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**Südasiens-Institut
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Editors:

Richard Burghart
Martin Gaenszle
András Höfer
Südasiens-Institut
Im Neuenheimer Feld 330
D - 69120 Heidelberg
Germany

Contributing Editors:

Austria: Dr. Michael Torsten Much
Institut für Tibetologie und
Buddhismuskunde
Universität Wien
Maria-Theresien-Str. 3/11
A-1090 Wien

France: Dr. Anne de Sales
23, rue Montorgueil
F-75001 Paris

Great Britain: Dr. Michael Hutt
Department of Indology
School of Oriental & African
Studies
Thornhaugh Street
GB-London WC1

Poland: Dr. Krzysztof Debnicki
Instytut Orientalistyczny
Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego
Krakowskie
Przedmieście 26/28
P-Warszawa.

Scandinavia: Hakan Wahlquist
The National Museum of Ethno-
graphy
P.O. Box 27140
S-102 52 Stockholm
S-Sweden

Switzerland: Dr. Joanna Pfaff-
Czarnecka
Ethnologisches Seminar
der Universität Zürich
Freiensteinstr. 5
CH-8032 Zürich.

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REVIEW ARTICLE

Stepping into the Public Arena Western Social Anthropology on Development Processes in Nepal

Joanna Pfaff-Czamecka

Bourliaud, J., Dobremez, J.-F. and F. Vigny (eds.) 1990. *Sociétés rurales des Andes et de l'Himalaya*. Grenoble: Versants.

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Gilmour, D.A. and R.J. Fisher 1991. Villagers, Forests and Foresters. *The Philosophy, Process and Practice of Community Forestry in Nepal*. Kathmandu: Sahayogi Press.

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After ten days of Nepalese and Western scholars listening to each other on the occasion of two conferences on recent processes in the Nepalese society held in Kathmandu in September 1992 (1), the periodical *Himal* pointed out in its review a "schism that grew between some foreign and Nepali research camps". While stressing the urgency perceived by Nepalese scholars to address the issues of the socioeconomic development of the country and to attack local problems through, for instance, applied research, Pratyoush Onta, the

author, quoted in a prominent place a Nepalese colleague's opinion on the Western contributions to date: "foreign scholars have done research with no relevance to Nepali society for many years". As is the case with all fundamentalism, it is impossible to argue with such a critic. However, a reply is necessary in order to continue what has been established over four decades (as apparent from Onta's article as well): a dialogue between both "camps".

Such a dialogue is all the more important, since, according to *Himal*, the Western social anthropology of Nepal faces to some extent the same problems that are encountered by our Nepalese colleagues educated within Western traditions: the enormous critical debate about epistemological and ethical issues concerning the Western representation of the "other" and the Western control of discourses on the representation of truth about the other - a debate going on in India for instance through the project of "Subaltern Studies" (2) - has finally reached the public forum in Nepal.

The critical voice in *Himal* has not (yet?) been raised by the "objects" of anthropological inquiries. These basically remain silent within the scientific realm, though not entirely: in October 1992 Alan Macfarlane presented a revealing paper in Oxford about Gurung activists' involvement in his and Sarah Harrison's project to translate Pignède's *Les Gurung* (1966) into English. While in Nepal, and later by fax, he was repeatedly asked to add comments upon specific passages of the book in which the former "objects" of inquiry felt misrepresented. Those whom we study in the course of our research show an interest in

the way they are described. We may expect that these kinds of queries will come up in public more and more.

Our Nepalese colleagues increasingly ask uncomfortable questions about their role within scientific, governmental and donor institutions, fearing that so far their work has basically benefited the funding agencies and themselves. They are in a double-role since the ongoing societal process affects their living and working circumstances. At the same time, as experts, they have something to say about the form of this change. Realizing that all over the world intelligentsia tends to associate with "power", solutions are sought to find a way out of this predicament. Many call for applied and action research, and, as mentioned, claim to abandon the traditional social anthropology as pursued mainly by Western scholars. I cannot agree with the basic imperative demanding that all scientific research be immediately useful, nor do I agree with the complaint that Western scholars have yet to contribute any knowledge about pertinent societal processes in Nepal. On the contrary, I shall try to indicate the scope of Western research on "development", understood as a comprehensive process of societal change, while our direct cooperation with donor institutions will only be a minor issue. The relationship between theory and practice (e.g., in the form of action research) will certainly be an important topic in future encounters between the Nepalese and their Western colleagues. The criticisms raised are a welcome and a much needed opportunity to assess our role in understanding the nature of Nepalese development.

It is no coincidence that the debate on the contribution of social sciences to Nepalese development was only brought to the public after the Nepalese citizens won the battle against the political establishment in Spring 1990. This debate is to be seen in the context of the democratization process, in the course of which many values and

institutions formerly taken for granted are being fundamentally questioned. In this process the Nepalese and Western experiences differ. I do not know how many of my Western colleagues have been facing the same problem I had when in Spring 1987 I was prevented from presenting some critical findings from the field in Kathmandu because I wanted to talk about things "that could not be". Still, the political system has not interfered with my research (or so I believe), and it seems that it has not affected the research of other Western scholars, even if many were careful not to raise, for instance, the issue of ethnicity in public. But why then does the Western research lack, with few exceptions, critical analyses of the political system or of the politico-economic relations? Did we follow the "rule of hospitality" that demands that we do not criticize the host? But who are our hosts?

The gap between our genuine concern from afar, and our Nepalese colleagues' daily confrontation with Nepal's societal conditions, even if they are by and large in privileged positions, is best demonstrated by the book *Nepal. Perspectives on Continuity and Change* edited by Kamal P. Malla, that was published just before Spring 1990. (3) Several Nepalese social scientists who contributed to this book were risking their privileges in the fight against the former "establishment" long before the "Movement" had broken into open. None of the critical Western publications can be so full of metaphors, allusions and texts-between-the-lines like several articles in this collection.

Though the introduction of the multi-party-system and decentralisation efforts form part of the substantial societal transformation in Nepal, tremendous problems persist, as do striking inequalities. The emergence of differentiated public fora, especially in urban areas, is in itself a sign of change and a new field of orientation for those who come here to do research on societal change. However, under the

changing circumstances new "holy cows" are coming into existence, and a substantial share of Nepalese people lack access to the public sphere, except when they are *targets* of interventions designed by experts who are putting forward their specific world views and (pre)conceptions about their objects. "Development" or "societal change" is to a large extent a process of emerging and/or changing *links* between societal subsystems. Viewed from the socio-anthropological perspective concerned in the first place with local societies, it is most pertinent to understand how these are increasingly being "embedded" in larger societal systems (such as the state). Even though some social anthropologists dread the mere idea that their research could relate to "development" at all, it is a new area for our inquiries to conceptualize links where partly incompatible world views, visions, knowledge and technologies, systems of production and circulation, and authority patterns meet and often collide. It is then our task, in my view, to bring our knowledge into the development debate in order to counterbalance the wide-spread tendency in the development discourse to reduce "traditional" life-styles to socio-cultural factors that "lag behind". It is equally essential to understand the nature of power relations involved in the process of "lifting out" social relations from local contexts of interaction and their "restructuring across indefinite spans of time-space" (4), especially by the media of money and expert systems.

1. Social anthropology and socio-cultural factors

This review is meant to discuss some of the issues which have constituted Western research on societal processes in Nepal, the results of which were published after 1985. Only a small portion of the existing publications could be "digested" here, but I hope to be able to sketch some important areas of inquiry and to point out several apparent deficiencies which prevent the

emergence of a fruitful and complex development debate within the social anthropology of Nepal. Some of the results presented by the geographers, economists and political scientists who have contributed to our knowledge will also be discussed. Since deep and long-lasting personal, and, to a lesser degree, institutional relationships between Nepalese and Western scholars have significantly structured the social anthropology of Nepal, it is also impossible to avoid quoting our Nepalese colleagues. Given my endeavor to present some of the most recent publications, there will be no space to do justice to the earlier contributions by Ch. von Fürer-Haimendorf, J.T. Hitchcock, Ph. Sagant, L. Rose, J. Sacherer, P. Caplan, A. Manzardo, D. Messerschmidt, P. Blaikie, J. Cameron, upon which present research is based to a large degree. (5)

At present, a growing number of social anthropologists, who are otherwise involved in "traditional" research, occasionally turn to development issues, probably because these, such as in the form of development projects, make themselves particularly noticeable in the field. That such encounters often result in embarrassment and doubt is testified in Todd T. Lewis's review article on Foreign Aid Processes in the Kathmandu Valley (1986). He describes his experience with the world of development workers and their projects as "extremely valuable but ultimately disillusioning" (1986: 168). Most social anthropologists, Nepalese and foreign, will agree with him that "the time should long be past when projects can be naive about socio-cultural realities or send in amateurs to design and implement critical efforts involving human survival" (*ibid.*).

The need to promote this perspective will be the *Leitmotiv* of this review. However, I suggest that we abandon the term "socio-cultural" which increasingly is applied to Nepal's peoples and/or local societies in the "development" jargon. While a few years ago it was essential to bring the terms "social" and "cultural" into the debate, nowadays this simplifying

phraseology disguises the complexity of human organisation to which any intervention must pay attention. The opposition between "development" and "socio-cultural factors", overtly or covertly present in many publications and project documents, conceals two crucial facts. Firstly, "development" is (or has) a culture as well, notwithstanding some experts' insistence that the Western rationality underlying the technical cooperation is "beyond culture". As Burghart points out in his article on health development, "the health planner sees himself as a scientist, or as a purely *rational* administrator, whose own cultural background (be it Nepalese or foreign) does not impinge on his own *decision-making*. It is other people, lacking professional knowledge, who are influenced by 'cultural factors'" (1988: 207, my italics). Secondly, the above-mentioned opposition narrows down the scope of human agency. People at the "bottom end" of the development hierarchies are not just embedded within specific social or cultural systems but have to make rational choices, for instance as economic or political agents - a fact that has often been neglected or played down in the development discourse so far. It is our task to challenge faulty stereotypes that are often repeated in public. How the Nepalese people are presented in the public is crucial, for, as Pigg remarks in her innovative article on social representations and development in Nepal: "Images of villages and village life accompany the promotion of development ideals" (1992: 491).

That the culture of development should become a new area of anthropological inquiry, was recently argued by Judith Justice. Her book *Policies, Plans, and People. Foreign Aid and Health Development* (1986) focusses on the Integrated Community Health Programme which was gradually transformed into Primary Health Care. Central to this book is the question: "how comes that information on social and cultural 'realities' [sic!, JPC] is generally not

used in planning health programmes?". For Justice, the reason lies in the nature of the Nepalese and international institutions involved, or rather in the bureaucratic cultures in which planning and implementing take place. I agree with the author that her study contributes to the much needed new anthropology "dealing with one of the major institutions now influencing our lives - the multinational organization, with its own goals and culture" (1989: 5). Having been herself exposed to the complex system of donor agencies, Justice is able to show the interfaces between governmental and donor agencies and the "people", and she discusses the possible role social scientists could play in facilitating the "meeting" process. While reflecting about this task, Justice describes the difficulties of social anthropologists interested in "modern issues": "One advisor repeatedly asked me why I was studying planners and the planning process instead of studying kinship, as other anthropologists did. (...) Ironically, knowledge of Nepali kinship networks could have increased advisors' understanding of decision making within the government. In addition to joking questions about why I did not carry a big stick as Margaret Mead did, I was most frequently asked what 'my group' was. When I replied, 'the Department of Health', or 'health planners', the conversation usually stopped" (1989: 136). Similar questions come from some social anthropologists as well.

