kanjur consists of one hundred and thirteen volumes which are divided into four sections: *mDo*, volumes 1-46; *'Bum*, volumes 47-66; *rGyud*, volumes 67-107; and *mDzod*, volumes 108-113. The *mDo* or treatises comprise the texts which deal with monastic rules, cosmogony, biographical literature and prayers. *'Bum* means 100,000 and is an alternative name given to the texts normally known as *Phar-phyin* or Prajñāpāramitā, the 'Perfect Wisdom'. The *rGyud* volumes contain the tantric teachings. The *mDzod* or 'Treasure' texts comprise the Dzogchen expositions and practices.

The Katen consisting of 293 volumes contains commentaries on the Kanjur, rituals, works on art, logic, medicine, astrology, and poetry.

THE BONPO PANTHEON

The Bonpo pantheon contains a great number of deities. Their classification is rather complex and can be done in several different ways. Every ritual cycle has its own complete set of divinities, the method of their visualization and worship. In the Bonpo, tantras are explained in detail, different sets of divinities belonging to a particular tantric cycle. One classification divides the deities into three groups: tranquil *(zhi-ba)*, wrathful *(khro-bo)*, and fierce *(phur-pa)*. There is a group a deities of 'Light and Darkness' described in the Bonpo cosmogony.

The highest ranking deities are Kuntu Zangpo *(Kun-tu bzang-po)* who abides in the Perfect Sphere, Shenlha Ökar *(gShen-lha 'od-dkar)* of the Enjoyment Sphere, and the Lord Shenrab *(gShen-rab)* who is the teacher of the present world-age. The most important female deity is Satri Ersang *(Sa-trig er-sangs)*, the 'Mother of All Beings', who is also known as Chamma *(Byams-ma)*, the 'Loving Mother'. There is a set of one thousand Buddhas and of the Buddhas of the Three Times, past, present, and future. Then there are the guardian deities known as the Protectors of the Word *(bKa'-skyong)*. The most important of them are Machog Sridpe Gyalmo *(Ma-mchog srid-pa'i rgyal-mo)*, Midud Champa Trago *(Mi-bdud 'byams-pa khrag-mgo)*, and Tsangod Hurpa *(bTsan-rgod hur-pa)*. The most general division of all the deities is the one which distinguishes between the gods of the higher spheres *('Jid-rten las 'das-pa'i lha)*, and the demi-gods and minor deities who remain active in this world *('Jig-rten-pa'i lha)*. To the second group belongs a whole host of mountain gods, local gods *(Sa-bdag)*, evil demons *(gNyen)*, female demons *(Ma-mo)*, and many other spirits and sprites such as *'Dre, Sri, kLu* and the like.

THE RELIGIOUS VOWS

The Bonpos make a clear distinction between the highest realities of the Perfect Sphere and the phenomenal existence *(sNang-ba)* which is this world of imperfection and sorrow. The living beings who exist in this world can be born in one of the Six Realms into which the world is divided. The three higher realms are those of gods *(lha)*, men *(mi)*, and titans *(lha-ma-yin)*. The three lower realms of rebirth are the animals *(byol-song)*, tormented spirits *(yi-dags)*, and hell-beings *(dmyal-ba)*. All living beings born in this world are imperfect. The law of causation and the effects of imperfect deeds in previous existences bring them back to birth again and again. It is by good actions and a virtuous life that one achieves ever higher levels of spiritual perfection and once totally purified and thus freed from the laws which bind one to this imperfect world, one attains to the highest realities which are the spheres of all the Perfect Buddhas *(Sangs-rgyas)*. The methods of reaching this highest goal were taught by Tonpa Shenrab himself and by successive Bonpo sages.

The Bon religion encourages all men to live a life of virtue and to strive towards the highest spiritual perfection. The most noble way to practice religion is to embark on a life of monkhook. A layman can also strive for perfection, but it is the monastic life which offers

one the best chance of attaining the levels of spiritual perfection. Through the centuries, the monastic life has formed an essential part of the Bonpo religion.

There are four grades of religious vows, two lower and two higher. The two lower ones are called nyenne *(bsNyen-gnas)* and genyen *(dGe-bsnyen)*. They are normally taken by laymen who want to practice religion in a more perfect way. When taken by monks they are considered to form an initial stage of their religious life. These two kinds of vows can be taken for any period of time. The vows of nyenne are four in number and are called the root vows *(rTsa-ba'i sdom-pa)*. They are listed below as the first four of the monks' vows. The vows of genyen include the four root vows and one vow of one's own choice, for example, to abstain from alcohol.

The monastic initiation proper *(rab-byung)* begins by taking the vows of tsangtsug *(gTsang-gtsug)* consisting of twenty five vows. Before taking these vows, a person is examined before the monastic community by questioning. When found worthy his hair is cut and he receives monastic robes and different items which a monk should possess: begging bowl, mendicant's staff, needle box, rosary, vase, and shaving blade. Next he receives a new name. After that he takes the vows.

The first four vows are called the root vows. They are:

1. To abstain from taking life.
2. To abstain from taking what is not given.
3. To abstain from false speech.
4. To abstain from unlawful sexual behaviour.

The next six refer to the six unvirtuous ways of behaving *(mi-dge-ba-drug)* These vows are:

5. Avoidance of idle speech.
6. Avoidance of bad language.
7. Avoiding causing division among people.
8. Avoiding wicked thoughts about others.
9. Avoiding poisoning his mind by evil intentions.
10. Avoiding abandoning his religion.

The next four refer to diet. He promises:

11. Not to drink alcohol.

12. Not to eat meat.
13. Not to eat garlic.
14. Not to take food after midday.

The next six concern the manner of sitting and worldly possessions:

15. To avoid sitting on high seats.
16. To avoid using colourful seat coverings.
17. To avoid jewelled and decorated seats.
18. Not to accept gold or silver.
19. Not to use ornaments or perfumes.
20. Not to participate in worldly celebrations and festivals.

The last five are called the additional vows:

21. He will cut his hair and finger nails.
22. He will keep clean and wash regularly.
23. He will carry and use only the personal items of a monk.
24. He will wear only his monastic robes.
25. He will use his new name.

A fully ordained monk *(drang-srong)* takes 250 vows which are fundamentally a detailed elaboration of the tsangtsug vows. The nuns take 360 vows.

Along with the monastic life, there are special methods of practicing and pursuing the higher levels of spiritual perfections. Amongst the Bonpos the most highly esteemed practices are those of the Great Perfection *(rDzogs-chen)* traditions. There are three different methods of meditation called the Atri *(A-khrid)* system, the Nyengyu *(sNyan-rgyud)* (oral transmission), and the Dzogchen itself. Another system of meditation also in use is called Cho *(gCod)*, 'the destruction of ego'.

THE MOST IMPORTANT RELIGIOUS CEREMONIES DURING THE YEAR

Roman numerals refer to the Tibetan month and Arabic numerals to the days of the month. Since the calendar is lunar, it is difficult to give western equivalents. The problem involved is similar to that of calculating the date of Easter in the Christian calendar. The Tibetan New Year generally falls between mid February and March.

I. 4-5; *Me-tog mchod-pa (Klong-rgyas)* - a ritual consisting fundamentally of invocations to the 1,000 Buddhas. It is performed to commemorate the incarnation in this world of the Lord Tonpa Shenrab.
7-8; *Cho-ga bcu-gnyis* - twelve rituals belonging to the *sūtras (mDo)*.
10; *Gar-'cham dus-ston* - ritual masked dances.
14-16; *'Dul-chog dang Me-tog mchod-pa* - one of the 12 rituals performed on the 7th and the 8th, and invocations to the 1,000 Buddhas.
21-22; *Ma-rgyud tshogs-mchod* - the ritual of the highest tantric tradition and prayer to the 84 'Great Magicians' *(Grub-thob)*.
23-30; *sMra-seng bsnyen-sgrub* - a set of rituals in worship of *sMra-seng*, the 'Lion of Speech' (god of wisdom).

II. 15; *Me-tog mchod-pa* - invocations to 1,000 Buddhas.

III. 14-15; Invocations to 1,000 Buddhas.

IV. 14-15; Invocations to 1,000 Buddhas.

V. 14-16; m*Kha'-klong gsang-mdos dang rNam-rgyal stong-mchod* - prayers and symbolic offering of the world to the highest tantric deities.

VI. 5; *Tshe-dbang gzhung bzhi'i tshogs mchod* - four rituals of *Tshe-dbang Rig-'dzin*, a great Bonpo *siddha*. Performed in commemoration of the death of m*Nyam-med shes-rab rgyal-mtshan*.
14-15; *Zhi-khro'i tshogs-brgya* - rituals of the tranquil and wrathful deities.

VII. 14-15; *Me-tog mchod-pa* performed in commemoration of the death of the last Yungdrung Ling abbot, bs*Tan-pa'i rgyal-mtshan*.
28; m*Nyam-med bla-sgrub tshogs-mchod* - prayers to the Bonpo saints, especially the abbots of Menri.

VIII. 15; *Cho-ga Mu-cho ldem-drug phebs gsung-bstan dbu-zug* - the commemoration of Mucho Demdrug's arrival in Olmo Lungring.

IX. 30; *Me-tog mchod-pa* performed to commemorate the death of the Lord Shenrab.

X. 4; *Ma-rgyud tshogs-mchod* - a shorter version of the ritual of the highest tantric tradition (see I. 21-22), sung according to the g*Shen* tradition.

7-8; *Me-tog mchod-pa* performed in commemoration of the death of the founder and first abbot of Yungdrung Ling, *Zla-ba rgyal-mtshan.*

XI. 27-29; d*Gu-gtor chen-mo* - end of the year ritual of the cycle for averting evil before the new year begins.

THE PRESENT SITUATION

Menri, our mother monastery in Tibet, and most of the other monastic establishments, lie waste and ruined. This situation is a great sadness and a concern to us. We pray and take heart that Tibet will once again become a free and religious land.

When we look back on 21 years of life here in India, we see many reasons for gratitude to those who have helped and continue helping us in the survival of our traditions. In the beginning, our conditions were hard but with the gracious help of the Indian Government and several charitable organizations, we have establish our centre. The present situation is still difficult but our traditions have taken root and grow.

Our special words of gratitude are due first to the Government of India which granted us permission to reside in this country and for helping us in many ways. Many other organizations have also helped us, especially the Catholic Relief Service who gave money for building the houses for our people here in Dolanji. His Holiness the Dalai Lama and his government gave us much encouragement to continue our traditions and helped to finance the studies of our monks. For the first time in the history of Tibet, we have been recognized as a valid religion and our traditions are respected. Now-a-days, the abbot of the monastery is treated on equal terms with the heads of the four major Buddhist orders, and one layman represents the Bonpos at the Assembly of the Deputies of Tibet in Dharamsala which consists of 12 members.

In the early 60s the Rockefeller Foundation in New York sponsored a visit to Britain by three Bonpo monks. The visit was mainly organized and administered by Professor David L. Snellgrove, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Two of these three monks are Sangye Tendzin, the present abbot, and Tendzin Namdak, the chief tutor of this monastery. Per Kvaerne of Oslo University has always taken friendly interest in our Monastic Centre. Our gratitude goes to

all those mentioned above and to many other people who helped us in the past and continue to help, both in Europe and in Asia.

Bonpo Monastic Centre
in collaboration with *Tadeusz Skorupski*
Dolanji, November 1980

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THE WOMEN OF TEBAS
FEMININE PERSPECTIVES IN GURUNG CULTURE

Ernestine McHugh
San Diego

A Description of Tebas Village

Walking thirty miles up from Pokhara, one reaches Tebas. It is a cluster of houses clinging high on a mountainside. Looking out from Tebas, one sees the pattern of terraced fields running down to the river. The gorge is steep. Sometimes there is only the sharp drop of the land, and a chasm with water rushing below. A road of hard slate steps twists up the mountain. On either side and above the village there are woods. As one goes higher, these thicken and darken to become a rain forest that spreads over the top of the mountain on which Tebas rests.

Across the gorge is a mirror-like image. Chimroe, another village, lies at this same height as Tebas on a similar mountain. There are more terraces and trees, another winding road down from the village. The sun rises behind Tebas and sets behind Chimroe.

Living in Tebas one lives with the elements. When the winter days are short and cold, and the earth dry and fallow, work is light. A few winter crops, wheat and barley, are cared for. Wood is laid up for the summer months when work is heavier. Baskets are made; cloth is woven. Family, animals, and house are maintained.

Winter is the dry season. The landscape is brown, yellow, and pale green. The river is small and can be forded in many places. People work in their courtyards and absorb

the heat of the sun. Firewood is too precious to be burnt for warmth. If the cold is very bitter, older people will go to bed to stay warm. When the sun is out, the weather is mild. Tebas is sheltered from the cold winds that blow off the snowy Himalayas.

In the winter in Tebas one notices the shapes of the stones, the terraces, the mountain slopes. The land is bare, the sky expansive. The wet season brings dramatic change. Around April thunderstorms come down from the north. These are followed, in several weeks, by the heavy monsoon rains from the south. The days lengthen and a time of intense agricultural work ensues. Working in the fields one can see a great wall of water coming up the gorge as the rainstorm approaches. The rain is warm and falls heavily. Terraces fill with water. There is a mountainside on shimmering pools into which rice can be transplanted. The land is fecund, smelling of damp earth and rich foliage. The river is swollen. The sky is filled with billowing clouds. As the water abates and the land dries the rice ripens. Around September it turns golden and is cut.

In the summer, the village is nearly empty. First corn, then millet, then rice must be planted. These crops, especially the rice, demand a great deal of labor and must be planted quickly while the weather is right. After the crops are harvested, the village again becomes the focus of activity.

The village consists of about 80 houses. It is the home of around 500 people. Sixty houses, those of the Gurung, are clustered close together. Half a mile north of these are the smaller houses of the untouchable castes: Kamis (metal workers), Damais (tailors), and Sarkis (leather workers).

The people in the village are generally divided into two categories: the Gurung and the untouchables. The Gurung have Oriental features. Although most of the population is fluent in Nepali, they prefer to speak Gurung, their mother language, which is of Tibeto-Burmese origin. Once primarily a pastoral, herding group, they have become more dependent on farming as the growing population has caused the forest to diminish. Money and goods become available as young men also go into

British and Indian Gurkha regiments as mercenary soldiers.

Skilled craftsmen: metal workers, stone masons, carpenters, come mainly from the untouchable castes. Untouchables also hire out as laborers during the planting season and do sharecropping on the land of the Gurung who are away in the army. They are indispensable to the Gurung farmers, most of whom have a reciprocal relationship with one or more untouchables. In this relationship the Gurung can rely on the untouchable to make a special effort to be available to work for him, do a good job, and the untouchable can rely on the Gurung as a source of work, of old clothes, and of a loan or small gift of food when times get hard.

The untouchables are racially distinct. They have dark complexions and Aryan features. Untouchables are considered both by themselves and by the Gurungs to be impure. If they touch a dish, foodstuff, or the body of a Gurung, that too is rendered impure and must be sprinkled with consecrated water in order to restore it to its former state. Food would be discarded. Thus, the term untouchable.

For all the village, there is a sense of identity with the land and the people. Whether untouchable or Gurung, they are "our own village people." Within the area surrounding the village there is a sense of protection, both from strangers and spirits. The presence of a number of people increases the safety of the village. In the youth of this generation of parents, headless spirits with lamps on their shoulders would dance in the courtyards of houses, terrifying the inhabitants. Now they do not come. "Because there are more people there is not such need for fear."

Stronger that the bond of common space is that of the group, the identity as part of a people called Gurung. Common language, customs, rituals reinforce that. There is a very strong ethic of sharing. One should not eat alone. Even a very small bit of special food, fruit or sugar-cane will be broken up so that many people can have a taste. I knew a two year old who would occasionally refuse to eat unless two or three friends came over to her house and ate with her. If a mother has an abundance of breast milk she will give it to the

small children and babies of her friends. Wealth is also shared, though in small token gifts, outside the family. The parents of a soldier will be given large sums of money and gold when he returns on leave; his brothers, sisters, and some cousins might receive clothing and watches; friends and more distant relatives would be given a pack of expensive cigarettes or candies. Work is also shared. Groups of friends work together in the fields, planting for each of their families in turn. The distinctions between the property and tasks of the individual and those of the group are not emphasized.

Status within the Gurung community is dependent on wealth, intelligence and abilities, and the purity of one's lineage. Those whose families have met the criteria for high status for many generations, and who are able to maintain or increase this, have the strongest positions in the village. The epitome of this is the *jimwal mukiya*, or head man, around whose house political and ritual activity centers. He is rich, intelligent, and charismatic. His wealth gives him the outward signs of a powerful man--a fine house, good clothing, and servants. His intelligence enables him to make competent decisions concerning land disputes, use of forest resources, and other communal matters. His personal magnetism enables him to command the loyalty of the villagers. Thus, the head man of Tebas wields in full the traditional power of his office.

A woman's status is dependent on that of her husband or father, so the pursuit of prestige is largely an occupation of men. The rewards of a prestigious man are many. He is consulted on matters concerning the village as a whole: projects, disputes, etc. He is likely to be incorporated into the formal political structure. Prestige also lifts a man above petty gossip. He is not subject to reproach unless the matter is a major one. Prestige is a quality explicitly defined, and a man's status is not diminished by mere opinion. A man of position and his family are treated with deference and great hospitality outside the village.

This much sought-after and carefully guarded prestige brings obligation with it. The generous hospitality received when traveling must be returned in kind to important visitors who expect to stay at a prestigious house, usually that of the

head man. To build one's own status and maintain that of the family, a boy or girl must treat their friends to food and drink during outings or ritual occasions. Poor people and wandering beggars go to the most prestigious houses, and it is a loss, both of status and religious merit, to turn them away empty handed. To maintain status rituals, especially the expensive funeral rite, must be performed lavishly, with many priests and abundant food and drink for the guests. At Kalorat, during the Dasain festival, the head man's family must serve food and drink to villagers who sit all night in his courtyard, singing and dancing to ensure prosperity and their leader's long life. The responsibilities of those with status help distribute the wealth they have accumulated and provide some balance of power.