A weakness of the book is that the author does not define what is meant by social and cultural "realities" (she never talks about societal divisions, conflicting interests etc.), and that she does not give a comprehensive account as to which elements in the "receivers" social life and world view condition their attitudes towards modern preventive and healing processes. Her section on "villagers' response to services" is far too short to bridge this gap, whereas other "socio-cultural" factors named throughout the book pertain basically to attitudes of the project personnel at

different levels of the planners' and implementors' hierarchy. The description of this hierarchy, the cooperation between the Nepalese government and the donor agencies (including constraints preventing it), the analysis of the impact of the international health policy upon Nepal, as well as the examples given about the planning and implementation process reaching down to the villages are, however, revealing. It is interesting to see, for instance, which ranks within the government are supposed to communicate with which ranks within the donor agencies (and with whom not), or how failures are deemed to occur when the government is under pressure to dispose of funds and when advisors are eager to produce quick results. There is also an interesting section on the bureaucratic culture rooted in Nepalese traditions which fits well into Dor Bahadur Bista's findings (published later) discussed in his *Fatalism and Development*. Besides suggesting that the social anthropology of Nepal should take up research on international and national institutions, and that development specialists listen to social anthropologists - the major value of this publication lies in repeated attempts to analyse the links between the "recipients" or "targets" of development projects and individuals and institutions of the Nepalese and international administration.

Obviously, this well-written book is primarily addressing planners and implementors; in Justice's eyes, the "dosage" of cultural and social issues depends apparently on what experts can digest; here I would have liked the author to go into more detail. A widespread dilemma becomes apparent here: what is obvious to social anthropologists is not known to the majority of those in charge of projects, who usually come from other disciplines, and, vice versa, academic scholars know little about the constraints of bureaucratic processes. How, is cooperation then possible? How is it possible, especially since, as Justice argues, our scarcely intelligible scientific language

is, not surprisingly, resented by development experts? Development experts are working under tremendous time-constraints (imposed by the system), seeking encompassing solutions, whereas we insist that realities of societal life are complex, hardly quantifiable, and to some degree unique. Justice suggests that anthropologists' approach to the planning process is different from that to gathering information (1989: 139). This is certainly a valid point, but, besides the ethical issue, it entails further practical problems. Let me come back to the basic question towards the end of this review, and turn now to two examples from the field of medical anthropology, which cast more light upon the issue of how to collect information about local societies (see also a small collection of articles in *Contributions to Nepalese Studies*, vol. 4, a special issue on anthropology, health and development, 1976).

Linda Stone (1986) also inquires into Primary Health Care (PHC). She shows that there is also a gap between written intentions (that contain vague notions) and the actual procedures. Though this project emphasizes "community participation" (by now a tremendously widespread term in project documents), the author is doubtful whether this aim was really achieved. She argues that the project encountered problems for three reasons in Nepal: 1. "PHC fails to appreciate villagers' values and their own perceived needs. In particular, PHC is organized primarily to provide health education, whereas villagers value modern curative services and feel little need for new health knowledge. 2. PHC views rural Nepali culture only pejoratively as a barrier to health education. Alternatively, local cultural beliefs and practices should be viewed as resources to facilitate dissemination and acceptance of modern health knowledge. 3. In attempting to incorporate Nepal's traditional medical practitioners into the program, PHC has mistakenly assumed that rural clients

passively believe in and obey traditional practitioners. In fact, clients play active roles and are themselves in control of the therapeutic process" (1986: 293).

Stone indicates here how little is known on the donor side about people's actual knowledge, perceptions and attitudes. This deficiency is matched by the paucity of scientific data on "everyday" issues, such as productive practices or usages within the household. Burghart (1988) is a rare exception. He inquires into the cultural knowledge of hygiene and sanitation that he sees as the basis for health development in Nepal. He concentrates mainly on the complex issue of "water": on the criteria people use to evaluate drinking water; classification of water-sources; forms of domestic storage of water; indigenous methods of water treatment; and knowledge of water-related diseases. While discussing the adequacy of local knowledge of hygiene, Burghart examines the notion of "culture" that guides development interventions (see also above). While addressing the problem of getting planners to translate their concerns into the understanding of local people, he stresses that policies cannot be successfully implemented and taken up by a people if they do not acquire some positive meaning in terms of their local culture. But the process of acquiring some mutual understanding is impeded by the cultural complexity, including the fact that "cultural knowledge" is unevenly distributed across the culture. Also: "One might (...) learn the terms of the debate or the criteria by which something is evaluated, but one cannot formalize common knowledge for it is context bound: not merely by the purpose of the action (e.g. to decontaminate well water) but also by the persons who are negotiating the solution" (1988: 208-8). While describing the interaction between medical doctors and Maithili women (Terai) Burghart also warns: "cultural misunderstandings occur, despite the fact that everyone speaks the same language" (ibid.: 210). Here, a fascinating area is

increasingly opening up in both the applied and the theoretical context; studies on problems of development cooperation (transfer and translation of knowledge; power relations involved) could contribute to the theoretical framework in the anthropological field. To my knowledge, however, no comprehensive attempts that build upon the recent anthropological theories (6) have been published on related phenomena in Nepal, and Nepalese examples and related concepts have not found entry into the broader theoretical debate.

Similar concerns emerge in the broad field of scientific studies on the natural environment as conceptualized and shaped by people. It is a rather recent area of inquiry in Himalayan research, to pay attention to *environmental knowledge*, to *people's perceptions of environment*; and to *forms of management of natural resources*. (7)

The majority of the contributions so far stem from neighbouring disciplines (geography, biology, agronomy, ecology, economics) whose findings are being published, for instance, in the American periodical "Mountain Research and Development" (but it is then not surprising that anthropological research has yet to reach an interesting level of theorising). A useful collection of geographical approaches to "indigenous environmental management and adaptation" and to "conservation and human resources" is presented in No. 1 in Vol. 10, 1990 with two short introductions by the social anthropologists Don Messerschmidt and Linda Stone. Extensive research was done at the Institute of Geography at Giessen: among recent publications are Perdita Pohle's inquiry into the ethnobotany in Manang district (1990); Ulrike Müller-Böker's research on social and economic causes of the overexploitation of natural resources in Gorkha (1990), or Willibald Haffner's article on the use of ecological potentials in Gorkha district (1986). The activities of the Bernese Geographical

Institute were briefly sketched in Number 2 (1991) of this Bulletin. Several articles on Nepal are included in an important reader on sustainable mountain agriculture (Jodha/Banskota/Pratap 1992) that includes a large variety of topics in two volumes ("Perspectives and Issues" and "Mountain Farmers' Strategies and Sustainability Implications"). This collection is certainly of interest to social scientists. However, one might even suspect that it is symptomatic that social anthropologists were not invited to participate. The fact that they were not, may be seen, among other things, as an indicator of many "hard-core" scientists' suspicion about our objectives, methods and approaches.

Several social scientists have inquired into people's roles (8) in natural resource management. For instance, Anis Dani and Gabriel Campbell (1986) presented a document on people's participation in watershed management in the Himalayan area. The discussion of management is accompanied by the analysis of people's perceptions of local resource value, resource renewability, resource security, resource use management, and resource equity (1986: 35). Another interesting document, meant to contribute anthropological knowledge to a large development project, was produced by Charles Ramble and Chandi P. Chapagain (1990) in collaboration with Woodlands Mountain Institute's Makalu-Barun Conservation Project (Sagarmatha National Park). The first part of this document is a careful examination of the existing literature on society and culture in the project region (seldom do project documents present digests of existing scientific data; there is a widespread tendency to produce data compilations anew). Then follows a discussion of the Sherpas' and the Rais' attitudes to nature and nature conservation with some practical suggestions how to cooperate with the local population, firstly in order to understand their social relationships and cultural systems and to learn from the amassed

knowledge, and secondly in order to translate project objectives into the "local" cultural notions.

Ramble and Chapagain point to "world views in action". This topic is taken up by two other social scientists who have worked in Eastern Nepal (Andrew Russel's PhD. thesis on the concept of environment within the Yakha community has, however, not yet been published). Klaus Seeland has presented several articles in which he explores the notion of "environment" as shaped by nature, society and religiousness (1990: 5, see also 1986). He inquires into external factors (for instance the influx of Hindu agriculturalists) affecting the changes in environmental perception among Tibeto-Burman speaking groups who are not only increasingly exposed to new forms of production, and hence to new forms of interaction with nature, but also to new cultural values displayed by the powerful immigrants. In this context he asks how "cultural notions of environment shape patterns of social reaction to environmental degradation" (1990: 1), and seeks to establish the reasons for social erosion in rural communities of South Asia. Seeland's articles are rather rare attempts of theorizing on factors underlying cultural change, and of examining how cultural change relates to environmental issues.

Despite what has been said about suspicions about social sciences among "hard-core" scientists, interdisciplinary attempts regarding the relationship of man and nature in Nepal/Himalayas are on the increase. Two French books result from such cooperation. The first one, *Les collines du Népal central: écosystèmes, structures sociales et systèmes agraires*, consisting of two volumes ("Paysages et sociétés dans les collines du Népal" and "Milieux et activités dans un village népalais") is the outcome of a prolonged (9) multidisciplinary research carried out by ecologists, geographers, anthropologists and agronomists. Several of the articles included were even written by

interdisciplinary teams. It is a very dense publication, comprising important data, identifying relevant areas of inquiry, and aiming at enlarging the conceptual framework, even though descriptions prevail. Since the team concentrated upon one area surrounding the village Salme in Nuwakot district situated at altitudes between 1400 and 4000 meters, it was possible to give a rounded picture of the relations between man and environment while pointing to a striking ecological and cultural variation even within such a small research unit. The authors describe, in the first volume, the natural environment of the surrounding area, the local population groups (comprising a very interesting ethno-historical account of Tamang chiefdoms that existed in this area before the Gorkha conquest - written by G. Toffin, C. Jest, D. Blamont), the diversity of agricultural systems, factors for differentiation of agro-pastoral systems, and the variety and scope of local and regional exchanges. The second volume concentrates on Salme village and discusses the forest resources and their exploitation, the ethnography and demography of the local Tamang society, agricultural practices and potentials as well as husbandry techniques.

The study area comprises several disparate eco-zones. Denis Blamont first distinguishes two types: 1. mountain production in a cold and dry milieu (prominence of pastoralism with high mountain pastures, besides agriculture and trade), and 2. tropical mountain area with intensive agricultural production. Two intermediary forms are added: 3. a humid and moderate mountain production system (prominence of pastoralism, but with a large forest area and the possibility to practice more intensive agriculture), and 4. an intermediary form between 2. and 3. with dependency upon rice agriculture and pastoralism at the same time. The detailed examination of the interdependence between different forms of production within and between various zones as well as

of changes in productive forms that occurred here, provides a comprehensive picture of a small territorial unit.

Again, this book pays attention to the complexity caused by the tremendous climatic, natural and socio-cultural diversity in a mountain environment. Its value also lies in stressing the importance of pastoralism and the interconnectedness between pastoralism and agriculture, while usually research puts too much emphasis on agriculture and the social relations based upon it (plains perspective). The thoroughness of this book may not be appealing to development practitioners. Jean-François Dobremez, the editor, insists that this research project does not aim at any practical problems of development; rather it seeks to answer scientific questions. Still, the findings of this book are certainly valuable to development agencies. The results of the project have also been published in various article collections and other books, and, according to the editor, they have been communicated to Nepalese colleagues and officials through seminars. However, one may ask how the contents of this book can be disseminated to those within the Nepalese and the Western audience who are not fluent in French (and the same question pertains to a bulk of publications written in Nepali, German, Norwegian, etc.). With the huge amounts of "development"-money pouring into Nepal, setting up an excellent library on social research, containing abstracts of publications that were written in other languages than English, would be a comparatively modest project.

The second French publication concentrates on *Sociétés rurales des Andes et de l'Himalaya*, and thus stresses the fact that there is something specific to the mountain environment that needs to be explored. It is a promising attempt at bringing to light several interesting differences between Andean and Himalayan habitats and societies (different quantities of space at people's disposal; different relation-

ships between state measures and mountain peasant societies). The comparison is however not very far-reaching, and this volume is rather a collection of papers on different topics than a form of dialogue, lacking a concluding effort to conceptualize what is specific to the mountains. Its main value lies in initiating comparative research. (10)

The social anthropologists who contributed the Himalayan examples all concentrate on the question how *space* can be conceptualized by social science, and what kind of "local" categories there are. Gérard Toffin discusses different spatial levels of social morphology among the Tamangs of Ankhola, which intersect with spatial divisions given by forms of technological adaptation in the production process. Marie Lecomte-Tilouine gives an interesting account of perceptions through which space is being taken "apart" by a Magar society in Gulmi district. By giving a list of toponyms, the author stresses that symbolic dichotomies do not necessarily coincide with physical barriers. Claiming that "the village does not exist", Philippe Ramirez discusses the lack of homology of administrative units with "coherent" units which are given by natural features, economic or social reasons etc. These three short articles are imaginative and stimulating attempts to compare differing perspectives (e.g., of the local people vs. of government officials or of scientists) of the same (?) phenomena.

2. Space-time, economy, demography

Introducing the spatial perspective leads me to two attempts done outside social sciences and to think about the nature of development processes in the Himalayas. How does the fact that the mountain environment conditions relationships in space and time, affect the processes of change? The geographer Nigel Allan compares two models of mountains, and argues that new models are needed to conceptualize "mountain development". The altitudinal

zonation model, derived from biogeography, has been widely used as a vehicle for characterizing man's imprint on the mountain landscape (1986: 185). This model reflects successful human adaptation and manipulation of the great range in environmental conditions found in mountain habitats. Allan proposes an alternate model that takes into consideration the tremendous changes in productive practices and expanding markets which arose in the mountains (Alps, Andes, and the Himalayas) through road, track and bridge construction: "The altitudinal zonation model is no longer suitable for characterizing mountain ecosystems now that human activity is directed to new motorized transportation networks linked to a wider political economy and no longer dependent on altitude" (ibid.). In Allan's model the "plains" where there are societal centres (political-administrative centres, market centres) are increasingly encroaching upon the mountains.

Even though Allan points to environmental degradation as a consequence of enhanced access, his analysis of market forces integrating mountain economies is far too enthusiastic. There is no mention of the everlasting debates in social sciences (e.g., the dependency-models, applied to Nepal by various Nepalese scholars as well as by P. Blaikie, J. Cameron and D. Seddon) about the nature of the potential integration processes. While infrastructural development (expanding network of communication and transport) brings about crucial changes in the productive system and in the circulating process, accessibility may enhance the economic marginality in a periphery rather than reduce it - even though some sections of the population may take advantage of new opportunities. Inquiries about causes and consequences of market expansion in the distinct Himalayan environment constitute a new field of interest.

The renowned Indian economist Narpal Jhoda presents an alternative model

of mountain development (1992). He begins his inquiry by establishing mountain specificities. (11) The major characteristics of the mountains are their inaccessibility, in the sense of poor communication and limited mobility; fragility, given by their geological composition in particular; marginality, and diversity. In this model, "a marginal entity is the one that counts least in the 'mainstream' situation (...). Several entities acquire marginal status when they are linked to dominant entities on unequal terms". However, "mountains, owing to their heterogeneity, have several, often narrow but specific 'niches' which are used by local communities in the course of their diversified activities". Helping in this process are the human adaptation mechanisms as reflected through "formal and informal arrangements for management of resources, diversified and interlinked activities to harness the micro-'niche' of specific eco-zones, and effective use of upland-lowland interlinkages" (1992: 44-46). Jodha's approach to "mountain development" is much more cautious than Allan's who advocates opening up mountains to plains' dynamics. In his view, understanding the rationale of human adaptation mechanisms in the "niche" potentials can help in the search for sustainable development.

Jodha's model, however, also conceptualizes the mountains from the point of view of resources. It is again a plains' perspective, defining marginality in the sense of "too far", and "too little", that is, by pointing out specific deficiencies. It is obviously a very different perspective from the one prevailing among the social anthropologists who usually strive to acquire an understanding from the "top of the mountain", seeking to perceive the world from the point of view of the society studied. Jodha's detailed and differentiated model may then be seen as a point of departure to conceptualize "mountain development" from the human actors' perspective. While social anthropologists can contribute much

to the issues he raises, such as the scope of human adaptation under diverse conditions (see Dobremez 1986 discussed above), the most interesting question is how marginality can be defined in a positive way: as autonomy in seeking appropriate solutions (including strategies to "outwit" the interfering state); as interconnectedness of social systems, world views and nature (see Seeland 1990); and as specific properties of small societal entities to adjust to emerging opportunities quickly and innovatively (vs. potential sluggishness of large societies (12)) - a point that is briefly dealt with by Zivetz (see below).

And how can we conceptualize "local societies" anew? - Nowadays it is a most striking experience to "see" different worlds coming together in many villages - despite forceful tectonic barriers. While sitting in a remote Bajhangi village, half devoid of male population due to their working as night-watchmen in Bangalore, interviewing a Brahmin priest on Dasain celebrations, and listening together to news on the Iraq war on Radio Nepal and the BBC in the breaks, I was made to realize the simultaneousness of various processes pouring into the place. Alan Macfarlane and Indrabahadur Gurung come to the conclusion that "the 'village' has to be conceived of now as essentially dispersed" (1990: 34). They argue that nowadays the Gurungs are reacting with a good economic sense to external market forces to which they adapt. Having lived on hunting and gathering in earlier times, "now, using the village as a base, they 'hunt and gather' all over the world, but their new territory is not the high pastures and thick forests of the nineteenth century, but the streets of Hong Kong, Bombay or Pokhara" (1990: 35).

"Mountain development", as conceptualized by Allan and Jodha, draws our attention in the first place to economic, demographic and environmental issues comprising such disparate and partly intersecting areas as: models of economic change and emerging linkages (dependency,

including center-periphery and circulationist models, models based upon the modernization theory), alternative strategies of (sustainable) mountain development, political economy relations, gender relations (including inequalities in access to resources), oppression, poverty, integration into the world economy, linkages between agriculture, trade and industrialisation, governmental policies (including international pressures), interconnection and conflicts of political, administrative and economic interests, local and regional exchanges, forms of cooperation (within households and communities), the connection between the micro- and the macro-level of the analysis; governmental and market mechanisms to enhance welfare, development policies (including import and export policies, subsidies, credit supplies), adaptive strategies to internal and external pressures, demographic factors, such as migration and population growth (in relation to the carrying capacity of natural environment, and to political economy), corruption and so forth.

Obviously, not all of the listed questions can be the object of socio-anthropological inquiries. The social anthropology of complex societies is in an everlasting process of defining itself. Many of the issues are subjects of economic and political inquiries, but there is no way of defining clear-cut professional divisions and areas of competence. No doubt, social anthropology has much to contribute. It is, however, striking how little attention Western social anthropologists have paid to this vast field so far (e.g., in comparison to the scope of socio-anthropological inquiries on related issues in other developing countries).

Poverty is not frequently discussed by Western scholars, though it is one of the major issues in Nepalese research (e.g., by C. Mishra). Besides the earlier work of Blaikie/ Cameron/ Seddon, and besides several articles by Stephen Mikesell, which

all concentrate upon class inequalities, Nancy Levine (1988) presents one of the rare contributions on economic and power relations in areas with scarcely monetized economies. (13) Levine concentrates on credit systems, indebtedness and poverty in six Humla villages. She concludes: "First, debtors and creditors in Humla neither stand ranged across any pre-existing social or ethnic divides, nor do they necessarily come from opposed social groups. Major loans are contracted between persons of the same caste or ethnic group, between have and have-not of any status, and loans play a major part in the village dynamic of changing economic advantage. Second, indebtedness is grounded at another economic level than the monetary economy and is more deeply rooted than modern needs for cash". I infer from Levine's detailed analysis that indebtedness and the resulting oppression cannot be discussed merely within class models. Subsequently, poverty ought to be studied also in the context of conflicts within small social units such as communities and even households. The themes of money-lending, forms of provision of rural credits, including the (partly newly emerging) forms of rotating credit associations ought to and certainly will be dealt with in studies to come.

There are not many Western attempts to analyse local economies and specific economic sectors in the context of the (changing) national economy (see, e.g., Schrader 1988). The major Western contribution in this area remains *Peasants and Workers in Nepal* (1979) (14) by Seddon, Blaikie and Cameron, which deals with poor peasants, rural artisans, porters, agricultural labourers, highway construction labourers, the urban labour force, and small business and petty bourgeoisie. Recently, Vivienne Kondos, Indra Ban, and Alex Kondos presented at the CNAS/ Sidney-conference in Kathmandu some results from their project on Nepal's manufacturing industry (see also A. Kondos 1987). After several years having passed

since the much discussed publications by the team Blaikie/Cameron/Seddon, a debate on how to theorize on mode(s) of production in Nepal and on the related class relations is being carried on by Stephen Mikesell and Jamuna Shrestha (1988).