The responsibility of a high status family extends from the material into the moral domain. A person who violates the code of behavior in the village "throws his prestige away." He also damages that of his relatives, of anyone he is closely associated with. An older child who disobeys his father in public will slightly diminish that man's status and authority. Building and maintaining prestige is important, even for those with very little. Practically, socially, and emotionally prestige is valuable. Prestige determines one's place within the community, and probably, to a large extent, self-image. The need to keep up one's prestige requires adherence to the group's ethical standards and is the greatest enforcer of morality.

In childhood and as a young adult it is a person's family that determines his status. Throughout life family remains the most important factor affecting prestige. The family bond is strong and far-reaching, seldom mentioned but all pervasive. People are called and referred to by kingship terms. It also plays a large part in identity: in youth one is known as Mukta Bahadur's second daughter; as one grows older she will be known as Lalit Man's mother. The same follows for a man. First he is known as his father's son, then as his child's father.

The family lives in a rectangular house consisting of storeroom upstairs and living space downstairs. There is usually a small room at each end of the house where grass and wood are kept. The living space is one room with a pole in the

middle. On one side of this is the hearth, altar, and pantry. On the other side of the pole is an open space in front of double doors. A woman and her husband, their children, daughter-in-law and a small grandchild or two will live here. The son, his wife and baby (children sleep with a parent) will sleep in one of the small rooms. As the son's family grows he will build a house of his own adjacent to that of his parents. After marriage a man's primary responsibility shifts from his parents to his wife and child, though the parents will always be looked after.

Parents are paid great respect in the Gurung community. They provide the necessities of life, and people speak of being grateful for the care that enabled them to grow up. The parents' approval of the child is all-important. If it is intact the opinions of others are meaningless. It is said, "If a mother or father says bad things the child should cry, but other people's talk is nothing." A family lives and work closely, so keeping peace there is important. Expression of anger is disapproved of by Gurung; loss of dignity diminishes prestige. An angry attitude is particularly harmful to the group one lives most closely with: "You should make your heart light and calm with your family, not get angry." Children do disobey, but not overtly, and not in matters of importance. The parent will usually know about but seldom react to this. When the roles of loving attentive parent and respectful obedient child are adhered to, dignity is maintained and the family is peaceful.

The Gurung system as a whole can be seen as a mechanism to preserve balance and reduce conflict: the reciprocity with the untouchables; the complementary roles of man and woman, parent and child, the interconnection of power and obligation in prestige. The ordering of the Gurung community is toward harmony, "that things should be good."

Feminine Perspectives on Community and Religion

Women in Tebas have a thorough understanding of the intricacies of their community. The women are familiar with the institutions of the village, including those in which they

cannot participate. There is no political or ritual activity whose details are forbidden to be known by the opposite sex. The domains of men and women touch, though in many ways they are separate. This section will examine feminine views of their own world--attitudes towards family, neighbours, and outsiders, the family. We will also look at female opinion of the realm of religion.

The Gurung woman contributes to her community mainly through her family. The family is of paramount importance. Women in Tebas attribute their feelings for people to relationship rather than personality. Ama would say, "I love Kanchi because she is my daughter." Affection is expressed little by word or gesture, much by caretaking and fulfillment of familial obligation. Though Saili, Kanchi's sister, never made friendly overtures to me, Ama said, "Saili really loves you. She always asks if she should call you for tea or bring you more wood." These tasks were Saili's responsibility through her fictive kin tie as my younger sister. That she was eager to carry them out demonstrated affection. Direct expression of affection seldom occurs in Tebas, except toward babies.

As with approval, disapproval is not often openly expressed. Maintaining harmony between people and a calm demeanor is highly valued. If a child is playing in a dangerous area, he will usually be moved, not admonished. Any forbidden object will be taken away and put out of reach, but the child is not likely to be scolded. When behaving badly he will initially be told in a friendly manner something like, "There's no use pleading to go and get candy. If we walk to the shop now a dead man will leap out at us and go Arrh!" If a child persists in harassing his mother, she may lose her temper and slap him. A worse punishment is shutting a child in the dark with the command, "Die!" Some other member of the household will immediately fetch the child and comfort him. Children are most visibly affected by the last punishment. Older children, reaching adolescence, are seldom punished. By then they have learned what behavior is acceptable. They are too old to harass their mothers for special treats or attention.

Older children are punished for violating group norms. The punishment is quite direct--verbal or physical or both.

Saili was scolded and hit by her mother for spending five rupees in one day and refusing to say where.

> There was no reason for her to have spent that much, even during the *pai*. Maila has to treat other young men and girls to build up his prestige, but Saili is far from the age where she has to do that. When she is fifteen or sixteen if she spends twenty, twenty-five rupees in one day, treating people and building up her prestige, that's OK. I'll have to give her that money then. But the only reason to spend five in one day now is bad habits.

It is important for Ama to protect Saili's "habits." It is necessary that Saili be known as a young girl of good character so that she will secure a prestigious husband, and so that the reputation of the family will be maintained. Watching over the development of the children's characters is largely the task of the Gurung Mother.

As well as guarding the habits of the children, the Gurung woman protects the purity of the house. Ama explained the points which she saw as important to maintain. Untouchables could not come into the house or touch utensils used to carry water or prepare food. If an untouchable touched a Gurung or other pure caste the person who had been polluted had to have holy water sprinkled on him in order to restore his purity. This is also the procedure for restoring purity after a person has come in contact with birth or death. Water becomes a purifying agent after gold or a flower from the household altar has been dipped in it.

It is important to the Gurung that roles be kept intact. For this it is necessary that some separation be maintained: touchable from untouchable, the living--members of the social world, from birth and death--the unsocialized and unknown. When things that should be separate come in contact, pollution results and purity must be restored.

There are certain toboos within the household as well as outside of it. Elder brothers cannot touch or sit on the same mat with younger brothers' wives. They both would need to be sprinkled with holy water in order for their purity to be restored. The other household taboo has to do with *jhuto*. If any utensil has been eaten out of, the vessel and its contents

are rendered *jhuto*, impure. Washing the vessel restores its purity, but nothing can be done to redeem the food. Within the family *jhuto* food will be eaten by members of lower status. It is acceptable for them. A woman will eat her husband's unfinished food, a child his parent's or older sibling's food. As a child gets older he may refuse *jhuto* food or dishes, but a woman will always accept her husband's *jhuto*. This is her duty. Among the Gurung *jhuto* food will also be shared between friends of the same caste. Unless given by a friend or a family member of higher status, *jhuto* is considered disgusting. One village woman recounted with horror a story about a tourist man she had seen eating his wife's leftover food. "It was awful," she said. "I wanted to vomit."

Gurung women protect the taboos both in and out of the home. They teach their children what is proper and enforce the correct behavior. The women of Tebas live in an ordered world. Rules of behavior are explicit. One should act according to what is appropriate given his place in the group. Within the Gurung community, this is determined by one's age, status, and kinship ties. When it becomes convenient because of close association or affection to integrate an outsider into the Gurung community, one becomes *meetini* or *meet*, ritual sister or brother, to the outsider. Though the relationship is initiated by two individuals, both of their families will consider themselves related and call each other by kinship terms. This custom serves to establish intergroup bonds with neighboring castes like the *Thakali*. It creates a place for non-Gurungs within the order of the community. One's *meet*, like one's spouse, will usually come from a family of similar financial status and prestige.

Though fictive kin ties, like *meet*, are usually initiated by individuals, marriages are not. A boy's mother is usually the architect of the new relationship. Her son will contribute to the decision, but it is likely that his parents will present him with his choice of four or five eligible young women. The criteria for choosing a potential bride are very clear. Wealth and prestige are important considerations, but what is most important is that the family is one with whom your family has traditionally exchanged brides. A cross-cousin marriage would

insure this, since it is either the family that your mother came from or your father's sister was given to. According to Ama, "It is not good to give to someone new."

A traditional cross-cousin marriage protects the purity of the lineage and enhances the prestige of both families. The bride should be pretty, industrious and of good character. If she has wealth of her own or is particularly intelligent this will increase her status as long as she stays within the parameters of her role. A woman who defies the social norms diminishes her own prestige and that of the family. A marriage outside the boundaries of the group also lessens a family's status. Ama explained that,

> Any Gurung with a mother of different caste would probably have to marry into a family of lower status, financially or otherwise. It would be difficult for him to follow the normal procedure of marrying someone of the same status as his father.

She went on to talk about status and the position of her family:

> We used to be one of the richest families around, one of the few that had money. People would come and borrow from us. Now we have many children and are not so wealthy, but we are still among the most prestigious people. Oh, lesser people have become officers (in Gurkha regiments) and wealthier than we are. They like to pretend to be high and put us down, but they can't touch us. We have our prestige. (Because you and *jimwal* both come from pure families?) Yes. (How does prestige help you?) It is protection. No one can abuse us. They can say what
>
> they like, but regardless of that we are who we are. We are high and no one's opinion can change that.

Jimwal's position as head man of the village greatly enhances the family's prestige. He is also a district administrator. His power is sanctioned both by tradition and by the modern political system. Gurung women tend to see the national government as important but not very relevant to their lives. The king is respected though he is quite a distant figure. To them Nepal is Kathmandu. Tebas is their country, governed by local people. Although the men are more sophisticated and discuss both national and international politics, the women of Tebas do not view themselves in so large a context. Anything beyond the ridges of Tebas is "another country."

To Gurung women, the gods control the destiny of the people. There are three major deities with altars around the village-Khul, god of the ancestors; Bhoome, god of prosperity; and Chandi, the village goddess. Various holy beings of Buddhism and Hinduism are also worshipped. The village deities are said to be most important and most powerful. Although they recognize differences in the religious systems of Buddhism and Hinduism, the Gurung consider the Gods that are worshipped to be the same deities called by different names. Thus, Amitabha is Brahma; Padmasambhava is Shiva; the Maitreya Buddha is Vishnu. The people of Tebas do not think of any one religion as being exclusively correct. They include a variety of religious practices in the ritual cycle. After a birth both a lama, a Buddhist priest, and a Hindu brahmin will be summoned. The lama performs the purification rite and the brahmin casts the child's horoscope. If the baby falls ill, a shaman is likely to be called to exorcise evil spirits. Each type of priest is thought to excel at a particular function.

For Gurung women, religion is a great source of comfort in a precarious world. It is distressing to them that some of their sophisticated children who have been educated or lived abroad cease to believe. One woman said of her son,

"He doesn't say much against the religion because he knows how I feel, but he may not do any rituals when I die. They look at the god and they say, 'That's not a god; that's a rock'."

There are spirits as well as gods around Tebas. Most are malignant; some are friendly. More feared than the spirits are the witches. They have the power to cause sickness, madness and death. Ama explained about witches:

> Witches have wisdom in their stomachs and are able to make people sick if they see them. They look just like other people. If you're big and your *daman* is strong they can do nothing, but if you're a baby or an old woman they can make you sick. Are there witches in America?
>
> I don't know. I don't know much about those things. They look just like people but are they people?
>
> They look just like us. They are people like us, but they have a *mantra.* They can make people sick. They play with witch fire at night. We don't see them, but people know and tell us. There are lots around here.

According to the women of Tebas, witchcraft is the most common cause of sickness and death. Women frequently exchange stories about witching incidents. Nani, Bouju, and some friends spent one evening talking about witches around the fire. Bouju told about the recent death of a young woman in a neighboring village:

> In Rimo, the schoolmaster, his sister-in-law, and father-in-law were sleeping in the house. A ritual had just been done and there was meat hanging from the rack above the fire. From above the rack a big cat, with long teeth pointing up and down, jumped down. It bared its fangs and breathed fire at the master, who threw things at it. Then it ran across the room and fought with the sister-in-law, ate her, and she fell out of bed dead, (He bit her?) Nothing was on her body. He ate the inside of her. (Drank her blood?) Yes. Maybe. Then it was gone. (It ran out the door?) The doors and windows were closed, but it was gone. A soldier had just brought her a lot of nice cloth. She wouldn't give any to the witch so she killed her. (Why do they do that to people?) We don't know. (Is there a witch god?) That's what they say. They go up to wash their hair at midnight on Sunday. Young men have seen them.

When Bouju finished, her friend spoke:

> You know the chief shaman of Khor died. He was eaten by a witch. He did a ritual, ate the offerings, and had dinner. Then he got sick. He couldn't speak for two days and he died. The witch ate him. Later she sat and stroked his body. It was the woman who lives above his house by the water tap, the one with two small goiters. Don't tell anyone I told you.

The people of Tebas do not consider themselves helpless in the face of the witches. There are techniques through which a witch can be exposed. Bouju explained:

> A lama or shaman can make the witch possessing a person speak by putting a rice cooking pot in the fire until it glows, then putting it on the person's cheeks. (Doesn't it hurt the person?) No, it only hurts the witch. When they're made to speak the priest makes them say how many sons and daughters they have, what their names are, if their husband is alive. Then we know who they are. Some are made to speak right away and with some it's really hard. I heard one speak inside a sick person once and I was so scared I couldn't talk.

There are less drastic methods of curing bewitchment. A shaman may have his own *mantras* to break the witch's spell. A lama can make offerings to satisfy a witch's hunger. Though witches are feared and disliked, threat or

anger is seldom expressed to them personally. It is said to be dangerous to cross a witch. They are treated politely and avoided. There are no witchhunts in Tebas. Like disease, bad weather, ruined crops, witches are considered to be an unfortunate but inevitable part of life.

Women can acquire supernatural powers by becoming witches or nuns. Men can also become witches, but in Tebas most witches are women and all priests are men. Women, because of their impurity, rank quite low in the Buddhist hierarchy and are thought to have relatively little power or authority. It is possible that the same impurity that makes a woman a weak priestess renders her a powerful witch. It is a great departure from the normal order of the Gurung world for a woman to manipulate the supernatural. It is logical that mixing female impurity with the pure and properly masculine spiritual world would erode the order of things as they should be and result in the fruits of witch-craft--madness, sickness and death.

The feats of priests, like those of witches, are a frequent topic of conversation among Gurung women. There are four classes of priests used by the Gurungs. Hindu brahmins are called to the village for divination or rituals designed to bring good luck and prosperity to a household. *Dammis*, untouchable shamans, are most often called for the exorcism of evil spirits and witches. They are thought to have a powerful connection with the local Gods. *Jakeris*, Gurung shamans, come from outside the village to perform ceremonies. No Gurung shamans reside in Tebas. The priests traditionally used by the Tebas Gurung are the lamas. Gurung boys train from childhood in order to become lamas. They usually study with their own fathers, then spend two to five months in a Tibetan or Thakali monastery to the north. The Thakali, like the Tibetans, are a more literate group of lamas. Gurung lamas, though they read and write the Tibetan script, do not understand the language. Their religion is much influenced by the pre-Buddhist tradition. The Thakali lamas consider Gurung Buddhism unorthodox.

In the winter Thakali lamas travel down from the north to escape the intense cold. They perform ceremonies in the houses of their kinsmen and in Gurung villages. Though they

admire the training and accomplishments of the Thakali lamas, Gurung women consider them to be improper. Phupul, Jimwal's sister, explained:

"The wandering lamas aren't so good. We say *namaste* (a greeting) to them and not much else. They aren't good. They like to talk a lot to young women, and they don't marry. They come to read and we don't look at them or say much to them."

Gurung lamas, on the other hand, are householders. They marry and serve the people of the villages in which they live. Chij lama, who works in Tebas, is the eleventh generation in the line of lamas to have served Chimroe and Tebas. He is married, has children, raises crops. The Thakali lama who comes to Tebas pointedly remarked that it is not right for Buddhist priests to drink, eat meat, marry, or plow the land. The women of Tebas, however, refer to the Thakali lama as one who "thinks he is big" and they appreciate Chij, their kinsman, as a good man and a good priest.

When praising the lamas, Gurung women describe their powers in curing and in dealing with death. It is the Tibetan and Thakali lamas who are renowned for these feats. Phupul is an old and very religious woman. She told some stories to illustrate the power of high lamas:

> There was a Tibetan lama staying in Khor, who after dying sat cross-legged for seven days. When he fell over they cremated him. He was a very high lama.
>
> Another lama cured Pani after she had been sick for seven years. When it came time for him to die, he knew. He put butter on his stomach and told people "When it melts I will die." He sat for five or six days, then it melted and he died.

These were both Thakali lamas. She went on to talk about another Thakali lama:

"Yegay is a high lama. He was higher before he got married, but he is still a high lama. He slept with a nun and she got pregnant, so they were married. His status went down after that."

Phupul admits that most Thakali lamas are respectable:

"All Thakali lamas aren't the same. Some have good hearts and some don't. We are all different and so are they. Gurung lamas are all different, too."

Ama does not distrust Thakali lamas like Phupul does. Her *meetini*, ritual sister, is a Thakali and has a nephew who is a high ranking Thakali lama. Ama told me about high lamas:

> A *koshyo* lama comes back to this world three years after his death. He can recognize his own books and things. If he marries he becomes like us, though; and doesn't know whether he'll come back or not. He can still practice and perform ceremonies, but he doesn't know about his next life. The others know they'll come back after three years as lamas.
>
> Nuns don't know whether they'll come back or not. They can read with lamas, but they can't do a death ceremony by themselves. They stay alone a lot, read the sacred books, and meditate. They don't get married.
>
> If a nun is lucky, she will be reborn as a lama, a male, and have a change to escape the vagaries of birth and death by becoming a *koshyo*. In a female body, one cannot be certain of subsequent births. She can only hope that if she lives well she will be reborn a man.

Gurung women speak well of Thakali nuns, but they themselves do not customarily give up the ordinary feminine roles of daughter, wife, mother, for a secluded religious life. Widows and spinsters often devote a large part of their time to religious practices, but they are not trained to read the sacred books or assist at ceremonies. Their practice usually consists of attending ceremonies, inviting lamas to perform rituals in their homes, and praying. Around the village these women are treated with respect. Devotion to religion is admired by both men and women.

It is expected that both men and women will follow their religious pursuits within the framework of ordinary village life. Unlike the Thakali, who withdraw from the activities of farm and family life to devote themselves to religion, Gurung are expected to integrate religion into everyday life. Religious withdrawal is mistrusted by the women of Tebas. Most admired are the lamas who are also husbands, fathers, and farmers. It is more appropriate for a devout young woman to fast for the well being of her husband, than to renounce the world for a religious life.

One way to look at the Gurung woman's inclusion of religion in ordinary life is as a lack of compartmentalization of experience. Religion is part of community life; one should participate in both. This holistic view can also be seen in the incorporation of varied religious traditions in the ritual cycle. Just as the Gurung woman does not see religion as exclusive of family or community life, she does not see belief in one religious system as inimical to belief in another. She will call a shaman, or a lama, or a brahmin at the appropriate time. Though the detail of the ritual may be different, what is worshipped is the same. It is important that the gods be honored in whatever ways can be found to please them. The well-being of the family and community, the state in which "all things are good," depends on the blessings of the gods. In a rugged environment where life is fragile all aspects of the supernatural are appealed to for sustenance and security.

The Life Cycle

The life of a Gurung woman can be compared to that of a tree. The tender plant grows into a sturdy sapling and blossoms. Then it bears fruit, becomes barren, and dies. The life cycle of the Gurung woman is similarly delineated. She passes from being a *butzi*, baby to *keti*, girl to *tarooni*, adolescent. She becomes a mother, *ama*, then an old woman or *buri*. Corresponding terms for a man are *butza*, *keta*, *tita*, *apa* and *bura*. Gurung men and women are not called by name but by kinship term. Even if there is no kin tie between two people, they are likely to have a classificatory relationship. Thus when two women meet and find they are of the same clan, they will call each other "sister" though they are not actually related. The use of kinship terminology extends into the third person. A woman will be referred to as "Kaji Man's first daughter" as a child, "Het Bahadur's wife" after she marries, and Raj Kumar's mother" after she has borne a child. The same pattern holds true for a man. One can see that these terms define certain stages of life. In this section we will explore the journey of the Gurung woman through the various stages of her life.

A Gurung baby is like a delicate shoot growing out of hard earth. The environment is harsh. Many infants and young children die in Tebas. Babies are coddled and fussed over. When the mother becomes bored with caring for her baby or is called away by other work, there is a legion of people to take over. Grandparents, aunts and uncles, young siblings and cousins are all eager to hold and care for the child. Little girls of the village may carry the child away to play with her and leave her at a neighbor's house. She will be watched and cuddled, and later returned home. Though not often displayed to other persons, affection is lavished on babies.

If a child survives babyhood, she is like a young tree that has taken root and is likely to grow to maturity. Children who live to age four or five usually go on to reach adulthood. About this time in a child's life sexual distinctions become apparent. Girls are not made so much of as boys. They are still given special tasty food, but are seldom dressed up or asked to show off. Now age-mate groups begin to form. Five or six little girls become companions to each other. They sing and dance, imitate their mothers' work, and play games together. They sometimes play with the little boys, but the groups are distinct.

Though adults are always near a group of children, little Gurung boys and girls do not spend much of their day with their parents. Most of their time is spent with their friends. Until adolescence they sleep with their parents or older siblings. After that boys often sleep alone, girls with a younger child. Near the age of eleven or twelve, the carefree childhood draws to a close and children begin to work. It is an easy transition since the child has been playing at these tasks since babyhood. Children work with their families or with the age-mates that they played with for so long.

By the time a child begins to work, she will be expected to follow the social rules of the community. She will not contradict or disobey her parents publicly; she will show respect for elders; she will become shy around members of the opposite sex. As a child enters adolescence, he or she becomes responsible for protecting the reputation of the family.

Unlike many other cultures, the Gurung do not perform an elaborate initiation rite at puberty. A boy's transition into adolescence goes unmarked by ceremony. His maleness has been established by his first hair-cutting, which usually takes place at age three. When a girl reaches puberty, her mother presents her with a *lungi*, a long skirt, to replace the short dresses she has worn as a child. The girl can now wear the *lungi*, but she might occasionally prefer to wear her short dress and that, too, is acceptable.

It is at adolescence that a young girl blossoms. This is considered to be the prime of her sexual attractiveness. With adolescence comes a period of flirtation between girls and boys. The same girls that have played together since babyhood participate as a group in this. Liasons are between groups of girls and boys from different villages. Although a girl is likely to have a special *tita* within a group of boys, public connection is between groups, not individuals. The girls and boys meet in each other's villages for *rodi-ghar*--evenings of eating, drinking, and singing to each other. They go to cut wood together and meet in the nearby bazaar. They exchange small gifts of combs, hats, and ribbons. The gift giving is strictly from group to group. Within the village, too, the young people flirt and tease each other. The girls and boys of Tebas form work groups in the planting season. They practice singing together and make up the *thetar* show of singing and dancing that is performed at death ceremonies.

Young men participate in these activities into their late twenties, even after they are married. For a young married woman, singing in public is forbidden. She may come to watch and listen at *thetar* or *rodi ghar*, but she is not allowed to participate. A girl's freedom is much curtailed by marriage. She must work harder. She is nc longer a part of the group of *taroonis* that she has been with since early childhood. It is best to marry out of one's own village, so that contact between the two families will remain special and ceremonious, and meetings will be accompanied by ritual gifts and generous hospitality. Girls usually greet their marriages with tears and protestations. "People cry at weddings. They all cry because the girl has to leave her home."

Marriages are arranged when a man's parents decide he is ready to marry. They will choose four or five suitable girls and ask him which he prefers. He is unlikely to know any of them personally, but may have seen or heard of them. He may have a choice of his own that he will suggest. When a girl is decided upon, the parents of the boy will go to her parents and propose the marriage, pointing out the advantages of the match and offering to give the bride so much gold. If the girl's parents agree an astrologer is consulted to set the date.

The girls is never consulted or even told about the arrangements. When the day for the marriage arrives the groom and a party of men from his village come to the girl's house. They tell her that she must come with them. She weeps and refuses, but her parents order her to go. She is carried away on a man's back, and the marriage ceremony is performed at the groom's house, amid feasting and animal sacrifice. The bride will stay three days, then be returned home. She will visit her husband's home periodically, for longer and longer visits, until she finally stays. She will continue to make occasional visits to her natal home. The marriage is usually not consummated until several months after the wedding, when some relationship exists between the bride and groom.

Most young women regard the traditional marriage process with fear and distaste. Kamala, a girl about seventeen years old, told me her feelings about marriage:

> Our marriage custom isn't good. We have to go without being asked, whether we like it or not, without even knowing. Sometimes a girl will be working and men will grab her and carry her away, or she'll be asleep and they'll say "Get up." "Why?" "To get married." If she hates him and doesn't want to go, and cries and cries, she still has to go. Sometimes she'll run away from that house and go off with another man, but he'll have to pay a fine to the first one, of 500 or 1000 rupees (12 rupees = one US dollar).
>
> Nowadays girls will run away with men they like. People say bad things about them and their parents get furious. (Can they come back to their natal house?) Maybe not at first, but after a while. After they have children, the parents forget about it. (Your cousin did that, didn't she?) Yes. She ran off with a soldier to Hong Kong. They ran straight out of the country. She hasn't come

back yet. (Where her parents angry?) Yes, they cried a lot. Maybe they wanted to give her to someone else. They didn't like that son-in-law.

It was *Tihar* (a festive holiday) and men were in the house playing cards late at night. She had her clothes all ready, and after milking the buffalo she said she didn't feel very well and lay down. A lot of people were in the house. Her mother and father went to sleep. The soldier was waiting outside. She snuck out and they ran off. Her brother went to Pokhara to look for them but they were gone. (He never asked for her?) No, they just ran off. I think it's not so bad now. They talk to his family. (Were they angry at that household?) No. They said their own daughter had wronged them; those people didn't do anything bad.

I want to run off with someone I like. I don't want to be given to anyone. (Will your mother be angry?) She'll be furious.

A year after this conversation, Kamala's marriage was arranged with the son of a well-to-do family in Rimo. Her aversion to arranged marriage was partly due to the unhappy marriage of her sister Indra Kumari. She explained the painful situation:

I was married when I was 19. I had never seen him before, nor had my mother. His parents are good to me and he is good to me, but he is twelve years older than I am and I don't like him. His house is in Daragoun (a full day's walk away). I don't like living in another country. I didn't want to go there. After the marriage I ran away but didn't know the road, so I got lost. I stayed in someone's house and cried all night. I had to sleep with him, though, and now I nave his son. What to do? I stay at home even though his parents send for me. He is away in the army. My mother and my aunt tell me I should go, that it's not proper not to live in that home. I don't want to go, so I stay at my family's house.

Some young people escape traditional marriages. Elopement is one method. If there is not a big difference in status between the boy and girl, the family won't interfere. If the bride is of higher status than the groom, however, the family will send a member to intercept the couple and bring the girl home before the ceremony takes places. Often the elopement will succeed and eventually both families accept the match. Another avenue open for a boy and girl who want a "love marriage" is to persuade their parents to arrange that marriage. If the boy and girl can be classified as cross-cousins and their

families are of similar wealth and prestige, the parents are not likely to stand in their way.

One such marriage in Tebas was that of Jimwal's nephew. He had met a girl while visiting in Khor and had fallen in love with her. He was in the British army Gurkha regiment, so was away much of the time, but they had corresponded and visited when he was on leave. After six years they were married. By this time, the young man had served two tours of duty in the army--three year periods with two month leaves in between--and on the third term he was allowed to bring his wife to Hong Kong with him. By waiting for the marriage until she could accompany him, she was spared a long period as a daughter-in-law in a strange village. Even if her new husband is away, a bride is expected to come live with and work for his family.

Many young women in Tebas are married to soldiers. Parvati's husband is a soldier in the British army, as was her father. She told me the story of her youth and marriage:

> My husband came to my house to ask for me with *Jetaju* (husband's elder brother) three years before we married. *Jetaju* was in Malay at the same time as my father was there. He used to give me candy often. I called him *Mama* (mother's brother), because in the army bases it's custom to call the women *chama* (mother's sister) and the men *mama*. So *Jetaju* told his younger brother he should marry me when he got back here. I was eleven then. They came to our house. I said, "The *Mama* who used to give me candy in Malay is here!" They sent me off to school and talked with my parents, grandparents and aunt. I was given to them, though we didn't marry until three years later. (How much older than you is he?) Four years.
>
> About a week later my little sister told me they had asked for me and I had been given to them. I cried and cried. I didn't understand what marriage meant and thought maybe I was to be a servant in their house. I wondered why they had asked for me and why my parents had given me away. My mother, aunt, sister-in-law, and my father told me I mustn't cry, that every woman who is born has to marry and leave her home. They said that Sister-in-law had had to; Mother had to and I was born, and see that Auntie doesn't get to live here at her childhood house. After they told me not to cry, I didn't in front of them, but I was still upset.
>
> When it came time for the marriage Auntie consulted a brahmin and he said the wedding shouldn't be done at

> the groom's house like it is traditionally--with musicians playing and a feast for the village. He said it should take place elsewhere, so we went to Kathmandu. My Auntie and all my friends, my *tarooni* group, went to Talaket and my baby's father and *Jetaju* met us there. My friends and I were all crying. Two of my friends and Auntie went with me to Kathmandu, four of us. I was married at Swayambhu temple there.

Parvati now lives with her father-in-law and children in Tebas. Her husband is now on his second tour of duty in Hong Kong. The next time he goes she and her two baby daughters will accompany him. She speaks about the trip with pleasure, looking forward to the freedom from agricultural work and the luxury of living in an apartment with a stove and running water. She said she has missed the comfort of the army base since she lived there as a child. Parvati plans to move to the town of Pokhara when her husband is discharged from the army. Though wealthy, prestigious and well-liked, Parvati is not satisfied with life in the village.

Saraswati, a neighbor of Parvati's, also misses the easy life she led abroad. Her husband is a soldier in India and she lived with him there for awhile. She lived in the town, unlike the wives of British soldiers in Hong Kong who stay in army apartment buildings with other Nepali women. The situation was both painful and rewarding for her.

> I have lived away from my village, like you. I went with my husband to India and when I was first there I was very sad. For the first year I cried all the time and missed my home. After awhile, though, I made friends, learned the language, and was much happier.
>
> When I was in India, water came into the house. There was a stove. I didn't have to work hard. My skin was smooth, though it darkened in the sun. The water didn't suit me so I got sick. I was in the hospital for a year and all my hair fell out.
>
> It's not good here--no roads or planes. You have to walk everywhere. There is no bazaar to look at, no cinema to go to. Life is hard here.

In spite of the hardness of her life, Saraswati intends to stay in Tebas.

Bouju, Jimwal's daughter-in-law could have gone to India with her husband but chose not to. Her brother is a lama, and

she comes from a traditional household. She is an exemplary daughter-in-law--hard working, obedient, and uncomplaining. She is quite religious, fasting each full moon and performing the household rituals. Bouju lives in keeping with the traditions. She does not crave the ease and excitement of modern life. She has never even been to the small bazaar near the village. When I asked her if she wanted to go, she replied, "Who do I know there?"

Bouju is living out the role played by her mother and grandmother. Atiya, the wife of Jimwal's older brother, told how it was when she came to her husband's household:

> This Grandfather Subidar (Jimwal's father) was very rich. He had coin money, not paper, and that was a time when not many people had money. He lent it out to other people here. They would come and ask for it.
>
> He had four sons and two died. This son (her husband) would have been Jimwal if he had been a hot smartie like his younger brother. But he is stupid and couldn't do it so it went to his brother.
>
> Grandfather Subidar and my father, who was a Major Subidar, were in the same platoon and were great friends. Grandfather Subidar asked for me, and my father gave me since they were good friends. My father had a stack of money and I came to a house with a stack of money. (I suppose there was a lot of land then, too.) There were loads of fields for us and there are loads of fields now. There used to be people at this house called *Kamari* who washed the dishes and everything but the government said we couldn't keep them anymore. Then everything you bought was really cheap, but now it's expensive.
>
> The old man never said a word to me about work. It was, "If you want to work, do; if you don't want to work, don't." I lived with them like their own daughter. It was very good.

After marriage, when a woman becomes part of a new family, the next step in her life cycle is having children The tree has grown strong and blossomed, and the time for it to bear fruit has come. Marriage affirms a boy's manhood. It is an important transition for a girl, but she is not considered to have truly reached womanhood until she bears a child. Then she will be acknowledged as a valuable member of the community. She will have fulfilled her proper role.

Though they are important milestones, pregnancy and childbearing are seen as frightening and dangerous by Gurung women. In spite of the pain and fear, a woman would rather have children than not. Children are prized in Tebas, and a childless woman is considered incomplete. A sterile woman is referred to with the derisive term *taray*.

Parvati was married when she was fifteen. She was twenty-one when I lived in Tebas and had two daughters, one six months and one two years old. She told of her feelings and experiences about childbearing:

> Pregnancy is very weakening. You have to wear two shawls on your head. If the slightest wind hits you, you get a terrible headache. You should wear very warm clothes. Also, when you are pregnant if anyone asks you for anything you have to give it, and everything has to be given with an open hand. The way you do this is the way the baby will come. There are lots of things to observe.
>
> Giving birth is very painful. Everyone cries a lot. Usually a woman is present, whoever you call. Men are embarrassed to be there, except maybe the father. Some husbands clean up the blood, wash the clothes, do the whole thing without anyone else. Others don't even come in the house. They only come to their wives at night, to sleep with them.
>
> With my oldest girl I felt the pain at about 3:00 p.m., called my uncle's mother, and my daughter was born at 5:00. My sisters were here the night the youngest came. I got up to urinate and when I came inside my stomach started hurting. It kept hurting and I called the same uncle's wife. A couple of hours later the youngest was born.
>
> Pregnancy is very scary. You know it will hurt and also if the placenta doesn't come out the woman will die, or if the baby doesn't come you both will die. I'm terrified of birth. I've carried two babies, both fearfully.

After the baby is born the blood and placenta are cleaned up and thrown away. This mustn't be discarded near land that has been plowed, and no furrows must be crossed on the way to discard it. A woman's neighbors or relations will see that this is taken care of. Anyone who touches the mother, baby, blood or placenta will need to undergo ritual purification because such contact results in pollution. This usually involves a bath or a sprinkling with holy water.

Birth pollution lasts for nine days. Then the mother and baby get out of bed and bathe. The mother will rest and eat rice with chicken curry for twenty days. Her sisters-in-law are required to give her chickens and her natal household might provide a goat if they can afford it.

The rearing of children is shared by the family and the community, though the parents have most of the responsibility of a child. Discipline for a young child is lax. The wants and whims of a boy, especially, are accommodated as far as possible.

Children are well cared for and in return they are expected to care for their parents as they grow older. When a woman's son marries, she gains a great deal of freedom since her daughter-in-law will do much of the household work. The young couple will live with the parents until their own family starts to grow.

When a woman grows old and her children all have their own households, she has less authority. Once her daughters-in-law have their own houses and families she has little power over them. Her children are still bound to care for her, though, and she commands much respect. She is like an old tree surrounded by the strong saplings that have grown up from her seeds.

After an old woman dies many people come to the death ceremony to honor her. All the people that a woman has commanded or cared for--her children and their spouses, members of her natal family, her husband--gather to send her off well. Her spirit will find its way to the land of the ancestors where it will be received by the community of Gurung dead. After this will begin another birth, another cycle of life in another form.