While poverty is a rare topic in Western research, so is also prosperity. As widely known, socio-anthropological research among upper strata is a difficult endeavour, since, for instance, prosperous entrepreneurs are reluctant to talk to strangers about the reasons of their success. Laurie Zivetz has succeeded in gaining access to entrepreneurs from several communities in Nepal: Newars, Marwaris, Thakalis, Sherpas, Tibetans as well as Gurungs and Manangis. In her book *Private Enterprise and the State in Modern Nepal* (1992) she explores the emergence and evolution of modern entrepreneurship in the context of Nepal's specific problems (size, lack of local raw materials, lack of access to sea-routes, India's political and economic strategy towards Nepal, the governmental constraints upon private enterprise). The most interesting section of the book is the analysis of why the above-mentioned minority communities have proved particularly successful in adopting an entrepreneurial culture, and also how the Newars' decline as Nepal's foremost entrepreneurial community has come about. In her very vividly written analysis, that is often "spiced" with proverbs and anecdotes, Zivetz comes to the conclusion that there is no single formula for success in business. But there are some regularities, such as a sense of community identity and internal cohesiveness; all the communities have gained their experiences in trade, and many have evolved internal systems to promote business within the community. "Most of these communities have inbuilt sanctions on the accumulation of wealth. However, in many cases they also place importance on relatively egalitarian social organisation and a measure of reciprocity within the community" (1992: 124). There is also the

tendency among the successful communities not to prevent women from venturing into business. One of the factors preventing the Newars from accumulation is identified in their reluctance to establish economic partnerships within the community. With regard to the issue of cooperation, it is interesting to see that a strong sense of unity based on cultural and social grounds may not be matched in the economic field; entering into economic relations with members of the same community is avoided in order to rule out frictions. Another revealing area of Zivetz's inquiry is her discussion of "marginality". While all the groups mentioned are marginal to the Nepalese society which is dominated by high-caste Hindus, each of the communities studied has been able to advance itself by building links with Nepal's ruling circles, through serving the rulers during the 19th century, and nowadays through establishing joint ventures either with Nepalese élites or with foreign entrepreneurs, and through bribery: "Social marginality - or, rather, minority status - has not prevented Nepal's entrepreneurial groups from co-existing quite successfully with the powers-that-be" (1992: 132).

Another area where various dimensions of inequality become apparent are *women studies* and studies on *gender relationships*. Many (female) scholars are actually conducting research on gender relations, female marginality and marginalization in the process of market expansion, prostitution, industrial labour in the urban context, and women's role in rural productive systems (the latter topics are being mainly researched by Nepalese scholars: Meena Acharya, Hisila Yemi and others). One recent area of inquiry is women's role in "community forestry" which will probably provide the most exciting data on female collective action. While in recent years a great variety of papers were presented at various conferences and seminars, or as project documents (one bibliography on women and

development was recently compiled at ICIMOD), I was not able to trace publications which would take up the issues introduced by Bennett/ Acharya and their team (CEDA, 1981) in a similarly comprehensive manner. Valuable data were recently presented by Kate Gilbert (1992) who studied intra-family dispute over property and labour in Eastern Nepal as well as legal documents (Muluki Ain, 1978-79, Sections on Family Law). Gilbert analyses legal provisions for women in comparison with the actual practice within the confines of household and family. As usual, there is a large gap between existing rights and their means of enforcement. Even if they know their rights, women are "unable or unwilling to pursue (their) rights through the legal system because of the inherent conflicts between the legal rights offered to them and their own long-term self interest as members of families and workers in a subsistence economy" (1992: 733).

In recent years *demographic issues*, including the wide complex of migration, were mainly studied by Nepalese scholars (Harka Gurung, Nanda Shrestha, Poonam Thapa). (16) Among studies on family and household, an international team (Thomas Fricke, Dilli Ram Dahal, Arland Thorton, Willam Axinn and Krishna P. Rimal) has recently presented a report (Fricke et al. 1991), based upon research conducted among Tamangs in two areas within the Kathmandu Valley and within the upper Ankhlu Khola Valley over 11 months (1987/88). Economic change is seen here as one element of transformations in social organization with implications for family relationships, marriage, and fertility. It is, among other things, an interesting inquiry into changing patterns of household relations in the rural context: "Our hypothesis is that supports for high fertility in non-market economies are mediated by family organization through alliance building and household formation strategies. This organization is undermined when senior family members lose control

over primary production through processes, such as land fragmentation and the rise of educational and wage-labor opportunities" (ibid.). The report contains a discussion of the complementarity of ethnographic methods and of quantitative data collection, an overview of recent theoretical approaches to demographic transition, and a detailed bibliography. (17)

In view of its wide reception there is no need to comment extensively upon a recent comprehensive account on the political economy of social deprivation in Nepal, namely David Seddon's *Nepal: A State of Poverty*. After identifying the roots of poverty and inequality through the analysis of political and economic change since the "unification", Seddon examines the scope and the symptoms of the current crisis in Nepal. The deterioration of the natural environment and the population pressures are seen in the framework of an "essentially hostile social environment in which exploitation, oppression and discrimination are pervasive". The analysis of the economic basis of social inequality and social deprivation is followed by an inquiry into the role of the state. Conservative vested interests within the state bureaucracy and in the wider political economy, of which the government forms part, are crucial factors deepening the crisis. Seddon identifies the role academics as well as foreign aid agencies should play in providing effective support for those struggling to improve the living and working conditions of the Nepalese masses by presenting sharper and more critical analyses of the Nepalese society (the book appeared in 1987). Rightly, as we know now, Seddon identifies fundamental contradictions that became increasingly apparent in the course of the 80s, and that would eventually lead to political change. Seddon concentrates upon the necessary reforms in political and administrative bodies (including the legal system) as well as in governmental procedures. I would have preferred to put the emphasis not on the

"result" of the struggle as apparent in the new constitution, but on the process that brought about this change: as an indicator of a new societal force emerging in Nepal, a highly politicized civil society.

3. Interface between politico-administrative institutions and local societies

The encompassing processes of infrastructural integration in Nepal through enhanced transport and communication are, to a large degree, the result of governmental measures. At the same time, they provide a basis for further governmental expansion and the proliferation of state institutions, through which a large amount of development projects are channeled, even to the most remote regions of the country. So far, the governmental expansion to the 75 Nepalese districts (with more than 35 offices based in every district capital), rationalized by "the state" as decentralisation, has enhanced centralisation (there is some indication that the decentralisation process is now gathering momentum). (18) It has manifested itself in increased control over the citizens: maintaining law and order; controlling resources, e.g., through land and forest registration and/or nationalization; directing economic change and promoting welfare through central measures. It is difficult to assess the role of governmental institutions in effecting societal changes throughout Nepal, since there are other forceful factors involved. Certainly, a very important area where to find its impact is in establishing and strengthening existing institutional links with local societies. The emerging interaction between social entities with differing scopes (state vs. community) connects world views (including legitimacy patterns), rationalities, and that differ from each other power potentials. On the empirical level, it is important to understand the state in a threefold perspective: state as an autonomous agency; state as a steering mechanism; and state as reacting to internal (interest groups) and external (global politics; impact of international donor-

agencies) pressures. It is equally important to examine institutional aspects of "community life", including the process of institutional change and institutional innovation with its binding elements (e.g. world views) and discontinuities (such as unequal access to resources), and hence forms of cooperation and conflict within local social entities.

The *place* where state and people meet, can be located through examining the welfare functions of the state, the (re)allocation and management of economic resources, forms of law and order maintenance, and endeavours to establish and maintain legitimacy patterns on the one hand, and through understanding individual and collective action within local societies reacting to, and bringing about, specific state measures on the other, for instance through strategies to achieve access to public goods and/or to retain control over collective goods which the state seeks to appropriate, e.g. by the nationalization of forests. The Nepalese citizens' attitude towards the state - that can prove benevolent but also harmful - is ambivalent, all the more so because, with the increasing societal complexity, the state cannot redeem its promise contained in its self-portrayal as the major force of societal progress that it strives to retain. It is important to note, however, that while many Nepalese citizens try to benefit from what the governmental system as a developing agency has to offer, a substantial share of action occurs outside the realm of the state institutions.

Among publications focussing upon the interface between governmental institutions and "local" societies, Gilmour and Fisher's *Villagers, Forests and Foresters: The Philosophy, Process and Practice of Community Forestry in Nepal* is certainly a most interesting and useful contribution. This book was written with a practical purpose and addresses development practitioners above all: it is an attempt to elaborate a "holistic approach to community forestry" that is defined as the

"control and management of forests by the people to use them". Besides digesting a large body of recent literature on forests and forest management in a development perspective, the authors are very well acquainted with social, economic and political life in Nepal at various levels of the national hierarchy and are accordingly differentiated in their argumentation. Forests in Nepal are so ubiquitous that all major societal phenomena can be illustrated and analysed with reference to them. Accordingly, this publication is a treasure trove - be it in the sense of learning from the authors, be it in the sense of identifying gaps and future areas of inquiry.

The book is the outcome of interdisciplinary cooperation between a forester (Gilmour) and an anthropologist (Fisher), with a short introduction by a geographer (Jack Ives), and one chapter on "Cost benefit analysis", containing a critical assessment of economic approaches to project evaluation by Neil Byron. "Community forestry" is the focal point of several crucial debates about the quest for multi-disciplinary approaches (and the preventing constraints), about accepting that the profession of specialists is a culture (against conceptualising science as value-free), and about power relations (for instance between the national and local levels) involved in natural resource management. The forestry perspective prevails in the chapters: "The extent and importance of Nepal's forests" and "'Appropriate' silviculture"; the socio-anthropological perspective is stronger in "Community forestry as a social process", "Implementation", and "Political and institutional context: Can community forestry work?", while both disciplines are fruitfully combined in the chapters on "Indigenous forestry", "Research for community forestry", and "Monitoring and evaluation". The issue of the book is introduced by showing how the "old" concept of community forestry has recently become an important "paradigm" in the

development discourse. The authors draw upon their experience within the development institutions (especially in the well-known Nepal-Australia Forestry Project) pointing out a tragedy lying in the fact that substantial development intervention (measured by the quantity of resources spent) has neither reduced worldwide inequality nor enhanced the access of the poor and underprivileged social strata to natural resources. They discuss the fallacy of élitist approaches which assume that the modern science and technology incorporated by the Western educated élites are to be imposed upon the putative ignorant village people. The authors criticise the two widespread development stereotypes: the one presenting local people as incapable of sensible resource management and contending that people must be educated, motivated, informed, coerced, "convinced"; and the alternative: the "ancient wisdom"-view which sees the knowledge and activities of villagers as a reflection of the special and inherited wisdom of generations that enables them to solve every problem if only they are left alone. The approach chosen is to assess the scope of existing social mechanisms and technical knowledge in local management of forest resources: "We then need to recognise and support what is working and to *facilitate* local problem solving when things are not going so well" (1991: 56).

The authors take the diversity within and among local societies as given. Instead of trying to reduce the societal complexity to a unifying model that allows one to neglect "idiosyncrasies", they advocate interventions which are flexible enough to adjust to specific local conditions. The knowledge of local societies, as I infer, is translated into action in the sense of making the practitioners aware of diversity, without compelling them to know every detail. This awareness is the basis for designing projects that adjust to local conditions, acknowledging that members of "local

societies" are the carriers of the projects, including the planning process, instead of viewing them as mere "recipients". Arguing against uniformity, Gilmour, Fisher and Byron touch on some rather delicate points concerning the procedures of Nepalese and foreign bureaucracies involved: they argue against the need of formal committee structures (users' groups) to carry out projects, against the overall need to design formal growth/yield models to manage forests, and against the need for cash-flow budgets for tree production and management systems. This may not be surprising to social anthropologists, but in development practice one rarely encounters the argument that farmers will adopt new practices when and if these make sense to them - regardless of the sophistication of project designs on paper.