MAITHILI LANGUAGE AND LINGUISTICS: SOME BACKGROUND NOTES[1]

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I. The Language and the Area

Maithili is a New Indo-Aryan (NIA) language written in the Devanāgarī[2] script. It is spoken by a total of about 21 million people in the eastern and northern regions of the Bihar state of north India and the southeastern plains, known as the Tarai, of Nepal. In the past, Maithili was regarded either as a dialect of Bengali (Beames 1872-79/reprint 1966: 84-85),[3] or of Eastern Hindi (Hoernle 1880), or as one of the three dialects of a spurious language called 'Bihari' (Grierson 1883-87; 1885; 1903/ reprint 1968). Today, however, it is recognized as a distinct language and taught as such in the Indian universities of Calcutta, Bihar, Patna, Bhagalpur, Darbhanga and Benares, and the Tribhuvan University of Nepal. Demographically, Maithili is the second most widely spoken language of Nepal,[4] and, according to the International P.E.N. (Poets, Essayists and Novelists) and the *Sahitya Akademi* (National Academy of Letters), the 16th largest language of India. As early an investigator as Grierson (1883a: 1) recognized the

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[1]This paper forms part of the 'Introduction' to Yadav (1979c).

[2]In the past, Maithili was written in the Mithilāksar script, which is akin to the Bengali writing system. No definite date can be determined as to when Maithili began to be written in the Devanāgarī script.

[3]This is an extrapolation, based on the fact that Beames treats Vidyāpati (1360 - 1448) - the greatest Maithili poet - as a Bengali poet.

[4]The first language is Nepali-which is also the national language.

distinctiveness of Maithili: "... for though, doubtless, Hindī and the dialects herein treated of may ultimately be traced up to a common parentage, this point of departure is so extremely distant, and the stems of these languages have developed and branched off so luxuriously in different directions, that they have nothing in common, but their roots."

II. A Brief Sketch of Important Works on Maithili

References to Maithili (then spelt *Mithelee* or *Mythili)* as a language date back to as early as 1801.[5] However, serious interest in Maithili linguistics began in the early 1880's when Sir George Abraham Grierson and A.F. Rudolf Hoernle published a series of scholarly books and papers on Maithili. In 1880, Hoernle published a book entitled *A Comparative Grammar of the Gaudian Languages with Special Reference to Eastern Hindi,* in which he treated Maithili as a dialect of Eastern Hindi. Hoernle, however, did recognize the fact that Maithili exhibits more "unmistakable similarities" ('Introduction', 1880: viii) to Bengali and Nepali than to Hindi. He observed:

> ... Indeed I am doubtful, whether it is more correct to class the Maithili as a Bengali dialect rather than as an E(astern) H(indi) one. Thus in the formation of the past tense, Maithili agrees very closely with Bengali, while it differs widely from the E.H.

In 1881, Grierson published *An Introduction to the Maithili Language of North Bihar,* part I 'Grammar' (henceforth *Introduction).* The *Introduction* is the most complete synchronic description of Maithili to date. It is divided into four parts - part I deals with the alphabet and pronounciation; part II deals with nouns, adjectives and pronouns; part III discusses the verb in detail; and part IV discusses the 'indeclinables', i.e., adverbs, prepositions, and conjunctions. The description, however, is based heavily upon Maithili forms obtained from translations of Hindi and Sanskrit forms by "the Pundits, Village School Masters and educated Native Gentlemen of Northern Mithila..." (p.1). In 1882, Grierson published part II ('Chrestomathy and Vocabulary')

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[5] H.T. Colebrooke (1901), as quoted in J. Mishra (1949: 39-40).

of the *Introduction*. The 'Vocabulary' is perhaps the earliest word-list of the Maithili language and contains all the words occurring in the *Chrestomathy* of the greatest Maithili poet, Vidyapati (1360-1448), besides "a large number of words collected by me in the country and in Court, and not hitherto found in dictionaries" ('Prefatory Note': 125). The major contribution of Grierson, however, lies in the very extensive dialectal survey of what he called Bihari, published during 1883-87 as the *Seven Grammars of the Dialects and Subdialects of the Bihari Language* (Part I, 'Introductory'; part II 'Bhojpuri Dialect'; part III 'Magadhi Dialect'; part IV 'Maithili-Bhojpuri Dialect'; part V 'South Maithili Dialect'; part VI 'South Maithili-Magadhi Dialect'; part VII 'South Maithili-Bangali Dialect'; and part VIII ' Maithili-Bangali Dialect'). During this period, there appeared Hoernle and Grierson's *A Comparative Dictionary of the Bihari Language* (part I 1885; part II 1889; only two parts published). A consummate summary of all the major findings was later published as 'Indo-European Family Eastern Group: Bihari and Oriya Languages' in Grierson's (1903/ reprint 1968) *Linguistic Survey of India* 5:2.

What is curious is that in spite of Grierson's tireless efforts to establish Maithili as a language separate from Bengali and Hindi, Kellog (1893) continues to treat Maithili as a dialect of Hindi. The importance of Kellog's work lies in the copious illustrations from Maithili, coupled with insightful philological notes.

In 1958, S. Jha's *The Formation of the Maithili Language* appeared. It is the most exhaustive diachronic description of Maithili. In it, Jha has undertaken to trace the history of Maithili from the Old Indo-Aryan (OIA) period and has laboured assiduously to assign Sanskrit etymologies to practically all forms of Maithili (for a contrary view, emphasizing the Santhali, i.e. Munda, influences on Maithili, see De Vresse, 1962).

In recent years, a number of Sanskrit grammars, masquerading as Maithili grammars, have been published in north India. A two volume history of Maithili literature has also been published by Mishra (1949, 1969a). In Nepal, linguists from the Summer Institute of Linguistics have recently published two papers on Maithili syntax, both written in the tagmemic framework (Davis

1973; Williams 1973), and a word-list (Trail 1973). *A Paryayāvācī Śavdakoś* (Dictionary of Synonyms) of 14 languages of Nepal, including Maithili, has also been published by the Royal Nepal Academy (B.S. 2030/ 1973-74).

Little has been published on the phonetics and phonology of Maithili. The only works that I have personal knowledge of are: Jha (1941, 1958); Ingemann and Yadav (1978) and Yadav (1976, 1979a, b, c, 1980).

III. A Note on the Term 'Bihari'

Since it is customary among western linguists to refer to Maithili as 'Bihari', a few words on this term are in order. The earliest usage of the term 'Bihari' (literally, the language of Bihar) is found in Grierson (1882 a:2), wherein he offers the following reasons for adopting this name to designate three dialects - Bhojpuri, Maithili and Magadhi [Magahi]:

1. It is a local name, like the names of other languages, as Bangalī, Panjābī, & c.
2. The extension of the name to cover all the dialects of Eastern Hindūstān has a paralled in the case of Marāṭhī, which has been extended to cover the Dakhanī dialect of Berār, while it means literally only the dialect of the Marāṭhā country.
3. There is a historical propriety in the name, as the work Bihār is derived form the Buddhist *Viharas* or monasteries once so thickly spread over that region; and Bihārī in its most ancient form was the language of the early Jains and Buddhists.
4. Bihārī has a prescriptive right to the dignity of assuming a general character, for the only one of all the dialects of Eastern Hindustan which possesses any literature is Maithili, a dialect of north Bihar.

That the choice was unfortunate has been felt ever since. Most modern writers on Maithili (Mishra 1949: 55-57; 1969b: 270-71 and G. Jha 1974: 29-30) have resented it and have so indicated. What is most irksome is that Grierson would group Maithili and Bhojpuri together as dialects of a common Bihari while he himself

was so well aware of the two separate cultural and linguistic as well as literary traditions, and even said that Bhojpuri "belongs rather to the United Provinces than to Bihar, ... and all its associations and traditions point to the west and not to the east" (*Linguistic Survey of India* 5:2, 40). A similar view-point was expressed by Chatterji (1926: 99):

> The Bhōjupuriyā [i.e., Bhojpuri] territory has always been under the influence of the West, and Western forms of speech, like Braj-Bhākā and Awadhī, and literary Hindūstānī (Hindī and Urdū) in later times, have been cultivated by poets and others who spoke Bhōjpuriyā at home.

Mishra (1969b: 270) sums up the popular sentiment of a modern Maithili writer in most forceful terms:

> There never was in the past nor exists today a language called Bihari. There is no mention of it in any literature, any document or any record. There is not a single individual who speaks or writes in the Bihari language as defined by Grierson. It has no script, no literature, no actual existence. It is surely a creation of Grierson's mind and lives in philological works of scholars who thoughtlessly copy Grierson's classification.

IV. The Earliest Written Text of Maithili

The *Varna - Ratṇākara* of Jyotirīsvara Kavisekharacārya (Chatterji and Misra, (eds) 1940) is the oldest written text of the Maithili language. It dates back to the early 14th century and is preserved in a Ms. written in 1507. It is a prose text written in the Mithilāksar[6] script, which is closer to the Bengali writing system. The text is:

> a sort of lexicon of vernaculars and Sanskrit terms, a repository of literary similies and conventions dealing with the various things in the world and ideas which are usually treated

[6]For a history of the origin and development of this script see R. Jha (1971).

> in poetry. We have in it either bare lists of terms, or the similies and conventions are set in the framework of a number of descriptions.
>
> (Chatterji and Misra, (eds.) 1940, 'Introduction" xxi)

Some Maithili scholars (Mishra 1949: 101-118; S. Jha 1958: 32-36) claim vigorously that the *Caryapadas* (circa 800-1100) are also written in some form of Old Maithili, while the eminent Bengali scholar Chatterji (1926) argues that the *Caryapadas* were written in Old Bengali. The argument continues, and the controversy rages on to include other Indian languages as well, as Chatterji (1949) observes:

> The fact the *Caryapadas* have been claimed for Old Assamese, Old Oriyā, Old Maithili (and Old Magahi) as much as for Old Bengali, only demonstrates the close kinship of these languages to one another; they have even been claimed for "old Hindi" taking "Hindi" in a loose and popular sense. Dr. Jayakant Misra [Mishra], like Dr. Subhadra Jha, thinks the *Caryas* are in old Maithili. I still stick to my view, put forward in my *Origin and Development of the Bengali Language* (1926), that the *Caryas* - of course at a time when the divergences between Maithili and Bengali and Oriya and Assamese were not very prominent. ('Introduction' to Mishra 1949: x).

V. Genetic Classification

No two linguists agree on how exactly to classify the Indo-Aryan languages, showing the place of Maithili among them. Prominent among those who have treated the problem are: Grierson (1883 a; 1918; 1919), Chatterji (1926), Mishra (1949), S. Jha (1958), G. Jha (1974) and Jeffers (1976).

The earliest classification of the NIA languages is that provided by Grierson (1883 a), who describes Maithili as a dialect of Bihari - a descendant of the Magadhī-derived Gaudian language, but quite distinct from the Hindi language (see Figure 1).

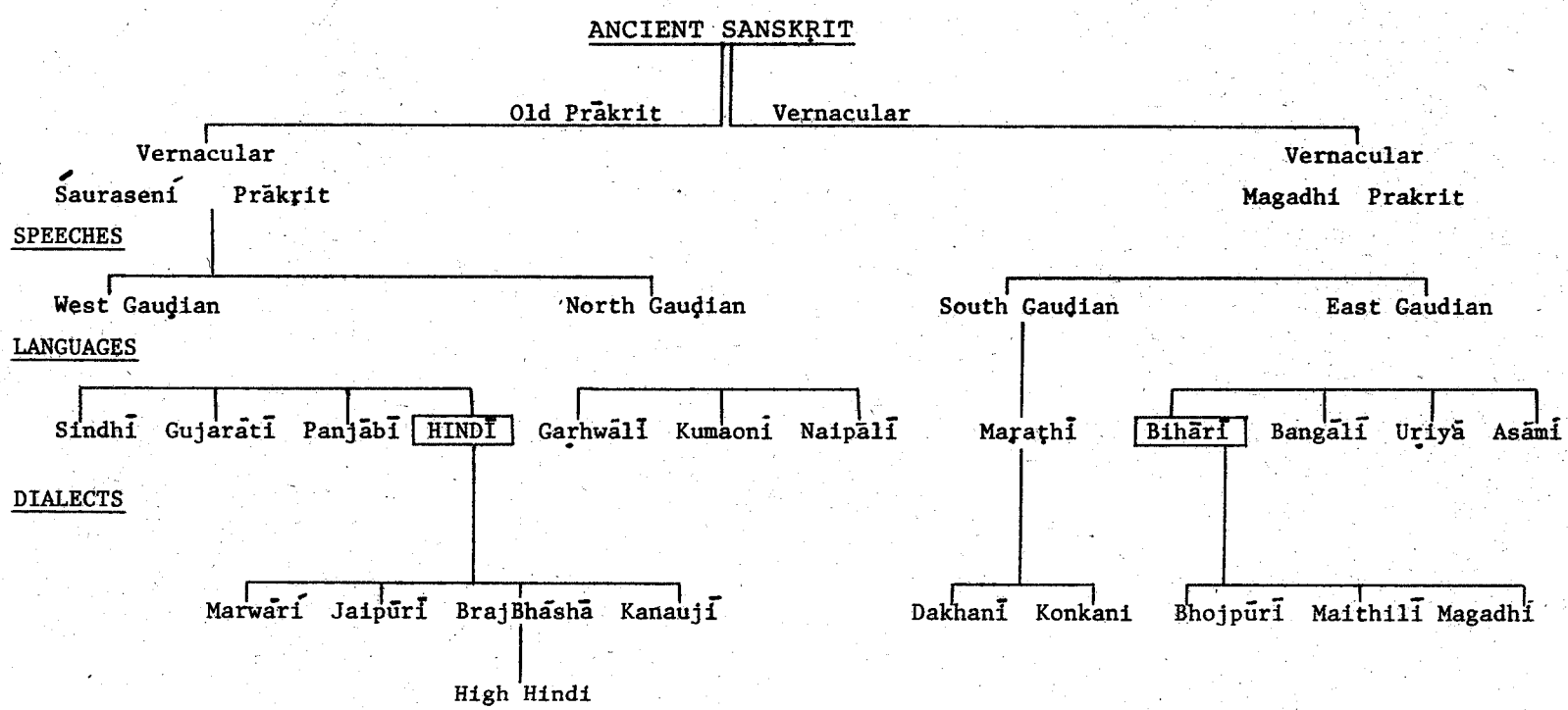

Fig. 1 Genetic classifications of NIA languages, according to Grierson (1883a)

Later, Grierson (1918, 1919; 1927) stipulated what is now known as the "inner group - outer group"[7] theory of Aryan migration into India, and provided a slightly different grouping of the Indo-Aryan languages. He divided them into three main divisions, the grouping of which was "based on linguistic considerations and also coincides with the geographical distribution of various languages" (Grierson 1918: 49). See Figures 2 and 3.

Chatterji (1926), like Grierson (1883a) believes that Maithili belongs to the group of Māgadhī Apabharaṁsa (called Māgadhī Prākrit by Grierson). He was also the first linguist to distinguish Maithili and Bhōjpuriyā (Bhojpuri) as belonging to two branches of the Magadhan subfamily (see Figure 4). Chatterji (1926) observes:

> Bhōjpuriyā somewhat stands apart from its sister speeches, having come under the influence of its western neighbour Awadhī (Ardha-Maghadhī) from very early times. ... But the sharp distinction between Bhōjpuriyā and Maithilī-Magadhī in their conjugation would justify their relegation to two separate groups, at least for the modern age. ('Introduction', p. 92).

Most native Maithili scholars seem to go along with Cahtterji's (1926) classification, with some minor modifications. Such a classification enables them to emphasize two main points, i.e., that Maithili is not a dialect of Hindi, and that Maithili is not a dialect of Bihari and hence ought to be grouped with Bhojpuri.

S. Jha's (1958) classification, which is often quoted in the Maithili language texts, is shown in Figure 5.

More recently, in a study based on the strict principles of historical and comparative linguistics, Jeffers (1976) has attempted

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[7] According to this theory, the modern Indo-Aryan vernaculars fall into two groups - the Inner and the Outer. The Inner group is constituted of languages like Western Hindi, Panjabi, Gujarati and Rajasthani, while the Outer group consists of languages like Sindhi, Marathi, Oriya, Bihari and Assamese. The two groups of languages exhibit fundamental phonetic, phonological and morphological differences. These differences are ascribed to separate invasions of groups of Aryans into India. It is argued that the Outer group of Aryans came to India first and settled in the Madhyadesa. i.e., Eastern Panjab and Western U.P. The Inner group of Aryans invaded later and pushed the Outer group out of their original homes, forcing them to move north, east and south. (See Chatterji [1926] for a contrary view).

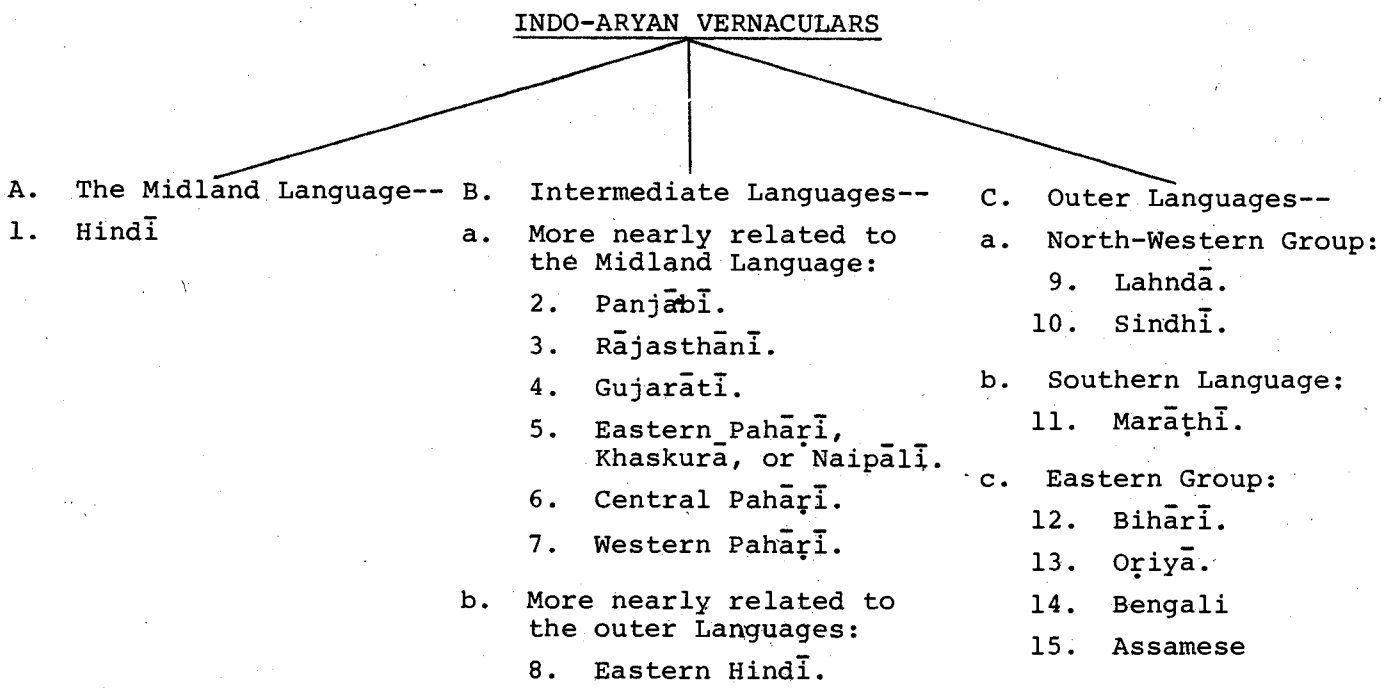

Fig. 2 Division of Indo-Aryan Vernaculars, based on Grierson (1918:49).

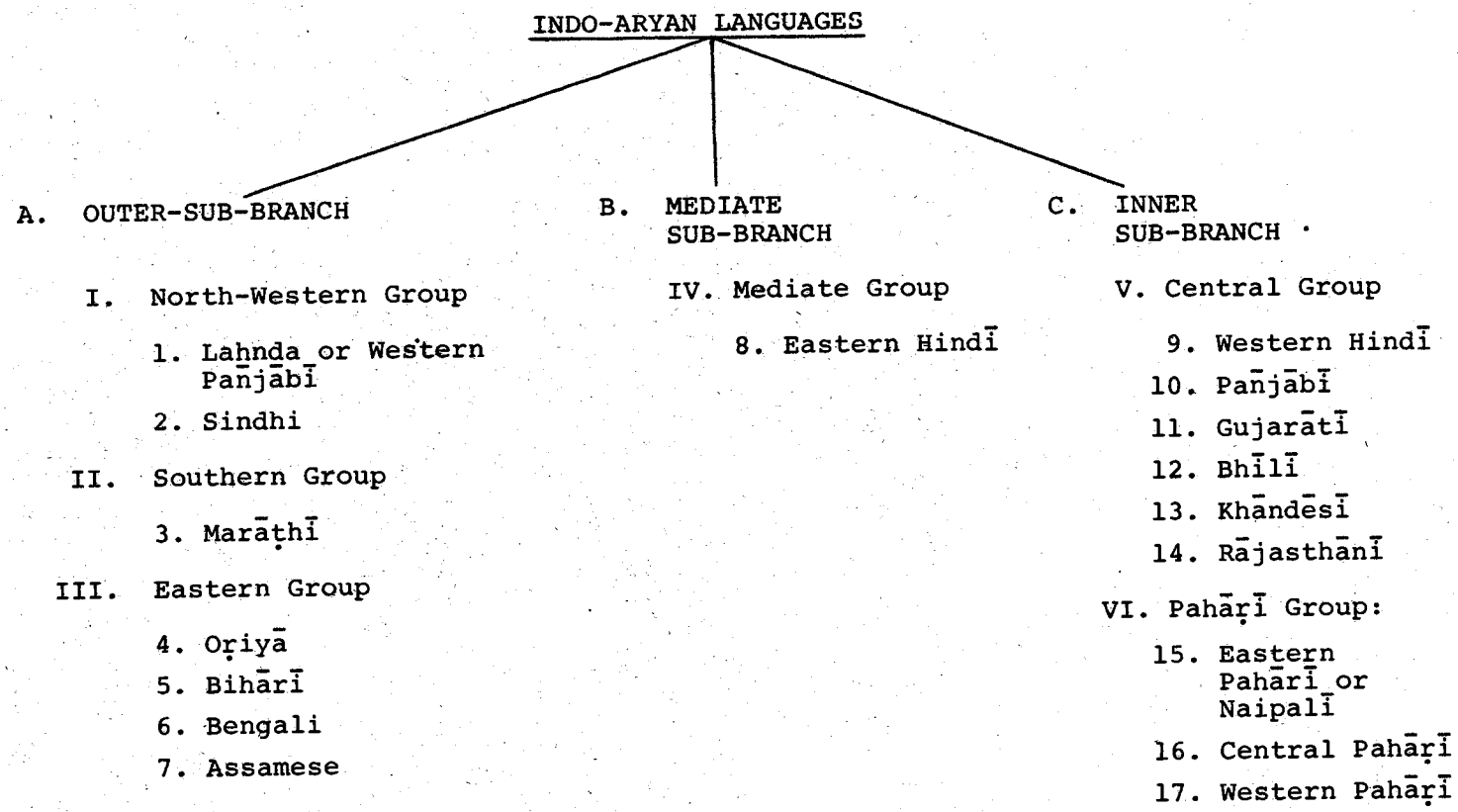

Fig. 3 Division of Indo-Aryan Languages, based on Grierson (1927:120).

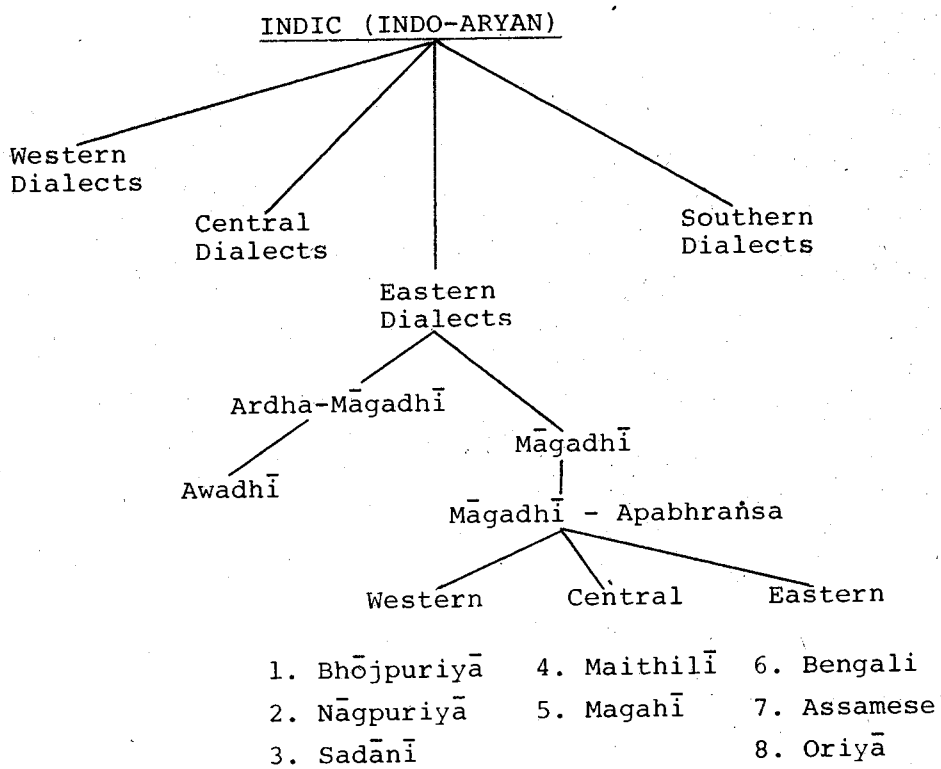

Fig. 4 Division of NIA languages, showing mainly the languages of North India; based on Chatterji (1926)

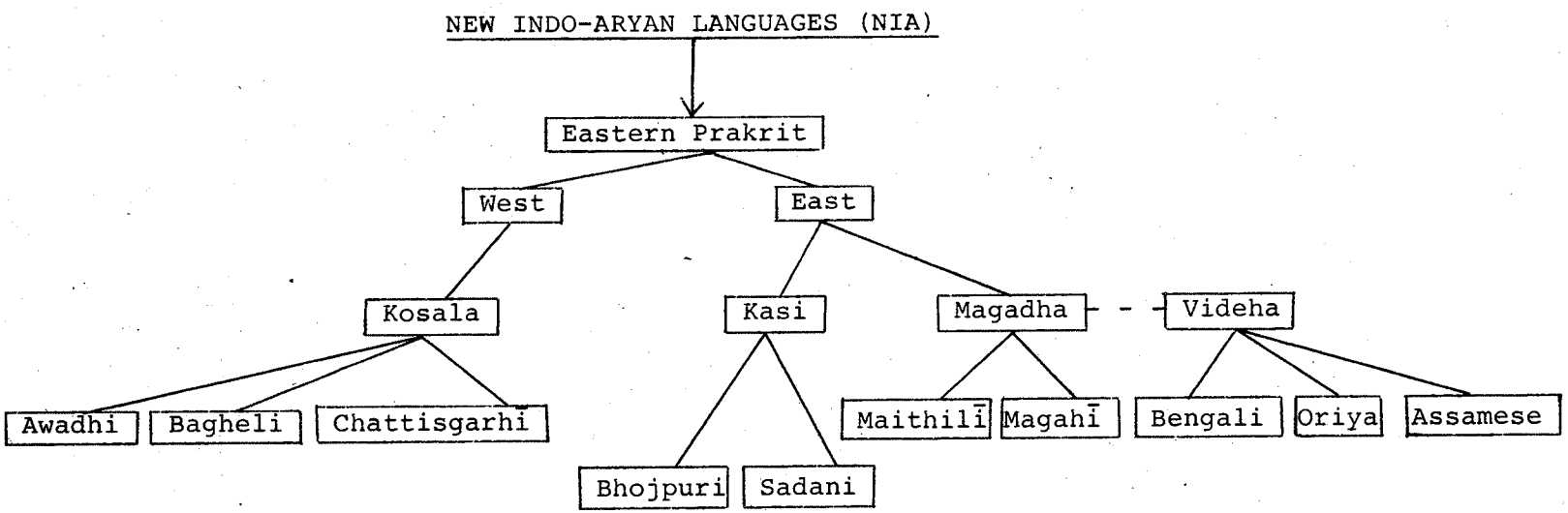

Fig. 5 Genetic relation of Maithili to other NIA languages of Eastern India, based on S. Jha (1958)

to establish the position of the "Bihar' languages (i.e. Maithili, Maghi and Bhojpuri) within the Indo-Aryan family. He concludes that:

> ... on the basis of the criterion of shared phonological innovation, Bihari cannot be considered a branch of the Eastern group of Indo-Aryan languages which includes Bengali, Assamese, and Oriya, as has traditionally been assumed. The only
>
> phonological innovations which Bihari shows with languages in its geographic vicinity must be assumed to represent reflexes of phonological changes which affected a large MIA (Middle Indo-Aryan) dialect region which incorporated, at least, East and West Hindi, Bihari, and the Eastern languages (p. 224).

To sum up, it seems fair to conclude that it is quite possible that the genetic classification problems that have arisen stem from the fact that there exists a dialect chain, or continumn, and therefore, it is difficult, or least arbitrary, to treat the genetic classification of Maithili within the Stammbaum model.

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THE USE OF OFFICINAL PLANTS AMONG THE LAMA PEOPLE OF YOL-MO

Preliminary report based on materials gathered and prepared with the Biologist Luca De Bettini in the autum of 1975

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> "Medicine is the only profession which has qualified members, and in Tibet they are many and excellent. It is not their custom to ask the patient how he is or what is his pain, but they feel first one pulse, then the other, then both together, and then say what ails the sick man. They have not many drugs, but good medicinal herbs, either indigenous or brought from China, the Lhoba country, (....), Nepal or Hindustan, ... From: Ippolito Desideri, *Historical Sketch of Thibet* (1712-1733), ed. by Filippo de Filippi as *An Account of Tibet*, London, 1937, p. 186.

Traditional medicine still occupies an important place both in Tibet proper and in cultural Tibet, where not only the profession of *am-chi* (or *em-chi* : physician)[1] is passed down from father to son in Ladakh, and a dispensary has been opened in Dharamsala, but also the healing power is still worshipped in the form of a set of eight "Medicine Buddhas", the supreme doctors who taught men how to cure sin, the most powerful disharmony causing physical infirmity. The chief of those "Medicine Buddhas", Vaidūrya Prabharāja, is portrayed in Tibetan iconography holding an iron bowl in his lap, and a twig of myrobolan plant (see: *Terminalia*, in the list below), a very tangible and material symbol of physical, and not just spiritual healing.

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[1] For the etymology of this word, see B. Laufer, *Loan-Words in Tibetan*, Leiden, E.J. Brill, 1918 (off print), p. 89, No. 162: "According to Jäschke, a Turkish word. From Uigur *umci* (....), Mongol *amci*".

Even the Chinese, particularly after their conquest of Tibet proper in 1959, have recognized Tibetan medicine as "a very great basis and component of the medicinal knowledge" of China,[2] though "contemporary Chinese claims making Tibetan medicine derive from the medicine of the Han, are deprived of all foundation".[3] The earliest and most serious historical reference to Tibetan medicine is possibly the chapter in the *Chronicle* of Tun-huang, giving an account of the history of medicine in Tibet. R. Stein explains that, according to the *Chronicle*, the Indian physician Vajradhvaja, the Chinese physician Hen-weng hang-de, and a physician from Khrom ("Rome", a Tibetan term designating the Romanized west in general)[4] called Ga-le-nos, from Tazig (Iran), were invited to Tibet during the reign of Srong-btsan-sgam-po (609-649 A.D). Works representing the different medical schools of those countries were then translated into Tibetan, but only the "Galen from Iran", Ga-le-nos, was appointed royal physician and he taught a class of pupils regardless of their family rank. Later on, in the VIIIth cent., another physician from Khrom, Bi-chi-tsan-ba-shi-la-ha, whose name in fact contains the Persian word meaning "physician", was invited to the Tibetan court. Again, it was that "Greek from Iran", rather than a Chinese or an Indian, who was appointed royal physician and "lord of the king", and entitled to sit in the centre of the assembly on "an excellent rug" and to be venerated as "superior" by all the others.[5]

Tibetan secular litereture is primarily concerned with medicine, on which countless treatises were written, the most widely known being the *Vaiḍūrya sNgon-po*, by Sangs-rgyas rGya-mtsho (1653-1705). Another outstanding work on the subject is the *Shel-gong* and its autocommentary, the *Shel-phreng*, by Ṭil-dmar dge-bshes bsTan-'dzin-phun-tshogs (XVIIIth

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[2]From: *mDo-dBus mTho-sgang sMan-ris gSal-ba'i Me-long*, Hsi-ning, Publishing House of the People of Tsinghai, 1973, Vol. I, p. 27.

[3]From F. Meyer, "Médecine tibétaine - l'homme et son milieu" in *Himalaya: Écologie-Ethnologie*, Paris, C.N.R.S., 1977, p. 196. Cf. *China Reconstructs*, XXV/3, pp. 40-1.

[4]As the identification of Khrom with the Romanized west in general is accepted not only by R. Stein, but also by D. Snellgrove, H. Richardson, and other eminent tibetologists, it is somewhat surprising to find it described as "a province in Eastern Tibet" in a recent work on Tibetan medicine (J.K. Rechung, *Tibetan Medicine*, London, Wellcome Institute of the History of Medicine, 1973, p. 16).

[5]R. Stein, *La civilisation tibétaine*, Paris, Dunod, 1962, pp. 39-40.

cent.). On the latter sources in particular, the Mongolian 'Jam-dpal-rdo-rje based, probably in the early XIXth cent., his profusely illustrated *Tibeto-Mongolian Materia Medica of Ayurveda*, which was edited by L. Chandra in 1971, with a foreward by E. Gene Smith. Such circumstances point to the facts that Tibetan medicine derived its theory and application not only from Ayurvedic medicine and that its techniques of diagnosis and treatment were not solely borrowed from Indian or Chinese medicine, but that it drew from other sources, too, and that in doing so, it developed a number of peculiarities of its own.[6] Consequently, I shall not insist any further on the necessity of considering Tibetan medicine as a separate historical entity, also in view of the fact that F. Meyer has brilliantly demonstrated that point in his very competent article "Médicine tibetaine - l'homme et son milieu".

The purpose of this preliminary report, rather, is to ascertain how and to which extent the Tibetan medical tradition survives in one culturally Tibetan area of the Nepalese Himālaya: Helambu (or Helmu, Tib.: Yol-mo). The report is based on field-work carried out in October-November 1975 with the view of surveying the use of officinal plants among the local population.

Historical reference to Himalayan medicinal plants can be found in both Tibetan and European literature on the subject, as is illustrated by the introductory quotation from Father Ippolito Desideri's account of his mission and travels in Tibet in the early XVIIIth cent. A whole episode of the national saga of Tibet, *Ge-sar of Gling* (or *Ge-sar of Khrom*) is devoted to the hero's "expedition to the country of the heretics of the Himālaya, holders of medicinal plants".[7] During his mission to Nepal in 1793, Colonel W. Kirkpatrick noticed: "The medicinal plants, as well as the dying drugs which rank among the natural growth of this country, are likewise very numerous, and some of them very valuable; of the former the Teetea-pât, Juttha, or Jaitamâsi, the Kootka, the Bikmah, the Cheraita, and the Roopmenger

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[6] F. Meyer, op. cit., p. 195.

[7] R. Stein, *Recherches sur l'épopée et le barde au Tibet*, Paris, imprimerie Nationale, 1959, p.57. Cf. A David-Neel and Lama Yongden, *The Superhuman Life of Gesar of Gling*, London, Rider & Co., 1933, pp.109-110 for the various names of plants (*a-ru-ra, skyu-ru-ra, dza-ti*, etc.) which are the object of Ge-sar's quest. The names of such medicinal plants are to be encountered in the list below.