The farmers discussed are to a lesser extent individual household members, and to a larger extent local communities that do not necessarily coincide with any administrative boundaries. In recent publications, the collective spirit of local (non-Hindu) communities emerges as a broad issue, with much hope being put in its role in development processes. Gilmour and Fisher differentiate in this area. Probably having rational choice-minded planners in mind, whom they choose to convince, they stress the importance of social values and norms as important cultural elements that bind societies together. However they do not exaggerate the issue: "community forestry" is not only about cooperation, but also about conflict, about decision-making and reaching consensus, as well as about inequality within local communities involving different interest groups. (19) The authors give enough examples to demonstrate how difficult it is to mobilize collective action and what kind of internal frictions prevent cooperation, and how successfully collectives can manage. They describe internal dynamics by showing, for instance, how local ward leaders make claims on behalf of their constituents,

seeking to enlarge their power base; they also deal with the inherent difficulty of making project objectives "public" in the initial stage of development interventions.

The sections on the interfaces between the state and donor agencies, personified in Forest Department officials of different weights, and the local societies (ideally not represented by any leaders) are most interesting. Gilmour and Fisher show that projects are social processes - visible events of policy implementation "around" which the state apparatus and aid agencies organize their activity. In their analysis, two social systems (with their own values, norms, institutional arrangements and limitations) meet in various forms and situations. In both systems, the actors are bound by the constraints of their own system. (It is difficult to collect data on these problems, unless one is himself/herself, like the authors, part of the process.) The authors indicate specific negative stereotypes prevalent on both sides, making both "parties" distrustful about each other's motives and hindering concerted action. They make important remarks on the devolution of state control over forest resources in the overall process of decentralisation (that now finally seems to be getting underway). It is indeed paradoxical that at present the Forest Department "is being asked to use its authority to give away its authority!". In this process, District Officers are put into an ambiguous position which they try to exploit for their own benefit; they "have a tendency to hand over *responsibility* for management but keep important elements of the *authority* for themselves".

The state's failures in this process are described in the final section. As already done by Justice, the working of the national bureaucracy is criticized mainly with reference to the traditional political culture. Once more we encounter the *chakari*-complex, and the great reluctance of officials to make decisions. Personal attitudes, as shaped by traditional patterns, are certainly among the

most forceful obstacles to the overall development process. However, one is glad to credit Dor Bahadur Bista with writing so much on this problem, thus creating room to address new issues in the future, since cultural attitudes are but one factor contributing to the failures of the political-administrative bodies in Nepal. In the context of forest management in Nepal one would like to have a more comprehensive final discussion on institutional limitations acting upon the governmental bodies concerned: coordination of forest protection and utilization between various ministries and the Planning Commission; legal inconsistencies and problems with legal enforcement; institutional pressures created by various donor institutions active in this area; shifting economic policies and hence shifting assessments of the importance of forest resources in relation to economic development; conflicting objectives of the administrative and the political process respectively (see, e.g., D.R. Panday 1989).

Despite putting the main emphasis on the local efforts, the authors attach great importance to governmental bodies. They point repeatedly to the emerging dilemma of the state's power monopoly and the imperative need for self-restriction in the decentralisation process at the same time. They show how powerful members of local societies have succeeded in enlarging their power base by establishing links to state officials (see also Brauen 1984). Regarding the equity issue, the major role is attached again to state agencies! But is the state able to advocate equity demands? Despite having given much evidence to the contrary, the authors believe, for instance, that in the long run radical changes in the attitude of the institutions and individuals can come about, and that the Ministry of Forest staff will be able to ensure that forest management plans allow for the provision of products to all segments of the population. Apparently, Gilmour and Fisher untie the Gordian knot by expressing their hope in the government changing itself. But how can that happen?

Gilmour and Fisher do not explicate the models underlying their analysis (in the fields of new institutional economics, economic theories of politics, social organisation, political theory); and I am inclined to assume that they put too much emphasis on the state's role in creating societal change.

The question of the institutional channels through which interventions, such as knowledge or technology transfer occur, is nowadays addressed increasingly by development theoreticians. (20) The constitutional change in Nepal has additionally reinforced the scientific interest in political institutions, governmental policies as well as in the process of the Nepalese people's politicization, in the sense of discovering new social and political forces active in Nepal at the national and/or local level: "concerned citizens" undertaking action in solving societal problems (e.g., Human Rights Fora); political mobilization (strikes, protest against governmental measures such as the Tanakpur-issue); attempts to define and pursue measures of self-restraint (especially in view of environmental degradation) (21); and striving for self-assertion in defining and pursuing development objectives (aims, priorities, forms of implementation and evaluation).

The forceful *political changes* during the last decade gave impetus to socio-anthropological inquiries into the political process. Several authors have imaginatively related cultural values to political action: for instance Martin Gaenzle (1992) points out the symbolic importance of blood sacrifice as a tribute to the democratic movement. Bert van der Hoek (1990) poses the polemical question relating to the political situation before Spring 1990: "How can it be explained that the ever-changing political circumstances, especially of the last two centuries, are accompanied by the persistence of rituals of an utterly conservative nature?" (1990: 149). The democratic movement itself was documented (and illustrated) by Bonk (1990

and 1991), and the problem of *human rights* has been recently discussed by Krämer (1991). Not surprisingly, little research has been done (or published?) on institutional aspects of the government, on informal relationships between political factions, or on powerful interest groups and their action. Alex Kondos's article on corruption (1987) is one of the exceptions. Several articles on ethnicity, identity and national integration have been written by Western scholars (this issue was also addressed especially by P.R. Sharma on the Nepalese side, see also the "Ethnicity"-issue in *Himal*, 1992) for instance by David Gellner (1986) and Declan Quigley (1987) who discuss the nature of Newar identity. (22) Many earlier publications deal with political conflicts in villages (see, e.g., Blustein 1977). A recent low-caste attempt to oppose Brahmanic rules was described in the semi-documentary film *Makai* by Bieri/Garlinski.

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The inquiry into the ongoing socio-political process in Nepal concerns two major interrelated topics: the process of change in state-systems and the limits to statehood, and the ongoing political process, in the course of which hidden societal cleavages and pertinent questions are coming into the open. Nepal faces various specific problems rooted in her traditions, the Himalayan environment, and geopolitical conditions, but also global problems, such as the environmental degradation, that call for civil action all over the world. The process of politicization, as already mentioned, is accompanied by a critical examination of the existing order and power images. There are common themes of universal importance, such as the critique of the progress imperative; and the related debate on the sociology of knowledge, the function of science, and the role of scientists within the societal order. In the context of inequalities within the world system, conflicts among those who are part of the process may initiate attempts to think of

solutions. By questioning the adequacy of Western research, our Nepalese colleagues "dragged" social anthropology into the public arena. This should remain one of the "places" where we are to continue our dialogue.

Footnotes:

- (1) a. First National Congress of Sociology/Anthropology in Nepal. Structure and Transition: Society, Poverty and Politics in Nepal. Organised by Sociological/Anthropological Society of Nepal (SASON), 4-6 September 1992. b. The Anthropology of Nepal: People, Problems and Processes. Organised by the University of Sydney and CNAS, 7-14 September 1992.
- (2) Several *Subaltern Studies. Writings on South Asian History and Society* volumes have been published by Ranajit Guha since 1982 in Oxford University Press, Delhi; for a good overview see: O'Hanlon, R. 1988.
- (3) Kirtipur: Tribhuvan University, CNAS 1989.
- (4) Giddens 1990: 21.
- (5) I have omitted here the names of those scholars whose research is mentioned in this review. For political change see Rose/Scholz 1980 and several other publications by Rose and various collaborators, Goodall (1978), Borgström (1976, 1980), Caplan, L. (1975), Boggs (1982). On ethnic relations, and on ethnic relations and state see Burghart (1984), English (1982, 1985), Manzardo (1985), von Fürer-Haimendorf (1975, 1978, 1981), Höfer (1979), March (1979), Gaige (1975, on regionalism), etc. On social change see L. Caplan (1970), Poffenberger (1981), Prindle (1983), etc.
- (6) See, e.g., Fardon 1985.
- (7) While talking of "environment" it is also important to mention the urban settings (see, e.g., Herdick 1988), and human shaping of the habitat by constructing houses and settlements (e.g. Toffin 1991/1981). An important source on the present debates is *The Himalayan Dilemma* by J. Ives and B. Messerli (1989). Further research outside social anthropology was done by C. Rieger,

J. Carter, B. Brower, I.-M. Bjonness, J. Kawakita, and others.

- (8) It would be very interesting to have an inquiry into the notion of "people" in publications dealing with development.
- (9) Several research phases are distinguished in the introduction. The main period was between 1978 and 1983.
- (10) The above-mentioned publication by Jodha et al. (1992) also contains several articles on the Andes. See also *The State of the World's mountains: A Global Report*, edited by P. Stone (1992).
- (11) These are not necessarily confined to mountain areas but characterize the Himalayan features.
- (12) See, e.g., Hondrich 1992.
- (13) While going through the Himalayan Research Bulletin XI (1-3), 1991, I found several indications of recent research, such as by J. Fortier on Land Tenure, Labour Practices, and a Theory of Multiple Modes of Production in Jajarkot district, or M. Cameron: "A Critical Examination of Structure and Practice in Nepal's Jajmani system: Exchange, Domination, and resistance from the Perspective of Low Castes" (probably based upon her field data from Bajhang). Again, the majority of "critical" issues are being brought up by Nepalese scholars at various American Conferences. See also research done by H. Zimolong on power structure in a Hindu caste society in the western Nepalese village G. (Gorkha district) concentrating mainly on the oppression of low castes, and low caste people's perception of social inequality.
- (14) For a critical assessment of the application of the centre-periphery model, as is done in several publications by P. Blaikie, J. Cameron and D. Seddon, see Macfarlane (1990) and Mikesell (1988). However, pointing out theoretical deficiencies of their model is not meant to diminish the importance of their contributions to the political economy of Nepal in any way.
- (15) But there are many important recent contributions such as Enslin (1990), Allen/Mukherjee (1990), Schuler (1988),

Levine (1988), see also the literature on relations within households, and Kondos/Ban (1990).

- (16) A very useful earlier collection was presented in *L'Ethnographie*, 77-78 (1978), see also R.C. Peet (1978).
- (17) See also Fricke (1988), Seeley 1988, Gray/Mearns (1989).
- (18) See, e.g., Knall 1989; Lindsey 1991.
- (19) Gilmour and Fisher refer here to a large body of socio-anthropological data on indigenous management systems and forms: see, e.g., von Fürer-Haimendorf 1964; Campbell 1978; Molnar 1981, several publications by Messerschmidt. There is also an interesting publication by Ben Campbell on cooperative forms among the Tamang, forthcoming. See also Stone (1989).
- (20) See, e.g., Long 1988.
- (21) Being a pertinent issue in Western democracies as well, see, e.g., Offe 1989.
- (22) See also *Kailash* issue XV (3-4), 1989, containing contributions by M. Hutt, D.J. Matthews, A. Macfarlane, A.W. Macdonald, Ch. McDonough, T. Riley-Smith; and also Pfaff-Czamecka (1989), M. Gaborieau 1993, and Anne de Sales, forthcoming.

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ARCHIVES

Nepalese Archives of the Department of Ethnomusicology in the Musée de l'Homme (Paris, 1960-1975).