(all of them bitter or aromatic woods) are in the most estimation".[8] The names of some of those medicinal plants will be encountered again, with different spellings, in the list below. The export of officinal plants from Nepal had been encouraged by Prithvi Narayan Shah (1725-1775) who directed that "herbs and drugs and other indigenous products" should "be sent to foreign countries and money thus attracted".[9]

During our visit to Yol-mo, the biologist Luca De Bettini and I interviewed a few farmers and medicine lamas, and gathered a number of dry and fresh samples of officinal plants, which were subsequently identified at the Department of Medicinal Plants of Kathmandu by Mr. Puspa Sakya, thanks to whose co-operation we had been able to obtain a special visa for Yol-mo and the equipment necessary for the collection of our herbarium. Our approach to the research was ethnobotanical and, to a lesser degree, lexicographic, rather than merely botanical. From October 22 to November 15 we marched almost every day to various hamlets or monasteries, visiting and revisiting our informants, slowly winning over their reluctancy to give us information and our discouragement at the frequent requests of western medicines by the local population, and eventually obtaining a great deal of specimens, too. Our initial difficulties were probably owed to the circumstance that our research may well have appeared retrospective, if not useless, to people who were often anxious to progress towards western medicine.

The main town of the area we studied is rTa-brgya Gyang (Tarke Gyang), a relatively affluent village, at an altitude of 9,300 feet. Other places where we stayed for the purpose of our research include: Sermathang and its neighbouring hamlet of Taperka; Kolama, a hamlet neighbouring Chimi Gyang; Melemchi; the little monastery of Cham Gyang, near Tarke Gyang; and the monastery of Bakhang, founded in 1934,

[8] W. Kirkpatrick, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepaul*, New Delhi, Asian Publication Services, 1975 repr., p.182. On p.207 the author mentions "Jaithamâsi, and various other medicinal drugs" as being produced in Tibet proper and in the border area of Kho-char (For this spelling see: G. Tucci, *Preliminary Report on Two Scientific Expeditions to Nepal*, Roma, Is. M.E.O., 1956, p.62). W. Kirkpatrick's spelling of local names is not always consistent. For these plants, cf, also F. Buchanan Hamilton, *An Account of the Kingdom of Nepal*, Edinburgh, Constable & Co., 1819, pp.85-6 and 97-100.

[9] M.C. Regmi, *A Study in Nepali Economic History*, New Delhi, Manjusrī Publishing House, 1971, p. 147.

the largest and wealthiest monastery in Yol-mo. Further research was carried out at the Tibetan centre of Bodhnāth, in the Kathmandu Valley. The people who inhabit Yol-mo have been studied by Graham Clarke, who is preparing a comprehensive work on the subject: they are ethnically, linguistically and culturally, Tibetans.[10]

Despite its obvious limitations, the preliminary conclusions we were able to draw from our research appear to be interesting also in view of the future development it may have. The first conclusion is that the science of medicinal plants in Yol-mo is not popular knowledge. The local population seems to rely entirely upon the prestige of traditional Tibetan medical knowledge as well as to trust the quicker and more apparent successes of western synthetic medicines. Furthermore, local folk are somewhat reluctant to admit that any popular use of medicinal plants actually exists, probably because of a kind of inferiority complex they have developed or perhaps inherited with regard to western scientific standards. Such a feeling seems to be shared by the better educated strata of the population, as we gathered from a conversation with a Lama nurse from Taperka on the subject of a plant which is very common in Yol-mo and whose fresh leaves are pounded to be used against bruises.

The second consideration to be made is that traditional medical science and the appreciable use of medicinal plants in Yol-mo appear by and large to be the prerogative of Tibetan monks who have received their regular religious education in monasteries, where they are subsequently trained as apothecaries and physicians. Such a circumstance confirms the strong influence of the Tibetan cultural heritage in the Himalayan areas of Nepal and the ascendancy which the Buddhist clergy still enjoys there nowadays.

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[10] I follow Mr. Graham Clarke (Lincoln College, Oxford) in preferring the appellation "Lama people" to the common one of "Sherpa". Only a few people from Yol-mo have connections with the actual Sherpas: they are in fact mostly Tibetans from Kyi-rong and Tamangs. In this context the word "lama" does not necessarily have religious implications, but rather indicates clan connotations. Mr. Clarke tells us that lamas from Kyi-rong (Southern Tibet) were given land grants in the upper ridges of Yol-mo by the Malla Kings in 1723, for services rendered in Yol-mo. Lama villages like Tarke Gyang were founded as retreats and subsequently underwent economic expansion. The result has been the formation of an elitist society in which competition and religious prestige play a fundamental role. The fact that people from the Lama clan call themselves "Shar-pa" in conversation with foreigners must be regarded as an attempt to simplify their otherwise obscure and complicated origin: all

By and large, both considerations reflect the situation of medical science in Tibet, where western medicine was held in great esteem until 1959: the British hospital in Lhasa was always busy, and such a circumstance is not surprising if we consider that in 1900, for instance, an epidemic of smallpox killed more than six thousand people only in Lhasa, and that not even the Dalai Lama was spared from the disease.[11] H. Richardson has pointed out that "Monks and lamas, as well as layfolk, made use of its services, and patients travelled from long distances seeking treatment. British, Sikkimese and Indian doctors were welcomed on the most friendly terms in the houses of the nobles and in the apartments of high-ranking lamas. Western medicine, especially 'injections', became a matter of prestige...".[12] Furthermore, Tibetan apothecaries were "glad to receive new drugs from any source, and the chief source in recent centuries has been China. From the Chinese and from those who cut up corpses *(ra-rgyab-pa)* they have gained some knowledge of the actual internal physical structure and the functioning of the human body, but no one ever seems to have shown interest in resolving the contradictions with ancient Indian psycho-physical theories, derived primarily from the practice of *yoga*."[13] Indian medical notions were preserved in Tibet chiefly as a literary and academic tradition, as was the case for other subjects belonging to the Indian scholastic inheritance. The Sanskrit names of Indian medicinal plants were kept for reasons of prestige and sometimes used to indicate local medicinal plants altogether different from the original Indian ones. That is why literary identification of plants alone is useless in the context of any seriously scientific study of Tibetan medicine. Tibetan medical practice deserves the attention of serious study, and one must deal with it on an empirical basis, identifying and testing the medicaments actually in use and watching the cures. In connection with Tibetan medical studies, the so-called "medical

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foreigners visiting Nepal have an idea of what Sherpas are; however, the Lama people of Yol-mo do not perform those activities of porterage which Sherpas are so highly reputed for. Likewise, a citizen of the Republic of San Marino would probably speak of himself as "Italian" if he were to be asked his nationality by a Tibetan.

[11] Cf. Dr. R. Moise, "Nota sulla medicina e l'igience nel Tibet", in Tucci, *A Lhasa e oltre*, Roma, La Libreria dello Stato, 1952, p.143.

[12] D.L. Snellgrove and H. Richardson, *A Cultural History of Tibet*, London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1968, pp. 261-262.

[13] Ibidem.

college" of lCag-po-ri, in Lhasa, was rather a temple than a centre whence medically qualified graduates would go out to practice their skills among the sick.[14] Like their colleagues in Yol-mo, its inmates would spend their time praying and invoking the intervention of the gods to re-establish the balance of the three humours which permeate the whole body but govern, above all, the brain, the abdomen and the bowels respectively.[15] Similarly, they would devote some of their time to growing and collecting plants of which they would have real knowledge, manufacturing pills and preparing medicaments "and a few of them would make use of the experience gained, in order to make a little extra money by the way...".[16] Tibetan doctors had a sort of Garden of Aesculapius "on a mountain to the north of Lhasa, near the monastery of Sera", where "Most of the herbs used as medicine were gathered".[17] Pills "were appropriately blessed before being distributed to those in need of them, with instructions not only on the dose to be taken, but on the times of the day they were to be swallowed and the prayers that were to be said with them"[18] and "for most illnesses Tibetans put more faith in prayers, charms and amulets than in medicine".[19] Like in Yol-mo, villagers could take advantage of the experience of some apothecary lama who would give some pills or prepare a concoction from his available stock of ingredients, and, what is most important, give a blessing as well. It was not a mere coincidence that we found one of our informants concerned with the prayers and rituals of the after-death ceremony at the bedside of one of his colleagues.

Unless otherwise stated, the use of the plants in the following

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[14] Ibidem.

[15] Cf. G. Tucci, *A Lhasa e oltre*, op. cit., p. 79 and *Tibet* London, Paul Elek Ltd., 1967, pp. 163-4. When one of the humours prevails over the others, illness results. The theory of the humours is of Indian derivation and provides the basis of Tibetan medicine. It is founded on the belief that physical imbalance is associated with spiritual imbalance.

[16] D. Snellgrove and H. Richardson, op. cit., ibidem.

[17] G. Tucci, *Tibet*, op. cit., p. 164

[18] Ibidem.

[19] D. Snellgrove and H. Richardson, op. cit., ibidem.

list refers to information gathered from Tibetan monks living locally, rather than from local farmers:

Fungi

1. Hypocraceae

Cordyceps sinensis (Berk.) Sacc. (Tib.: *dbyar-rtswa dgun-'bu*, "Summer-plant winter-worm"). This parasitic fungus is distributed in Himalayan areas of Nepal such as the upper Langtang, north of Yol-mo, where it is gathered at 4, 200 m. It comes out of the anterior end of a Lepidopterum's larva during the monsoon period. The larva "is seen living if the plant is collected in early monsoon. In the month of July when the yak herds are shifted to the higher altitude, the yaks hurriedly search for these plants among the grasses and hence one can not find the plant in the areas where yaks and sheep grazes". *(sic)*. "To detect the fructification of the plant which comes out of the ground among the grasses one has to bent *(sic)* down to keep one's eye to the grass level and see around. One may see the plant as a small spike of *Ophioglossum* with dark brown fructification and yellowish white stalk 5-8 cm. long". "Plant combination with *Orchis incarnata*, honey and cow's milk; tonic to yak and sheep".[20]

Angiospermae Dicotyledones

2. Ranunculaceae

Delphinium sp. (Nep.:*niribiashi;* Tib.:*bong-dkar;* Eng.: larkspur). According to our informant in Melemchi, the root of this plant

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[20] From *Medicinal Plants of Nepal*, Kathmandu, Ministry of Forests, 1970, pp.116-7. Cf. also: S. Ch. Das, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary*, Delhi, Motilal Banarsidass, 1976 repr., p.914; F. Hulbotter, *Chinesish-Tibetische Pharmakologie und Rezeptur*, Ulm-Donau, Karl F. Haug Verlag, 1957, p.48; L. Chandra (ed.), *A Tibeto-Mongolian Materia Medica of Ayurveda of 'Jam-dpal-rdo-rje of Mongolia*, New Delhi, International Academy of Indian Culture, 1971, f.168; *mDo-dBus mTho-sgang sMan-rin gSal-ba'i Me-long*, op. cit., pp.294-5. B. Laufer (op. cit., pp.41 and 45-6) gives the following further sources: A. Engler, *Die naturlichen Pflanzenfamilien*, Vol.1, 1, pp.368-9; A. Hosie, "Journey to the Eastern Frontier of Tibet", *Parliamentary Papers, China*, No.1, 1905, p.38; Parennin, *Lettres édifiantes*, Paris, 1781, Vol.XIX, pp.300-3; W. Rockhill, *J.R.A.S.*, 1981, p.271; G.A. Stuart, *Chinese Materia Medica*, p.126; and *List of Chinese Medicines*, Shanghai, 1889, p.442, (No. 287).

is used as an antidote against aconite poisoning. However, no specific antidote for aconite poisoning is available in modern western medicine. The Sanskrit *nirvisa* stands for "not poisonous; deprived of poison". As a matter of fact delphinine, the active principle of larkspur, is an irritant poison, causing vomiting and purging. Perhaps it is in its connection with being violently emetic and cathartic, that this species is used. The alkaloid delphinine "has also been employed similarly to aconite, both internally and externally, for neuralgia... By depressing the action of the spinal cord it arrests the convulsions caused by strychnine".[21] The Tibetan word has been variously translated as "the white species of aconite" (S. Ch. Das, op. cit., p. 878), *"Aconitum heterophillum* Wall".[22] (Atis root, another species of *Ranuncolaea,* growing in the Western temperate Himalayas, not containing aconitine and said to be non-poisonous), and *"Aconitum sinense"* (F. Hubotter, op. cit., p. 26). Cf. also L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 159. Both *Delphinium* and *Aconitum* belong to the same family and, as it happens, it is likely that the Tibetan name designates various different species in different areas of cultural Tibet. The officinal use of this plant by decoction is confirmed in *mDo-dBus* etc., op. cit., pp. 30-31: "Regarding drugs of mineral substances, they are cooked in the juice of *bong-dkar:* one ounce of *Delphinium* (sp.) is added to one catty (16 ounces) of mineral substance. Then their poison is driven away". The certain use of *"Nirbishi"* is echoed by F. Hamilton, op. cit., pp. 98-9.

3. Papaveraceae

(a) *Meconopsis* sp. (Tib.: *ut-pal.* F. Meyer has pointed out that, although the Sanskrit *ut-pa-la* designates the blue lotus, the Tibetan name designates different varieties of *Meconopsis* growing at high altitude).[23] The dry fruit of this plant is ground and diluted in lukewarm water, to serve

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[21] M. Grieve, *A Modern Herbal,* Harmondsworth, Penguin Books, 1978, p. 771.

[22] V. Dash, *Tibetan Medicine With Special Reference to Yoga Sataka,* Dharamsala, Library of Tibetan Works & Archives, 1976, p. 316.

[23] F. Meyer, op. cit., p. 201.

as a diuretic. Cf. L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 173, and *mDo-dBus* etc., op. cit., pp. 570-2.

(b) *Meconopsis* sp. (Tib.: *mdzer-gan).* The flower of this other species is prepared and used in the same way as the preceding one.

4. Rutaceae

Zanthoxylum armatum D.C. *(zanthoxylum alatum* Roxb.) (Nep.: *timur;* Tib.: *g.yer-ma).* The fruits of this shrub, or small tree, distributed in the Himalayan and Mahabharat regions of Nepal between 1, 500 and 2,400 m, are pounded and either chewed on their own or else eaten with other food for their stomachic properties. Cf. L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 99, F. Hübotter, op. cit., pp.104.5, *mDo-dBus* etc., op. cit., pp. 392.4, and *Medicinal Plants of Nepal,* op. cit., p. 60. According to B. Laufer, op. cit., p. 89, the Tibetan *g.yer-ma* derives "In all probability, from Uigur *yarma...".*

5. Rosaceae

Potentilla (fulgens Wall.?) (Yol-mo dialect: *grod-lod).* The root of this herb, distributed between 2,400 and 2,700 m, is used as an astringent in cases of diarrhoea.

6. Saxifragaceae

Bergenia ligulata (Wall.) Engl. (Tib.: *ha-bo;* Eng.: rockfoil). This perennial herb is distributed in the Mahabharat area between 2,100 and 3,000 m. Its root is ground into a powder which is diluted into water to serve as an antitoxic. Cf. *Medicinal Plants of Nepal,* op. cit., p. 83.

7. Combretaceae

(a) *Terminalia belerica* Roxb. (Nep.: *barro;* Tib.: *ba-ru-ra* and *a-ru-ra;* Eng.: bastard myrobalan). The pericarp in the fruit of this large tree, diffused in the Himalayan region of Nepal, appears to be used as an antispasmodic or, mixed with water and made into a paste, to disinfect wounds. Cf. L. Chandra, (ed.) op. cit., f. 84 and *Medicinal Plants of Nepal,* op. cit., pp. 93-4.

(b) *Terminalia chebula* (Nep.: *harro;* Tib.: *a-ru-ra).* This large deciduous tree reaching the height of 30 m grows in the Himalayan regions of Nepal up to 1,500 m. The external part of its fruit, ground and mixed with water, is believed to serve as an expectorant, whereas in the form of a pill it would be used as an analgesic. Cf. F. Hubotter, op. cit., p. 101; V.B. Deash, op. cit., p. 347 and "The Drug *Terminalia Chebula* in Ayurveda and Tibetan Medical Literature", *Kailash,* IV/I, pp. 5-20; L. Chandra (ed.) op. cit., f. 81; and *Medicinal Plants of Nepal,* op. cit., p. 150. The unripe, astringent fruits of this myrobalan are a source of tannin and "are also used in dyeing, possibly for their tannin content when mordanting wool for other dyestuffs, certainly as the source of a yellowish brown dye in themselves".[24]

8. Compositae

Aster sp. (Nep.:*bheDako ankha;* Tib.: *lug-mig,* "sheep eye": "*Aster alpinus* L.", "*Aster altaicus* Willd.", "*Aster biennis* Ldb.").[25] It is distributed in Yol-mo. Its flower is believed to cure "poison and plague".[26] The medicinal use of the flower of this plant is confirmed in L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 174.

9. Gentianaceae

(a) *Gentiana* sp. (Tib.: *spang-rgyan; "Gentiana kurroo",*[27] *"Gentiana decumbens* L.", *"Gentiana triflora* Pall.").[28] Its blue flower is pounded and prepared as a decoction to serve as a digestive and an antispasmodic. Cf. L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f.177 and S. Ch. Das, op. cit., p. 797.

(b) *Swertia chirata* (Tib.:*tig-ta;* Eng.: Chiretta). This herb, diffused in Yol-mo between 1,200 and 3,000m, is used as an

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[24] Philip Denwood, *The Tibetan Carpet,* Warminster, Aris and Phillips Ltd., 1978, pp. 23-4.

[25] A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, *Slovar Tibetsko-Latino Russkikh Nazvanni Lekarstvennogo Tastitelnogo Syrya,* Ulan-Ude, 1963,,Nos. 103-5.

[26] S. Ch. Das, op. cit., p. 1215.

[27] *Medicinal Plants of Nepal,* op. cit., p. 26.

[28] A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, op.cit., Nos. 300 and 307.

antipyretic. Cf. S. Ch. Das, op. cit., p. 515: "growing in the Himalayas, largely used as an antidote against fever and liver complaints"; V.B. Dash, op. cit., pp. 75-6, where the spelling is: *ti-kta;* and *Medicinal Plants of Nepal,* op. cit., p. 49. Cf F. Hamilton, op. cit., pp. 85-6: *"Chirata"* is used "in slow febrile diseases, as strengthening the stomach". On the "Nepalese" *tig-ta* see L. Chandra, (ed.), f. 130.

10. Scrophulariaceae

Picrorhiza scrophulariflora (Nep.: *kutki;* Tib.: *hong-len;* Eng.: gentian). This herb is distributed in the Himalayas and a decoction known for its antipyretic properties is prepared from its root. Cf. L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 158 and *mDo-dBus* etc., op. cit., pp. 552-4. Of. also F. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 100.

11. Chenopodiaceae

Chenopodium album Linn. (Nep.: *bethe;* Eng.: white goosefoot). This erect herb is distributed throughout Nepal up to 4,000 m. and cultivated in Yol-mo. Its seeds are cooked with milk to serve as a laxative. Cf. *Medicinal Plants of Nepal,* op. cit., p. 132.

12. Euphorbiaceae

Emblica officinalis (Gaertn.) *sive Phyllantus emblica* (linn.); (Tib.: *skyu-ru-ra;* Eng.: emblic myrobalan). The fresh fruit of this tree, distributed in the southern subtropical valleys in Nepal, are commonly chewed in Yol-mo. They dry fruit is ground and mixed with water to serve as an appetizer as well as a remedy against anaemia. Cf. V.B. Dash, op. cit., p. 277, L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 84, and *Medicinal Plants of Nepal,* op. cit., pp. 6-7.

Monocotyledones

13. Orchidaceae

Orchis latifolia Linn. var. *incarnata* (Nep.: *panch aunle,* "five fingers"). This herb is distributed in Himalayan areas such as Langtang, a valley bordering on Yol-mo, between 2,400 and 3,600m.

Its tuber is used for its tonic properties, either alone or combined with *Cordyceps sinensis*. Cf. *Medicinal Plants of Nepal*, op. cit., pp. 88-9.

14. Araceae

Acorus calamus Linn. (Nep.: *bojho;* Tib.: *shu-dag;* Eng.: sweet flag). This aromatic perennial herb is distributed in the Himalayan region at a height of 1,800 m. Its rhizome is pounded and mixed with water to serve as a balm and is applied locally in the case of pains from sinusitis. Cf. V.B. Dash, op. cit., pp. 166-7; L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 136; and *Medicinal Plants of Nepal*, op. cit., pp. 101-2.

15. Palmae

Areca catecu Linn. (Tib.: *dza-ti;* Eng.: areca nut). This tree is cultivated in eastern Nepal and its nut is used in Yol-mo as an antiemetic. (Cf. *Medicinal Plants of Nepal*, op. cit., pp. 146-7). Though such a use is not confirmed by modern pharmacopoeias, which dwell on the astringent and anthelmintic properties of the nut, this plant provides a good example of how unreliable and confusing may be an identification based on lexical and literary sources only. B. Laufer, op. cit., p. 70, translates *dza-ti* as *"Myristica moschata"*. F. Hubotter, op. cit., p. 76 followed by A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, has: *"Myristica fragrans"*, whose mace and nutmeg also help digestion. S. Ch. Das, op. cit., p. 1047 has: "the nutmeg" and "n. of the flower *Jasminum grandiflorum*". V.B. Dash, op. cit., p. 329 has: *"Jasminum grandiflorum* Linn.".

I have based the Latin nomenclature of the list above on the identification of our specimens by botanists, as that seems to be the only scientifically serious criterion of reference before starting to establish for which reasons and purposes the palnts gathered are actually used. When botanical identification was incomplete or impossible, as for the plants in the following list, I have provided lexical identification in inverted commas, which in the light of the contradictions amongst dictionaries and other literary sources, probably owed to the various local nomenclatures, are mere suggestions yet to be confirmed through the identification of the actual specimens by botanists. Bearing that in mind, I have discarded as irrelevant

all lexical terms which were not supported by botanical evidence and all nomenclature which was not recorded "in loco".

As the officinal use of the plants mentioned above is obviously subject to a number of combinations, I shall limit myself to mentioning only a few. In addition to the combination of *Cordyceps sinensis* and *Orchis incarnata* mentioned above, there are also those of *Emblica officinalis, Terminalia belerica* and *Terminalia chebula* as an antipyretic, and of the two last plants as an analgesic against headaches. Incidentally, the local uses of the medicinal plants mentioned above more often than not correspond to officinal properties acknowledged by western pharmacopoeias.

The list of plants whose identification was limited to the family or merely lexicographic follows:

A. *sBru-nag* (F. Hübotter, op. cit., p. 76: *"Nothosmyrnium japonicum* sive *Ligusticum sinense")*. This Umbellifera is cultivated at Cham Gyang, and its seeds appear to be ground and mixed with water to serve as an astringent in cases of diarrhoea. Cf. *spru-nag* in A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, op. cit., No. 334: *"Heracleum sinense"*.

B. *Dug-mo nyung* (F. Hübotter, op. cit., p. 52: *"Cynanchum sibiricum"*; A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, op. cit., No. 58: *"Antitoxicum sibiricum* (L.) Pobed" or *"Vincetoxicum sibiricum* (L.) Dcne."; and No. 228: *"Cynoctonum purpureum* (Pall.) Pobed."; V.B. Dash, op. cit., p. 301: *"Holarrhena antidysenterica* Wall.". Cf. S. Ch. Das, op. cit., p. 627: "medicinal fruit akin to *Karaya"*, it "stops dysentry and cures biliousness", and V.B. Dash, op. cit., pp. 192-3). Its seeds are ingested for their emetic properties as an antitoxic in cases of poisoning. Cf. also L. Chandra (ed.), f. 184 and *mDo-dBus* etc., op. cit., pp. 177-9.

C. *Go-snyod (waju;* S.Ch. Das, op. cit., p. 226: "cummin seed"; V.B. Dash, op. cit., p. 283: *"Cuminum cyminum* Linn."; F. Hubotter, op. cit., p. 61: *"Foeniculum vulgare"*; A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, op. cit., No. 282: *"Foeniculum vulgare* Mill."; No. 57: *"Anisum vulgare* Gaertn."; No. 171: *"Carum buriaticum* Turcz." No. 172: *"Carum carvi* L."; No. 202: *"Cnidium dahuricum* (Jacq.) Turcz.". This umbelliferous plant is cultivated at Cham Gyang. Its seeds are ground, mixed with butter and made into a paste which is used

as an analgesic against headaches. (Cf. V.B. Dash, op. cit., pp. 100-1). Both cummin and fennel are cultivated in Nepal. Cf. also L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 187.

D. *rGun-'brum* (F. Hübotter, op. cit., p. 104; V.B. Dash, op. cit., p. 287; and A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, op. cit., No. 732: *"Vitis vinifera* Linn."; Cf. L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 96). Its sap is used as an ophthalmic remedy.

E. *mKhan-pa (bzang)* (A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, op. cit., No.79: *"Artemisia frigida* Willd."; F. Hubotter, op. cit., p. 35 has "mkhan-pa": *"Artemisia stelleriana"*; cf. L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 156). This *Compositа* is cultivated at Cham Gyang and its leaves are used for their haemostatic properties. Cf. S.Ch. Das,op. cit., p. 179: *"mkhan-pa* is deemed useful in healing fresh cut wounds; it is also applied to swellings.".

F. *sLe-tres* (A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, op. cit., No. 653; F. Hubotter, op. cit., p. 100: *"Sophora flavescens"*; and B.V. Dash, op. cit., p. 343: *"Cyperus rotundus"* and *"Tinospora cordifolia")*. The tuber of this plant appears to be pounded and mixed with water to serve in the case of bruises and wounds. Cf. L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 134 and *mDo-dBus* etc., op. cit., pp. 546-8. B. Laufer, op. cit., pp. 5-6 quotes a Tibetan lexicographical work printed in 1741, stating that the word *sle-tres* derived from the language of Zhang-zhung (Western Tibet), and gives:*"Sophora flavescens"*.

G. *Ru-rta* (V.B. Dash, op. cit., p. 334: *"Saussurea lappa* C.B. Clarke"; F. Hubotter, op. cit., p. 94: *"Rosa Banksiae"*; cf. also Csoma de Koros, *Tibetan-English Dictionary:* "a king of spicy root"; H.A. Jaschke; in Lahul, *"Inula Helenium"*;[29] and, as explained by Satis Chandra Acharya, quoted in S.Ch. Das, op. cit., p. 1186: *"Costus speciosus")*. Its roots and leaves are dried and ground, and the powder is mixed with water to serve as an expectorant, whereas the root alone seems to be applied locally in cases of fracture. Cf. L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 132.

H. *gSer-gyi me-tog* (F. Hübotter, op. cit., p. 75, followed by A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, op. cit., No. 429: *"Momordica cochin-*

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[29] H.A. Jaschke, *A Tibetan-English Dictionary with Special Reference to the Prevailing Dialects*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd., 1972, p. 531.

chinensis Spr."). The powder from the seeds of this Cucurbitacea are mixed with water to serve as an antiemetic. Cf. L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 183.

I. *Thal-ka rdo-rje* (V.B. Dash, op. cit., p. 299: "thal-ka": *"Cassia tora* Linn."; F. Hubotter, op. cit., p. 45: *"Cassia obtusifolia sive tora"*; A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, op. cit., Nos. 159 and 164 add: *"Caragana microphylla* (Pall.) Lam." and *"Caragana spinosa* (L.) D.C.". Cf. S.Ch. Das, op. cit., p. 574: "a medicinal fruit; is described as.... 'in shape like a dog's penis'.... Thal-ka rdorje *(sic)* relieves suppurations...."). The powder from its seed is mixed with water to serve in cases of infections of the urinary organs. Cf. L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 185.

J. *Thulo kati* local name: padamchal. Cf. S.B. Malla,[30] "Rheum emod Wall. Rhubarb"; and as "patuswa" in *Medicinal Plants of Nepal*, op. cit., p. 61: *"Polygonum molle* D. Don."). It is used as an expectorant and seems to be used also to treat fractures. Cf. also F. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 100: *"Padam chhal"*.

K. *g.Ya-kyi-ma* (A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, op. cit., No. 621: *"Saxifraga punctata* L."; No. 67: *"Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* (L.) Spreng."; No. 144: *"Caltha natans* Pall."; No. 554: *"Pyrola incarnata* Fisch."; No. 556: *"Pyrola rotundifolia* L."; No. 713: *"Vaccinium vitis idaea*

L.". Cf. H.A. Jaschke, op. cit., p. 517: in Lahul, "a small high-alpine Saussurea"; S.Ch. Das, op. cit., p. 1151, adds:"the flower of which plant is an antibilious medicine".). This plant is common in Yol-mo; its leaves are pounded and prepared as a decoction which appears to be used cold as an antiemetic. Cf. L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 168 and *mDo-dBus* etc., op. cit., pp. 386-8.

May I just hint here to the circumstance that Tibetan apothecaries in Yol-mo resort to the use of mineral and animal products too. I shall limit myself to mentioning two: *rgya-mtshal* (Indian or Chinese cinnabar, red mercury sulphide, or native vermilion), with "heavy and cool" properties (Tib.: *(Tib-bsil)*, which is taken orally to "hold marrow and veins" (cf. L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 59 and F.

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[30] In "Potentialities of Medicinal Herbs in Nepal", *Himalaya: Ecologie-Ethnologie*, Paris, C.N.R.S., 1977, p. 193, No. 27.

Hubotter, op. cit., p. 128); and the rare and highly expensive musk (Tib.: *gla-rtsi)*, which is obtained from a male sexual gland of *Moscus moschiferus*[31] (Tib.: *gla-ba)* a small deer hunted also in Tibet and the Himālayas. The gland (or musk pod) measures five to eight centimetres in diameter and two and a half in thickness, and weighs, when dried, about thrity grams. After the musk deer has been killed, the pods are removed with the musk still intact and then dried. Its grainy powder would be used for its disinfectant properties. In India and the Far East musk has been used traditionally for its supposed aphrodisiac, stimulant and antispasmodic effects (Cf. S.Ch. Das, op. cit., p. 254: "the musk eradicates snake-poison, kidney-disease, plague"; cf. also F. Hubotter, op. cit., p. 114 and L. Chandra (ed.), op cit., ff. 78 and 233). Dried musk pods of the commercial grade "three" are supplied by Nepal, though already in Kirkpatrick's day musk deer did not appear to be as numerous as they used to be.[32]

Another useful plant common in Yol-mo is *Lycopodium clavatum* Linn. (common club moss), a *Lycopodiacea* distributed between 1,800 and 2,400 m in Nepal. The small size of its spores and their high content of finely divided oil droplets make for inflammability. They can be used, as lycopodium powder, in fireworks or flashlight photography and their properties are known in Nepal.

Although we realized that wild edible plants are gathered mainly during the spring, we did witness the consumption of *Gaultheria fragrantissima* Wall., a member of the Ericacea family. This stout shrub grows not only in Yol-mo, but also in Churia and Mahabaharat. As a matter of fact, apart from the occasional use of wild berries, the diet of the Yol-mo people is based upon locally grown crops such as apples and turnips (which were introduced there in the sixties), barley (which after being parched and ground into flour, *rtsam-pa*, is kneaded

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[31] In *mDo-dBus* etc., op. cit., vol. III, pp. 16-17, the denomination *Moscus sifanicus* Buchner is preferred.

[32] Cf. W. Kirkpatrick, op. cit., pp.130-1: "Very little pure musk is to be obtained at Khatmanda *(sic)* and there is still less exported from Nepaul". In Kirkpatrick's day, the "kustoora" or musk deer was caught with snares made with a particular kind of mountain bamboo. On the subject of the musk deer, Kirkpatrick refers to S. Turner's *Account of An Embassy to the Court of the Teshoo Lama in Tibet*, London, W. Bulner & Co., 1800, pp.200-1. Musk was a produce of Tibet and exported at least since the VIIIth century. It is now sold in Lhasa for about stg. 7.-. per 100 grams. S. Turner, op. cit., p.381, indicates that a small quantity of musk was exported from Tibet to China in his day, and it is likely that it is so even nowadays. The same source mentions musk in a list of Tibetan exports to Bengal (ibidem. pp. 382-3).

with tea prepared in the Tibetan manner), buckwheat and potatoes. Millet and corn are used exclusively for the production of alcoholic drinks,[33] and mustard for the extraction of oil. Rice and wheat are carried to Yol-mo from lower altitudes.

Our search for ceremonial plants was more successful. Such plants, either individually or as ingredients for incense, are currently used for worship in the shrines of any house, monastery, or temple. The following samples were collected and identified:

Gymnospermae

1. Pinaceae

(a) *Abies* cf. *spectabilis (dhup;* Yol-mo d.: *skal-da shug-pa;* Eng.:fir). It is not uncommon at 3,000 m. Its leaves and white wood are used for the manufacture of incense *(dhupi:* for the wide use of this term, cf. also F. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 96).

(b) *Cedrus deodara* (Roxb.) Loud. (Yol-mo d.:*shug-pa shing;* Eng.: Himalayan cedar). The reddish-brown coloured and intensely scented wood of this Pinacea is used not only as the main ingredient in the manufacture of Nepalese incense, but also as a fuel for the Buddhist pyres in this area of Nepal. A robust and lofty tree, often attaining 70 m in height, it is distributed in the western Himalayan region of Nepal between 1,200 and 1,300 m, although it can be found even at 2,700 m.[34] Cf. L. Chandra, (ed.), f. 98.

2. Cupressaceae

(a) *Juniperus indica* Bertoloni *sive Juniperus pseudo-sabina* Fish. et Mey.; J.D. Hooker, 1882). The needle-like leaves of this shrub are denser than those of *Juniperus recurva.* Its branchlets are burnt for worship.

[33] Here the process of brewing may be mentioned. When the boiled grains have cooled down, some yeast is added, after which the brew is left standing for two or three days, until it has sufficiently fermented. After some water has been poured into it, the brew is considered to be ready for use.

[34] The Deodar Cedar was introduced in 1831 in Great Britain from the Himālayas and planted mainly for ornamental purposes. It grows there to 60 m in height and may be admired for example in the ornamental drives of the New Forest.

(b) *Juniperus recurva* Buch.-Ham. ex D. Don (Nep.: *bairunpati;* also; *dhupi).* It is distributed in the temperate and alpine Himalayas from 2,300 to 4,000 m. Its branchlets are picked at the end of the summer and used either to manufacture incense, or else are burnt for worship. Cf. also F. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 97.

Angiospermae Dictyledones

3. Ericaceae

Rhododendron anthopogon D. Don (Nep.: *sunpati;* also: *dhupi).* This small shrub, 3 m high, is distributed in the alpine Himālayas at any altitude from 3,300 to 4,000 m. It is used in the manufacture of incense. If we have to believe the information given to us by the chieftain of Melemchi, Punya Vajra Lama, the sulphur-coloured flowers of this plant are picked at the end of the spring and used to prepare a concoction which, according to religious texts, will stimulate mental activity. Cf. also F. Hamilton, op. cit., p. 97.

4. Valerianaceae

Nardostachys jatamansi DC. (Nep.: *dzaributi;* Eng.: spikenard). This erect herb is distributed in the Himalayan regions at an altitude between 3,300 and 5,100 m. It is used to manufacture not only incense, but, according to our informant at Melemchi, also a perfume which is used by Lama women.

5. Compositae

Artemisia dubia Wall. *(Artemisia vulgaris* Linn.; J.D. Hooker, 1882) Nep.: *titepati;* Eng.: mugwort). This plant, plentiful between 1,500 and 3,600 m, is used either for the manufacture of incense, or else burnt on its own, in which case its dried flowers are preferred.