Mireille Helffer and Anne de Sales

Early in the sixties, anthropologists and linguists within the National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS) started to collect oral and specifically musical traditions of various groups in Nepal. In 1966 the ethnomusicologist Mireille Helffer joined them and within a research programme directed by Prof. Millot, conducted several missions focusing on musical collections. Dr. Helffer then supervised the listing of all the collected documents - about 500 tapes that were presented to the Department of Ethnomusicology in the Musée de l'Homme. Each recorded tape was copied and classified in a file describing its contents (duration, place and conditions of recording, as well as the subject). A copy of the file was given to the collector. This is how Marc Gaboriau, Mireille Helffer, Corneille Jest, Alexander W. Macdonald, Philippe Sagant, and to a lesser extent Jean-François Mouel and Alain Fournier, presented their recordings between 1960 and 1975. A copy of Bernard Pignède's recordings (1958) was added to this very rich collection representing the Indo-Nepalese castes, including the Muslims, as well as most of the ethnic groups of Nepal.

It is regrettable that, since then, researchers who have carried out fieldwork, have ceased to present their recorded documents to the Department of Ethnomusicology in the Musée de l'Homme.

CONTENTS OF THE COLLECTIONS

1) The Indo-Nepalese castes

Two rich sets of recordings emerge. The first one concerns the *Gāine* repertoire,

popular songs of the *jhyāure* type, ritual songs such as *mālsiri git* and panegyric songs of the *karkha* type. Numerous missions were concerned with this caste of beggar-singers:

- 1961-62: A.W. Macdonald, assisted by Dor Bahadur Bista, recorded about a hundred pieces accompanied on the viol *sarangi*.

- 1966: survey by M. Helffer in the Kathmandu Valley and central Nepal (Pokhara area, Baglung etc.)

- 1966-70: recordings by M. Gaborieau in the Kathmandu valley and the Gorkha area.

- 1965-70: recordings by C. Jest.

The second important set of documents concerns the caste of tailors-musicians, the *Damāi*, recordings of whom were made in various areas of Nepal. In 1969, during a mission in Dadeldhura (West Nepal), M. Gaborieau and M. Helffer collected an exceptionally rich body of musical material on the *dholi-huḍkiyā*. Besides these two specifically musical sets, various other recordings should be mentioned:

- tales and accounts related by Bahun and Chetri;

- recordings of linguistic interest;

- documents concerning the Muslims of the Kathmandu Valley and of Central Nepal (M. Gaborieau).

2) The ethnic groups

Musical samples were recorded among several ethnic groups such as the Chantel (C. Jest), the Gurung (B. Pignède and Champion), the Hayu (C. Jest), the Limbu P. Sagant), the Magar (C. Jest), the Newar (M. Helffer, C. Jest, G. Toffin), the Sherpa

(C. Jest, A.W. Macdonald), the Tamang (M. Gaborieau, M. Helffer, C. Jest, A.W. Macdonald) and among Tibetan populations of the high Himalayan Valleys.

These recordings illustrate various musical genres: seasonal songs accompanying work in the fields, planting out or harvesting rice, songs sung while gathering in the forest, sheep- or yak-herding songs and festival songs. The narrative songs are represented by the Indian epics of the Mahābhārata and the Rāmāyaṇa and by the Tibetan epic of Gesar, as well as by chantefables (*bān*), by heroic accounts (*bhārat*) from West Nepal (to be compared with repertoires from Kumaon) and by such foundation myth as the Tamang *hvāi* and the Limbu *mundhum*.

Other recordings include performances by various categories of religious intercessors (*jhākri*, *lha-pa*, *puimbo*) as well as ritual music of the Tibetan Buddhist and Bonpo traditions.

COLLECTIONS OF MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

About a hundred musical instruments collected in Nepal by various researchers, especially by C. Jest, are kept in the Department of Ethnomusicology in the Musée de l'Homme. The whole instrumental range of the *Damāi* is represented (long trumpets, oboes, kettledrums of various sizes, and cymbals). Among the drums used by the religious intercessors there are single-sided drums such as the *rnga* of the Gurung, the *ring* of the Chantel, the *damphu* of the Tamang, as well as double-sided drums like the *dhyāgro*. Mention should also be made of lutes (*sgra-snyan*), small fiddles with sympathetic strings (the *sāraṅgi* of the *Bādī*), hourglass drums (the *huḍko* of the *dholi*) and a few instruments used by the Newar.

USE MADE OF THE COLLECTIONS

The collected recordings have been used for the sound-tracks of films and for exhibi-

tions, and provided the basis for the following publications:

Helffer, M.

1969a: "Fanfares villageoises au Népal", *Objets et Mondes* IX/2: 51-58.

1969b: *Castes de Musiciens au Népal*, record 30cm/""t, Musée de l'Homme LD20, with a booklet in French and English, the Nepali text of the songs, photos, musical notations (no longer available).

Helffer, M. et Macdonald, A.W.

1966 "Sur un *sāraṅgi* de *gāine*", *Objets et Mondes*, VI/2: 133-142.

1968 "Le vers népalé chanté", *L'Homme* VIII/3: 37-95 and VIII/4: 58-91.

English translations in A.W. Macdonald: *Essays on the Ethnology of Tibet and South Asia*, Kathmandu: Ratna Pustak Bhandar, 1975: 175-265.

Helffer, M. and Gaborieau, M.

1968 "Problèmes posés par un chant du Tihar". *Ethnographie*, 68-89.

1974a: "A propos d'un tambour du Kumaon et de l'ouest du Népal". *Studia Instrumentorum Musicae Popularis III*, Stockholm. Musik Historika Museet: 75-79.

1974b: Remarque sur l'utilisation des tambours-sablier dans le monde indien, le Népal et le Tibet", *ibid*, 268-272.

CONCLUSION

This collection is the legacy of an era when neither radios or cassette players were known in Nepal. It can therefore be used as a reference that enables one to evaluate the changes in repertoire and styles over a period of more than 30 years. A number of works in progress are using the collection in this way (J. Glodé, C. Tingey, Ph. Ramirez, H. Weisethaunet).

It is hoped that this summary will encourage young researchers to deposit their recorded documents with descriptive files in archives where they can be consulted. Only in this way can they be of value to future research.

TOPICAL REPORTS

Economic Development, Participation, and Decentralization in Nepal

Bruno Knall

Nepal figures in three lists of UN statistics. Because of the low per capita income, it belongs to the Least Developed Countries (LDC); with regard to the consequences of the oil crisis, it figures in the list of the Most Seriously Affected Countries (MSAC); and since it has no direct access to sea, it is classified as one of the Landlocked Countries. Seeing these and other well-known parameters of underdevelopment, one needed to ask why Nepal has failed to produce a higher rate of economic growth and, above all, to improve the living standards of the poorest groups of the population.

That the concepts of "decentralization", "participation", "development from below" and "basic needs strategy" have increasingly gained in importance in the context of the economic and social development of the Third World is due not least to the fact that the often - quoted "trickle-down effect" has proven insufficient. In other words, planning as decreed and executed by top-level instances has failed in letting the poorer groups participate in economic growth. A new development paradigm claims the active participation of the population, in particular of those social groups which have hitherto been deprived of the benefits of development. At the institutional level this participation necessitates a change from centralism to a more decentralized way of planning in which the processes of decision - making and implementation are to be shifted to a much larger extent than it has been the case till now from the national to the local instances. Five arguments may be cited in support of this new paradigm:

(1) The success of development projects largely depends on the participation of the population both in planning and realization. Those concerned the most are thus put in a position to articulate their needs and ideas and to contribute local resources, such as capital, labour and material. In addition, the use of appropriate technology warrants the integration of the project into the local population's way of life.

(2) Participation enhances the people's trust in their own capabilities, strengthens their solidarity and ability to self-help.

(3) Participation furthers democratization; in this sense, democratization is synonymous with decentralization.

(4) The inadequacy of ministerial bureaucracy in rendering public services in the fields of transport, health, education and social welfare provides a further argument in support of decentralization and participation. Participation may offer a palliative in that the people, thanks to their acquaintance with the local conditions, can make use of their own skill and know how.

(5) Participation gets a process started which is likely to effect a change in the attitude of non-local bureaucrats and experts who now have an opportunity to acquire a better understanding of the local population's needs, values and social structure.

While one cannot expect from these two strategies to work miracles, they should nevertheless be regarded as utterly important components in, or even preconditions of, a steady growth in underdeveloped national economies. This insight has in the meantime been widely accepted, and in what follows I shall exemplify its implications with reference to Nepal.

April 1990, when King Birendra abolished the Panchayat System, marked a major divide. To be sure, participation and decentralization were not inexistent prior to this date; what lacked, however, was suitable political and economic framework that would have facilitated the manifold attempts in the field to unfurl their full effect. Development planning was initiated in 1955 as a part of the instrumentarium of the Five Years Plans. It is a widely accepted view that no plan can be successful in its implementation phase unless it fulfills two criteria, namely the criterion of communication and the criterion of active participation. The former is fulfilled if there exist adequate channels of information between the planning agency, the public sector (ministries, state or mixed corporations) and the private sector (industrial companies, professional associations, trade unions, consulting firms, research institutes, etc.). This criterion also implies that the measures to be taken are formulated in a language which is intelligible to all participants in the process, and to the population in particular. The second criterion, that of active participation, stipulates that, rather than being the task of an esoteric group of technocrats, the implementation be carried out with the participation of individuals and private organizations, such as cooperatives and rural communities. A predominant majority of the population must see in the plan an expression of their own needs in order to be prepared to submit to the efforts and sacrifices the implementation requires from them.

As a matter of fact, the first three Development Plans in Nepal were initiated and executed exclusively from above, that is, by the National Planning Commission in loose cooperation with the ministries concerned. Only in the fourth Development Plan (1970-1975) do we find some rather reluctant attempts to make provisions for people's participation. Chapter I of the Plan states explicitly: "According to the Panchayat System's goal of enlisting greater cooperation of the people in the economic develop-

ment of the country, attempts will be made to make involve Panchayats of various levels in the process of both plan formulation and implementation in order to make the participation of people in the local development work more active and dynamic." Such programmatic aims are not lacking in the subsequent Five Year Plans either. They remain, however, wishful planning which made investment funds available not only to the public and private sectors, but also to the panchayat sector, and expected from the panchayats at the district, village and town levels to mobilize additional funds and labour. Dr. Shrestha, former Vice Chairman of the National Planning commission, aptly described this potential of participation in stating: "A plan can enlist an active and creative participation of the common people in the village only when it is fully reflective of their genuine needs, hopes and aspirations and also provides an effective outlet to ventilate their grievances."

The first onset to achieve a genuine break-through towards participation and decentralization was made in the seventh Five Years Plan (1985-1990). A Decentralization Law, the first one in the history of Nepal, was promulgated in November 1982, but it took two more years to work out the administrative provisions in the execution of this law. This attempt assigned a central role to the direct beneficiaries of projects at the district, village and town levels. It envisaged a procedure in which the projects were to be conceived at the lowest levels and then passed on to the district to be integrated into the district plan by five expert committees; after its approval by the District Panchayat, the district plan was to be submitted to the National Planning Commission in Kathmandu. Unfortunately, this procedure could not be followed in all 75 districts, partly because of the delayed provisions and partly because the local decision makers were not sufficiently trained for coping with their task. To meet the demand for trained personnel, I developed, in collaboration with some other foreign experts and with the

financial support of the Deutsche Stiftung für Internationale Entwicklung, a curriculum for a three-month course to train Local Development Officers. That despite their good qualification these LDOs failed to effect a decisive and long-term impact must be attributed to the fact that the above-mentioned criterion of communication remained unfulfilled, since the officials of the various ministries were unwilling to come to an agreement with the LDOs over individual projects.

In addition, the Panchayat System with its political hierarchies also impeded participation. Not only was it a rigid partyless system which left no room for dissenters, but it also made decentralization the task of its highly centralized political structure - a system - immanent *contradictio in adjecto*. This is not to assert that the Panchayat era lacked in successful projects, but to presume that with more people's participation much more could have been achieved. The example of the Small Farmers Development Programme (SFDP) demonstrates how it was possible to stimulate participation among the poor with subsidies from the state during the Panchayat period. Initiated by FAO, the Programme came under the management of the Agricultural Development Bank whose qualified workers, the so-called Group Organizers, were commissioned to organize groups among poor small farmers and motivate them to take up credits for income-relevant activities, such as crop cultivation, irrigation, livestock, bio-gas plants, etc. Credits were also provided for activities of social importance, such as the construction of latrines, washing places, initiatives in family planning, adult education and the like. Group Organizers acted as advisors to the farmers and as mediators between them and the ministries. Being organized by external agents, the SFDP cannot be regarded as participation from below in the strict sense of the term, but it is a positive fact that by now more than 40 such projects could be set up in a total of 75 districts, and in most cases with lasting

success. The Programme has had its limitations in the increasing difficulty to recruit adequately trained and psychologically capable Group Organizers. Another limitation became manifest in those instances where local Panchayat elites managed to misuse such projects for their own benefit.

The Dhading Project, supported by German development aid, provides a second example of a successful undertaking that dates back to the Panchayat period. This is the first rural development project to be executed in accordance with the Decentralization Law. It gives the rural population the opportunity to decide on all those measures that concern the village and is designed as a self-supporting project to be continued even beyond the term of external financing. As observations show, villagers are definitely in a position to identify their problems, formulate and carry out action programmes in their sole responsibility; their technical abilities have also exceeded the expectations of the administration. Among the negative, critical factors were the deficient professional qualification of the population and the dullness of the administrative machinery, not least of the Panchayat bureaucracy into which the project was integrated.

Article 25 of the new democratic Constitution of the 9th November 1990 lays down briefly and unequivocally that "It shall be the main responsibility of the State to bring about conditions for the enjoyment of the fruits of democracy through maximum participation of the people in the governance of the country through the medium of decentralization of administration." In June 1990 already three laws were promulgated to determine the roles of the District Development Committee, the Town Development Committee and the Village Development Committee. The new Government under G.P. Koirala has adopted the decentralization policy, and the function of the Development Committee at the different levels has been the object of a number of deliberations since the summer of 1991. Thus, the Ministry of Local Development organized a

meeting in August 1991, in which MPs and Nepalese experts exchanged their views on form and function of these future "local governments". Convened by the Tribhuvan University, the political parties and other non-governmental organizations, several seminars and symposia provided a forum for discussing the tasks of the Local Development Committees. In October 1991, an Administrative Reform Commission was established with the aim of formulating proposals for a more efficient administration and a more adequate personnel structure with due regard to the principles of decentralization. In March 1992, Parliament had passed a Local Body Election Procedure Bill regulating the modalities of the elections to the Village, Town and District Development Committee, which took place in last May and June.

This development laid the institutional foundations of a democratic decentraliza-

tion and a more efficient people's participation. Fortunately and quite in contrast to the Panchayat System, the Government now aims at an intensive cooperation with non-governmental organizations, too, in the conception and execution of economic and social projects. It should also be noted that the eighth Development Plan (1992-1997) gives particular consideration to improving the living standard of the poor; up to 70% of the public development expenditure shall be for the benefit of the rural and backward areas.

To conclude, Nepal has arrived at a turning point by taking important steps towards economic development, decentralization and people's participation. Their success, however, presupposes an improvement of the so-called talk-action ratio: the hitherto prevalent discrepancy between word and deed must diminish considerably, indeed.

European Researchers affiliated with Tribhuvan University

Mangala Shrestha

Nepal was opened formally for foreigners after 1950. The foreigners were attracted to Nepal on account of its natural beauties, the virgin land, its unique and hidden culture, history, unique anthropological background, diversified geographical conditions, art and architecture and the high Himalayan ranges. The affiliation of foreign researchers with Tribhuvan University (TU) began only in 1968 (Shakya, 1984). However, many foreign scholars had done their researches on different disciplines even before the establishment of Tribhuvan University (1957) in Nepal.

The first authentic foreign researcher in Nepal was Kirkpatrick followed by Hamilton and Hodgson. In 1952, the Swiss government appointed with the permission of the Nepalese government a geologist,

Toni Hagen, to conduct a geological survey for Nepal. At present, there are many foreign researchers formally affiliated with different institutions or central departments or R.D. of T.U. The Research Division of T.U. renders academic administrative service to foreign researchers, i.e., receiving application forms and research proposals, evaluating the research proposals by the departments concerned and research centres, accepting or rejecting the proposals, affiliating the researchers to the departments concerned or research centres and recommending non-tourist visas through the Ministry of Education, Culture and Social Welfare.

The aim of this paper is to explore the number of European researchers formally affiliated with T.U. between the year 1980-

1990 and their areas and fields of research.

Number of European researchers affiliated with T.U. (1980-1990)

There were altogether 104 European Researchers registered for their research studies in T.U. during the years 1980-1990. It was found from the Research Division's records that researchers from 14 different European countries were registered to conduct their researches in affiliation with T.U. during the years 1980-1990. Among these 104 foreign researchers, 34 came from Germany, 30 from U.K., 8 from France, 7 from Switzerland, 6 from the Netherlands, 5 from Norway, 3 each from Sweden, Austria and Denmark, and 1 each from Spain, Hungary, Finland, Belgium and Ireland. The percentages of researchers from different European countries were 32.69% from Germany, 28.84% from U.K., 7.69% from France, 6.73% from Switzerland, 5.76% from the Netherlands and 4.80% from Norway. Likewise 2.88% researchers were from Sweden, Austria and Denmark and 0.96% researchers were from Spain, Hungary, Finland, Belgium and Ireland.

Popular Fields of Research for European Researchers

Out of 104 European researchers affiliated with T.U. over the year 1980-1990, 68 research studies were related to the social sciences, 15 were related to science and technology, 7 were related to medicine, 5 were related to forestry, 4 were related to agriculture and 2 were related to education. Likewise 1 each was related to music, law and management. Among the different subjects of the social sciences, the most popular fields of research for the researchers were anthropology, sociology and culture.

The percentage of foreign researchers occupied in the field of social sciences was 68.38%. Similarly the percentage of those researchers who did their researches in the fields of science and technology, and medicine were 14.42% and 6.73% respectively. The percentage in forestry, agriculture and

education were 4.80%, 3.84% and 1.92% respectively. Likewise in management, music and law the share of percentage was only 0.96% (Thapa, Shrestha, Sharma et al., 1991). The most attractive fields of research for the Europeans were anthropology, sociology, culture, science and technology, geography, medicine, forestry and so on.

Conclusion

After the political change in Nepal, the country was opened for foreigners in 1950. Like other foreigners, Europeans also started taking an interest in Nepal. The European researchers were interested in Nepalese culture, history, archeology, and the sociological and anthropological aspects of Nepal. Some also were interested in medicine, science and technology, forestry and so on. Nepalese life, its cultural heritage, castes, geological structure and other aspects were new to Europe, so the European researchers were attracted towards these subjects. Through its Research Division, Tribhuvan University helped to affiliate those researchers with T.U. who came to Nepal to undertake research projects on subjects related to Nepal.

As a consequence, the flow of European researchers has been increasing every year. However, T.U. has not had maximal benefit from these researchers due to the fact that many of the researchers collected the information and data in Nepal and returned to their countries without submitting the final reports to the Research Division (Thapa, Shrestha, Sharma et al., 1992.)

Among the European researchers German researchers were highest in number. The reason for this may be due to the fact that Tribhuvan University has an agreement with the Nepal Research Centre and Heidelberg University regarding the conducting of research by their researchers through these institutions.

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Table 1: Countrywise European Researchers and their field researches (1980-1990)

| Field of Research | Social Science | Science & Technology | Medicine | Education | Forestry | Agriculture | Management | Music | Law | Total | |
|-------------------|----------------|----------------------|----------|-----------|----------|-------------|------------|-------|------|-------|-------|
| Countries | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Germany | 27 | 3 | - | 2 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | 34 | 32.69 |
| U.K. | 16 | 6 | 3 | - | 4 | 1 | - | - | - | 30 | 28.84 |
| France | 6 | 2 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 8 | 7.69 |
| Switzerland | 5 | - | 1 | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 7 | 6.73 |
| Netherlands | 2 | 2 | - | - | 1 | 1 | - | - | - | 6 | 5.76 |
| Norway | 4 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 5 | 4.80 |
| Norway | 2 | - | - | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | 3 | 2.88 |
| Sweden | 2 | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 3 | 2.88 |
| Austria | 1 | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 3 | 2.88 |
| Denmark | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.96 |
| Spain | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.96 |
| Hungary | - | - | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.96 |
| Belgium | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.96 |
| Ireland | 1 | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 1 | 0.96 |
| Finland | 68 | 15 | 7 | 2 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 104 | |
| Total | 65.8 | 14.42 | 6.73 | 1.92 | 4.80 | 3.84 | 0.96 | 0.96 | 0.96 | 100 | |

Source: Research Division, Rector's Office, T.U.

Sāmkālīn Sāhitya and the Democratisation in Nepali Literature

Michael Hutt

The Panchayat period (1962-90) brought huge changes to Nepal. Like everything else, the world of Nepali literature changed irrevocably. When King Mahendra dismissed the Congress government in 1960, the older, more established writers were still adjusting to the atmosphere of freedom that had followed the Rana's downfall ten years earlier. Younger writers had yet to find their feet. Then suddenly new restrictions were imposed and new uncertainties came into being. Just as the first generation of post-Rana regime children entered the sixth and seventh years in the first rash of new schools, freedom of expression was curtailed.

It might have been assumed that censorship, even mild censorship, would inevitably retard the growth and development of literature that was still comparatively young. But in the case of Nepali literature the need to express dissent opaquely led to a kind of disciplined restraint, and the development of rich allegorical writing. This was especially true in the poetry, which remained the most sophisticated and commonly-published genre. Nepali literature's most serious shortcomings were the scarcity of full-blown novels, the lack of a developed tradition of criticism and a failure to reach an audience beyond the tiny urban minority.