6. Undetermined

Da-li. We have been unable to positively identify this plant so far. According to H.A. Jaschke, (op. cit., p. 247), its name, in Tibetan, designates "several kinds of low-growing Rhododendron". S.Ch. Das, op. cit., p. 612, gives the spelling: *da-lis*

and defines it as "a species of dwarf rhododendron with fragrant leaves". The spelling *da-li*, however, is confirmed in L. Chandra (ed.), op. cit., f. 106. Flowers and blossoms of this plant are used for medicinal purposes. A.F. Gammerman and B.V. Semichov, op. cit., No. 575, confirm both the spelling *da-li* and the translation "rhododendron". Its root is used to manufacture incense.

Regarding the use of ceremonial plants in Yol-mo, this report may be considered to be virtually complete. The scarce samples of edible plants, particularly berries, which we could gather during our excursion, would justify a second journey to the area during the spring, in order to complete the research. The interest inherent to this type of study resides in a truly scientific attitude towards the use, preparations and properties of plants. Tibetan science is founded as much on observation as on the beliefs that there is no illness without a corresponding panacea in nature and that each plant is endowed with an individual utilitarian function. However naive this attitude may be, an attentive scrutiny of the uses of medicinal and edible plants in the field would probably show that they often correspond to properties acknowledged by modern western science, at the same time enriching it with more data. Many of the medicinal plants discussed in this article are in fact already exported from Nepal.

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SHORT REVIEWS

THE CASTE HIERARCHY AND THE STATE OF NEPAL: A STUDY OF THE MULUKI AIN OF 1854. By Andras Hofer. Khumbu Himal, Ergebnisse Des Forschungsunternehmens Nepal Himalaya. Universitatsverlag Wanger, Innsbruck. 1979.

The study of caste in India by anthropologists is made in village settings where its beliefs are still reigning strong. Caste is controlled and perpetuated by informal local bodies such as the caste assemblies. For hundreds of years caste and formal political authority have had no direct connection in India, mostly because India was ruled by Muslim and British powers for many centuries. After India's independence in 1947, caste became an untenable concept to give recognition to and to enshrine in the laws of a modern secular state. However, the case of Nepal in this regard is quite the opposite of India; here a patrimonial state has centrally managed and controlled caste matters for everybody from a long time in the past. Even now when Nepal has adopted the goals of development and modernisation in its polity and governance, its past legacy manifest in certain forms continues. The country is steeped in tradition, the caste system itself has not been abolished as such, and the source of all power in the state is the king who can only be a Hindu according to its constitution. In the past, the state used to get speedily involved in the adjudication of caste matters. Caste is an important consideration even now for retaining social status and economic privileges in Nepal, although in the eyes of the Law everybody is made equal. The present book by Andras Hofer examines the state-caste relationship in detail probing certain crucial issues in the setting of Nepal in a most scholarly study. The study also develops a marvellous tool for studying the anthropology of caste by using a historical-legal document belonging to the middle of the 19th century. This document is the Legal Code of Nepal, popularly called in Nepali the *Muluki Ain* (henceforth MA in this review), which had, for more than a century since it

was first promulgated in 1854 A.D., represented the highest legal authority in the governance of all the people of Nepal.

The MA contains a wide array of laws in a comprehensive compilation, detailing the punishment of civil and criminal offences under diverse social, economic and administrative categories. Some of its sections provide excellent material for studying the social relationship of groups in a traditional society of South Asia. This document has been known to exist for quite some time. Yet, except for short papers by a few scholars in the past, it has hardly been tapped by anybody at such length before. This underlines the great importance of Hofer's study. Besides, a state document such as the MA may have some wholly new clues to provide for understanding the theory of caste, which lends an added value to the present study.

There are in all nineteen concise sections in the book, a conclusion and two appendices. The central theme of enquiry examines the caste hierarchy of Nepal and some of its bases and ramifications, correlation of caste and status, dimensions of status, and finally, the role of state in the management of intra-caste and inter-caste relationships. Of the two appendices, one attempts to define caste hierarchy as observed in sharing a water-pipe smoke in a village of central Nepal based on the author's empirical data, and the other gives a translation of the section of MA on the killing of cows. The presentation assembles the data from MA and enunciates each subject with descriptive texts and tables. Then a brief mention of theoretical formulations on each problem, further supported by ethnographic data from published sources are given, and in this the author shows a remarkable familiarity and knowledge.

For such an unwieldy book the MA comes out most clearly on the caste hierarchy of the people it deals with. There is a single linear hierarchy laid down for everybody in which Nepal's social and cultural heterogeneity is effectively comprehended. The integration of the Newars in this society has been marked with some ambivalence, however. They constitute a distinct group of Hindus marked off by a history and culture of their own from the other *Parbatiya* (hill) Hindus who promulgated the MA. The Newar low castes continue to be treated as low castes with their precisely defined positions in it. But their other castes in the middle and higher order are seen ranged alongside the various ethnic communities who follow no internal caste

stratification of their own and who are labelled *matawali* for their alcohol drinking in their usages and customs. The case of the Newars does probably provide a clue to the process of subjugation of a smaller group by a larger and politically more powerful group through war and conquest as seen recurrently happening in Indian history. The claim of intrinsic caste purity and superiority by the predominant group is mostly made on the basis of cultural attributes. The two symbolic appurtenances determining the higher and the lower hierarchy among pure caste groups ascribed by MA are respectively the sacred cord and alcohol drinking. But the high caste Newar Hindus' cord-wearing was apparently given not much significance in view of their alcohol-drinking practices. Curiously, this ritual line also draws a linguistic line between the speakers of Nepali and speakers of Tibeto-Burman groups of languages, although this was no basis of distinction for tne MA. One wonders as to what symbolism the Newar themselves had adopted to distinguish their castes from the ethnic groups such as the Tamang when they were ruling Nepal.

A much stronger line marking the high-low status in the castes of MA is represented by water-exchange line, much like everywhere else in the caste societies. The laws for breaching it are the most severe, and the consequence is heavy in proportion to the relative distance of the impure caste from the high caste. The entire territory of the MA's jurisdiction which would cover the state's international boundaries is looked upon as a sacred land where the Hindus' high psycho-moral order would be jealously guarded by the state. Any loss in the absolute caste-specific purity of a person was more the state's concern than that of his immediate family or his kin, because if this was not at once rectified either by allowing expiation or awarding of punishment, the defaulter could contaminate the whole society and bring the life of *dharma* collapsing down.

Hofer's study indicates several other bases of hierarchy in the MA besides the above ritual one. These imply the economic and the legal status cuting across the ritual status marked by alcohol drinking. It is significant that all these statuses would have been meaningless for other societies outside the authority of the state. An interesting point emerges on women. Their caste-specific purity, legal status and their economic rights get correlated with three variables in their sexual-purity, which are sexual virginity, marital chastity and becoming a whore. The chastity of a woman remains intact up to

three marriages, after which she is decreed a whore. Only a woman married as a virgin is allowed her commensality rights with her husband. The legality of hypergamous marriages within all the pure castes of Nepal and allowance for remarriage to even women of high castes secures full caste-status of the father to all the issues born out of such marriages. But caste prudery requires the husband in such a case to separate his commensality from his wife. Thus in the MA, commensality is more important than consexuality for the retention of caste.

A meaningful discussion in the book turns on the question of examining the state's role in the light of MA in the last several sections of it. The objective behind the compilation of MA is set out in its preface: one objective is said to be 'homogenising the application of the Law for the whole country' and, the other, meting out a uniform punishment to all the people according to their guilt and caste. The MA, thus, appears to integrate within itself the juristic traditions of two different ages. The urge for homogeneisation has probably its genesis in the awareness of a modern state felt through the person of the then ruler and promulgator of MA, Jung Bahadur Rana (1846-1877 A.D.), which might have developed out of his contacts with the British Indian Government and from the impact of his visit to England and France in 1850 A.D. The codification of the MA and the authority bestowed on it for the dispensation of justice through the various appointed courts and offices of the government are more in line with the acts of a modern state. (It is believed many punishments in the MA are less severe and harsh than what these were in the pre-codification days). However, the MA seems to support and perpetuate a Hindu society that is quite traditional in its functioning and outlook. Its various laws on social interaction between groups and between individuals of the same group invoke a much older Hindu society. Many categories of offences enumerated in the MA draw a close similarity with the *Arthasastra* of Kautilya than is usually thought by most people. In the same way, the idealistically visualised system of social relationship of caste based on *dharma* is derived in its entire spirit from the *smritis*, especially *Manusmriti*.

So, in the light of the above statement, to what class of work the MA must truly belong? Is it the legal code of a modern nation-state or merely a compilation of traditional Hindu law? No doubt, it is a little of both these things. However, its traditional overtones are more distinct. The state seems to enjoy much less power in

prescribing new laws in total disregard of the traditional and customary laws. The cases of Mecya (P. 100) and Tamang (P. 148) cited by Hofer to prove that the MA arrogated a greater power to its ruler than the ancient Indian legal tradition allowed its king to have, are small and isolated instances only. Actually, decisions regarding them had been taken as corrective actions of MA's previous ignorance of acknowledged empirical facts. In the traditional Indian concept of law, the state's (the king's) role appears to have always lain in merely being a punisher. The enuciation of law itself came through accepting customary laws or was the handiwork of Brahmans, who knew what the moral-ethical world ought really to be. This overall spirit of separation of authority is generally followed by the MA also.

On the basis of MA the state's role in caste gains certain new dimensions in Nepal vis-a-vis India, which may be summarised as follows:

i. Nepali society has a strictly defined hierarchy, whereas this can get attenuated in India, from region to region;

ii. its laws are prescriptive backed by a state authority and felt with equal force throughout the state's boundaries;

iii. it has centralised rules for punishing infringement of caste offences;

iv. social mobility is strictly regulated and is allowed only individually in the approved manner (this is in marked contrast to the Indian village situation. A.C. Mayer, in his book *Caste and Kinship in Central India* (1960; Routledge & Kegan Paul, London) says in respect of Central India: "One must note that a rich individual or one who has influence with officials or politicians cannot change his rank alone. The entire caste-group must change with him)" (p. 49).

In passing, I should probably mention a couple of minor errors which have appeared in the book due to minor misunderstanding of the text of the MA. On p. 57, Hofer derives a wrong import in saying that salt can act as a purifier of food. If anything, salt does just the opposite. On p. 73 and p. 112, he mentions that a Upadhyaya Brahmin has the freedom to refuse to eat from his properly wedded Upadhyaya wife married as a virgin. The actual line (MA p. 389 # 34) clearly mentions that such a wife to whom he may do so is a *lyayako* i.e., wed without proper marriage rites. There is similarly a little confusion (p. 45) between the term *Kumal* (an ethnic group of the river valleys of Central Nepal) and *kumale* (Nepali term for potter which exclusively comes from a sub-caste of the Newar Jyapu).

The book is an outstanding contribution to Nepali studies in an area of great importance the utility of which will be realised more fully by further studies, for which we are all so grateful to Hofer.

P.R.S.

REPORT FROM LHASA. 1979. By Dor Bahadur Bista, Sajha Publications, Kathmandu. Price: Rs

The report furnishes general reading material on Tibet in the wake of its take-over by the communist government of the People's Republic of China in 1959. It describes places in and around Lhasa that the author was invited to visit in his official capacity by the government and officials of Tibet, during his stay there. The author was Chief Consul at the Royal Nepali Consulate Office in Lhasa for nearly three years during the period 1972-1975. The writing, rendered in a personalized style, is based on the author's impressions and observations made of the new Tibet under the communist regime. There is no specific theme or focus of the book. It rambles like the diary of an amiable diplomat who is pleased by the change and progress made by Tibet under the communist regime of China in all spheres of its life. There is a description of the author's journey to Lhasa by the overland route across the Kodari bridge on the Nepal - Tibet border containing some highlights of the Tibetan landscape and the new hamlets and settlements along the route. Other accounts include descriptions of communes, parks, factories, theatres and some of the old monastic centres, new changed into museums. Several sections towards the end of the book are devoted to describing persons of Nepali or mixed Nepali and Tibetan parentage living in Lhasa in connection with their trade. Some of them have problems with regard to the transfer of their property from Tibet. How one wishes that this aspect had been treated at some length and that the author had taken this moment to delve into the history of these people in Tibet and trace the roots of the present problem. However the book endeavours to scrupulsusly avoid anything that might even remotely be called polemical about China-Nepal relations, and the narrative is thus cautions and subdued in tone. The text is illustrated with a few photographic cliches of Tibet. The absence of a map of Tibet from the book is, however, somewhat puzzling.

A NEPALESE DISCOVERS HIS COUNTRY. By Prakash A. Raj. Sajha Prakashan, Kathmandu, Nepal, Price Rs 25.00.

This small booklet suffers from two basic flaws that no book of any merit should ever suffer from. First, it has no subject matter of general interest. Secondly, its rendering style is dull and commonplace. One might even be a little irked with the somewhat presumptuous title which arouses a lot of expectations in the readers at first. The book is written as an autobiographic sketch, but in a manner which appears no little queer for an autobiography; members of the family about whom mention is made, are not identified by their names anywhere. The grandfather of the author is praised in high and glowing terms for his exploits and achievements made in the Rana regime. Yet, nobody is able to say what such a distinguished person was called by reading the book.

To the author, the reason for dashing off the present book lay in his perceiving of himself as a frant-ranking representative of Nepal's socio-economic and political transition period in 1951. There is no doubt indeed about his meeting these qualifications. Besides being born in this transition period, he hails from a Brahmin family which had played no mean role during the Rana regime. Being able to use such a vantage point presented to him by his family background, one cannot help feeling that a fascinating book could have been made out of it by using a little imagination. The family was the one which throughout had provided the Rana rule with the *Badagurujya* (the hereditory post of the Chief Royal Religious Authority) to the Rana rulers. Thus one expects not too unreasonably perhaps that the author had tapped the family archives or made use of the family gossip that he might have overheard for making the material of the book and giving new insights into the ways and manners of Rana court-life, the power, authority and functions exercised by his grandfather in Nepal, and about the flurries and anxieties faced by the tottering regime near the time of its downfall in 1951. It would not be wrong to presume that the author's grandfather himself could not have looked at these developments with equanimity since he was such a strong prop of the Rana regime throughout his life. Instead of being any of these things, the book is merely a redaction of some well-known facts, already told by so many hands in more authentic and documented forms. Occasional details of the family accounts are the only original parts of the book, and perhaps the only interesting parts, as well. One

last point. The incident of the author being taken for admission to an ordinary school inside the town of Kathmandu by his grandfather immediately after the political changeover (p. 48) seems to me to be a case of some sociological significance for Nepal. Aristocratic pride and norms appropriate to it exhibited in the living style of certain people, seems to wear off as quickly as it had first appeared in Brahmins and, probably, in a few other castes, too. More lasting pretensions of the aristocratic behaviour are wont to be the expressions of families belonging to one of two specific caste groups, who in such doings believe themselves to be emulating the higher life-styles of the erstwhile Rana palaces. These people expect others to be addressing them in a more servile and obsequious form of court language that falls out of tune with the modern times.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS OF KAPILAVASTU, LUMBINI, DEVADAHA. By Babu Krishna Rijal. 88 pages, 45 illustrations. Published by Educational Enterprises (Pvt.) Ltd., Kathmandu. Price Rs 65.00.

This small book, written by an expert from the Archaeological Department, HMG Nepal, is an attempt to present an up to date record of the archaeological remains of the Nepal tarai area around Lumbini, the birthplace of the Buddha. Chapter One on Kapilavastu gives an account of what is known of Kapilavastu, the home of the Buddha, from ancient Buddhist texts and the accounts of the Chinese travelers who visited it in the fifth and seventh centuries A.D. Chapter Two on Lumbini gives a short historical account of the site and an account of the archaeological activities that have taken place there since the site was rediscovered in 1901. Chapter Three is concerned mainly with the identification of the remains of the stupa in Deoriya village in Parasi as the Ramagrama Stupa of the ancient Buddhist accounts.

Chapter Four takes up the question of the identification of Kapilavastu. Kapilavastu, the home of the Buddha must be distinguished from Lumbini his birthplace which was a grove on the way between his father's home and his mother's paternal home. Lumbini is positively identified by the Ashokan pillar marking the spot; no such positive evidence has been found for Kapilavastu. The author outlines the early speculations on the location of Kapilavastu by orientalists in the last century and the final identification of Tilaurakot (about

two miles north of Taulihawa in the Nepal tarai) as the site of Kapilavastu by P.C. Mukherjee. The rest of this chapter and the whole of the next chapter deal with the excavations at Tilaurakot in 1962 and 1967. Chapter Five gives an account of the chronology of the site from archaeological strata, an account of the structures excavated, and the items of archaeological interest found in the course of the excavations.

The book has two appendices which take up the now contorverted identification of Tilaurakot as Kapilavastu. The controversy has arisen because of the archaeological finds at Piprahwa, about three miles south of Lumbini in the Indian state of Uttar Pradesh and the claims of K.M. Srivastava, the archaeologist in charge of these excavations, that Piprahwa is Kapilavastu. The first appendix, an Archaeological Department handout as well as some of the author's own remarks in Chapter Four, unfortunately, generate more heat than light, but the author's point is valid: Srivastava's conclusions go far beyond what his evidence will support. The second appendix by A.D.T.E. Perera of Sri Lanka is a reasoned and balanced assesment of the whole question. He too concludes that, judging by the available archaeological materials at the two places, it is more justifiable to identify Tilaurakot as Kapilavastu than Piprahwa.

One thing that is evident from this account is that there is much work left to be done at Tilaurakot. Only a few of the several mounds within the ancient walled complex have been excavated and the remains of the villages across the river from the walled complex have not been touched. Further excavation and preservation of the excavated sites might well settle the whole controversy and would certainly enhace the whole area as a pilgrimage site for the numerous Buddhists from all over Asia who now come to Lumbini and whose number will increase considerably with the development of the Lumbini site.

J K L

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