The Panchayat governments tried to encourage the development of Nepali literature and to extend the scope of the language in every sphere of national life. This they did to the exclusion of Nepal's other languages: Newari, Hindi and Maithili disappeared from the official media. The Royal Nepal Academy, established by King Mahendra, became devoted almost entirely to the promotion of Nepali literature, particularly poetry. But the

quality of the literature its members produced was severely compromised by the culture of sycophancy that developed within its walls. The poet Bhupi Sherchan's huge popularity was due to his searing indictments of the Nepali establishment, but once he had become an Academy member these no longer appeared. It may seem to be a contradiction, but the increasing richness of Nepali literature during the Panchayat period was due more to the regime's censorious tendencies than to its attempts to foster development.

After the end of the Panchayat system, the freedom has been bewildering. Nepal's writers and poets are in the process of finding a new direction. As one poet put it in summer 1992, "if you have been kicking against a wall (*parkhāl*) for thirty years, what do you do when the wall falls down?" There seems to have been a weakening in the spirit of Nepali poetry. Verse genres were the principle medium for the expression of dissent, after all, and in a multi-party democracy the issues are less clear-cut, though the scope for expression is broader. On the other hand, writers of prose seem to have gained in confidence. This might reflect the continued westernisation of the educated urban class: having modernised poetry, there now seems to be an urge to modernise by moving the emphasis away from verse altogether.

These are subjective impressions and they would be misleading. However, they are supported by the content of *Sāmkālīn Sāhitya* (Contemporary Literature), a quarterly published in Nepali by the newly-constituted Royal Nepal Academy. In 1990, the interim government was strongly criticised when it appointed a new Academy membership that consisted almost entirely of allegedly pro-Congress male writers. Nevertheless, these members remain in

place and *Sāmkālīn Sāhitya* (chief editor Krishnachandra Singh Pradhan, editors Bairagi Kainla and Ishwar Ballabh, assistant editor Avinash Shrestha) represents a major advance.

The first issue of *Sāmkālīn Sāhitya* is dated *Māgh, Phāgun, Cait* 2047 (the first quarter of 1991), and was published just a few months after the promulgation of Nepal's new democratic constitution. Pradhan's purpose as editor-in-chief is clear from his first editorial:

"Now we are in the pale light of multi-party democracy after a political change. Democracy is not merely a release from constraints: it is also a system, an opinion, a profound responsibility and an open invitation to construct a future. We ourselves must change radically if we are to accept democracy and establish it in our minds, customs and conduct. If we oppose it, if we do not resolve contradictions such as "we have not changed, only society has" or "we have changed, but society has not", there will be an imbalance."

The most striking feature of *Sāmkālīn Sāhitya* is the total absence of Nepali poetry. No explanation is offered for this: Pradhan simply states that the journal is *gadya-pradhān* (mainly prose), though it does sometimes include Nepali translations of poetry from other languages. The emphasis on prose may stem from Pradhan's own preferences (he is a respected essayist and critic, with a major study of the Nepali novel to his credit), or from the fact that the Academy also publishes *Kavitā* (edited by Mohan Koirala), which is devoted entirely to poetry. Two other features of *Sāmkālīn Sāhitya* are notable. First, there is a regular section on foreign literature, headed *deśbā-hira*:

"So the world is shrinking, countries are coming closer to each other. The sun that shines in one place filters through to other places too. When one country suffers an earthquake, others are shaken too... We, our countries and our democracy, are all shores onto which the new waves of revolution and

change will wash... National and international developments have their own backgrounds and contexts. Contemporaneity will not be the same everywhere... We need to understand the changes, trends and experiments that are taking place in contemporary literature."

The nine volumes of *Sāmkālīn Sāhitya* that have appeared so far have included Nepali translations of stories and poems from Bangladesh (vol.I), Pakistan (II), Sri Lanka (III), India (IV), China (V), Japan (VI), Africa: Senegal, Sudan, Kenya, Angola, Congo, Cape Verde and Mozambique (VII), Latin America: Colombia, Mexico and Puerto Rico (VIII) and the USA IX).

Each issue also includes a section headed *deśhītra* which features Nepali translations of contemporary works originally written or published in another language of Nepal. This is a significant sign of a change in the establishment's attitude to Nepal's linguistic and cultural diversity. It was evident in the revolutionary poetry of the Democracy Movement itself, and is also reflected in the new constitution. In his preface to volume I, Pradhan wrote:

"In this *deśhītra* column this time, the literature of Nepāl Bhāṣā is presented. It would be an exaggeration if we were to claim that such a brief account could provide a full acquaintance with the literature of any language. Nor is that what this journal is trying to do. What we do intend is that the readers and writers of one language should have at least an inkling (*ābhās*) of what is going on in the contemporary literature of the country's other languages... We should not claim too loudly that this will create a new culture... But we do feel that this will provide a taste of parallel experiences, sensibilities and sufferings, even as we keep our own ethnic characteristics and cultural authenticity in perspective."

Translations of Newari literature (Headed "Nepāl Bhāṣā" in volume I, then "Newari" in other issues) have featured in four issues:

Vol. I: Stories by Cittadhār 'Hṛdaya', Rāmeśvara and Kedār 'Situ'; poems by Durgālāl Śreṣṭha and Sudah Khusaḥ.

Vol. III: Introduction to Newari literature by Keśavmān Śākya; stories by Sūryabahādur Pivāḥ and Bhūṣanprasād Śreṣṭha; poems by Ānanda Joṣī, Buddha Saymi, Sureś Kiraṇ.

Vol.V: Stories by Pūmadās Śreṣṭha, Dhusvām Saymi and Keśavmān Śākya; poems by Śyāmbahādur Saṃyaju, Sundar Madhikarmī and Pratisarā Saymi.

Vol. VIII: Stories by Jagdīs Citrakār, Āśārām Śākya and Darveratna Śākya; poems by Pūma Vaidya, Rāmeś Madhu and Triratna Śākya.

Translations from Maithili literature have also featured in four issues:

Vol. II: Essay on modern Maithili literature by Yugeśvarprasād Varmā; stories by Rājendra P. Vimala, Rāmbharos Kāpaḍi Bhramar and Surendra Lābh; poems by Bhuvaneśvar Pāthey, Mathurānanda Caudhari Māthur and Revatīraṃaṇ Lāl.

Vol. IV: Survey of Nepalese Maithili literature by Rāmbharos Kāpaḍi Bhramar; play by Mahendra Malaṅgiyā; story by R.N. Sudhākar; poems by Dhīrendra, Hariścandra and Ayodhyānāth Caudhari.

Vol. VI: Stories by Rājendra Vimala, Bhuvaneśvar Pāthey, Surendra Jhā Śāstrī; poems by Dharmendra Jhā Vihval, Digambar Jhā Dinmaṇi, Śyāmsundar Śaśi and Rameś Jhā Bhāvagra.

Vol. VIII: Stories by Dhūmketu and Dhīrendra.

Volume VII contained works translated from Limbu: a summary of the development of Limbu language and literature by Bairāgī Kāilā; a story ("the first modern short story written in Limbu") by Kājimān Kandaṅbā; poems by Mahāguru Phālgunanda Liṅḍen, Thāmsuhāṅg Puṣpa Subba Asita, Yir Nembāṅg, Yehāṅg Lāvati and Virahī Kāilā.

The original Nepali content consists of new short stories, plays, essays, criticism, travel reminiscences and sometimes 'contemplations' or a writer's profile of another writer. Some of it is challenging and controversial; little of it could have appeared in an Academy publication before 1990. *Samkālin Sāhitya* is one of the best and most interesting mirrors currently available of the changes that are taking place in Nepal's intellectual culture as a result of democratisation.

INTERVIEW

Reflections of a plant-hunter in Nepal: An Interview with Dr. Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha

Charles Ramble

Dr. Tirtha Bahadur Shrestha is currently the coordinator of Nepal's National Heritage Programme in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN). During his distinguished career as one of Nepal's foremost botanists he has published "not very much really: just four or five books and twenty or so scientific articles." In the late 1980s Dr. Shrestha headed the task force responsible for conducting the

research that culminated recently in the creation of the Makalu-Barun Conservation Area. At that time the present interviewer had an opportunity to work with him, and was struck by his breadth of knowledge and interests. In the course of a lengthy interview, some extracts of which are printed here, Dr. Shrestha attributed his advocacy of a wide perspective to a decade in the Royal Nepal Academy, where he held the post of

Member Secretary for a year. Frustration at the oversimplification of complex situations was a recurrent theme during our conversation: for example, the eclipsing of governmental legerdemain by the conspicuous Tanakpur dispute, or the upstaging of Nepal's most pressing ecological concerns by issues such as the Himal Cement factory and Godavari Marble, currently two of the arch-fiends in the demonology of Kathmandu's ecologists.

Early in his career, after a period of teaching in high schools and in the Amrit Science College, Dr. Shrestha joined the Department of Medicinal Plants. The initial task of assessing Nepal's wealth of medicinal and aromatic herbs launched him on a trajectory as a plant collector that would eventually take him throughout Nepal.

TBS: The first trip I made was to Trishuli in 1962-63, travelling through Dhading, Gorkha and so on. We found that people were very dependent on medicinal herbs for their cash income. For commodities such as oil, kerosene, thread, cloth and suchlike they relied on the sale of herbs. We collected samples without knowing the scientific names for them. One of the plants that are sold is *bikh* [Aconitum], but there are seventeen or eighteen types of *bikh*, and we didn't know which one was which. In fact we don't know some of them even today. Scientifically speaking, it was essential to make a thorough collection, so I gradually became a plant collector. I found it fascinating, travelling and collecting plants. I've been a plant collector ever since. I collected everything I could see, as far as my resources would allow me. At that time we were permitted only two porters, because the budget was limited. Later I travelled with John Adam Stainton [author of *The Forests of Nepal*, etc.], who died recently. I travelled with him all over Nepal between 1965 and 1968 in extended tours. At that time our main interest was to discover new species, especially since

there was no constraint on the number of porters. He could afford it. The only constraint was my own physique. If I was strong enough I could collect as much as I liked, and Stainton was very supportive.

CR: How many districts have you collected in?

TBS: Most districts. The districts I haven't travelled in are... let me think... No, I've collected in all districts of Nepal.

CR: Do you think there are still many plant species to be discovered?

TBS: Among the lichens and fungi, and even the ferns, there certainly remains a lot to discover. But I don't think there are many undescribed species among the angiosperms [higher plants]. On the other hand, there is much scope for discovering the medicinal and other chemical properties of the plants we do know. That hasn't been done.

CR: Your doctoral work focussed on Western Nepal, didn't it?

TBS: Yes. The thesis was entitled "The Ecology and Vegetation of North-west Nepal". It was later published by the Royal Nepal Academy [1982]. In 1972 I had met Dobremez, who had a plan to make a vegetation map of the whole of Nepal. I put together all my previous collections, and since one set was in the Natural History Museum in London, I spent most of my time and money while in France - my doctorate was from Grenoble - travelling to England. And happily my wife was in London at the time, in 1978, doing her Ph.D.

CR: In 1979 you became a Member of the Royal Nepal Academy. How was it to be a natural scientist in an institution dedicated primarily to the arts?

TBS: Originally the Academy was a home for arts and literature, but under the patronage of the present king, in 1975, Lain Singh Bangdel was asked to reorganise it. The new vision was to have a single Academy that would accommodate all the different branches of knowledge, and the constitution also included science. They had *kalā*, art, *saṃskṛti*, culture, *sāhitya*, literature, *gyān*, knowledge or philosophy,