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## CONFERENCE PAPERS & ABSTRACTS

### The Anthropology of Nepal: People, Problems and Processes

Department of Anthropology, University of Sydney and  
Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, Tribhuvan University  
Kathmandu, 7-14 September 1992

#### Panels

*The Anthropology of Resource Management*

*General Anthropology*

*Medical Anthropology*

*The State and the People*

*Urbanism in Nepal*

*Women and Development*

#### Abstracts

**Bipin Kumar Acharya (Tribhuvan University) Panel: *Medical Anthropology***

**"Nature Cure and Indigenous Healing Practices in Nepal: A Medical Anthropological Perspective"**

Medical Anthropology, as an approach, has been contributing with its scholars and students in health care, treatment, ethnomedicine, community care, ecosystem management and so on. Anthropologists today are attracted to this young sub-field. They are contributing both in theoretical and applied aspects of human health. Most of the world's communities at present practice; a mix of conventional, folk, indigenous, modern or scientific healing methods, the mix depending on relative access to both knowledge and resources.

Nepal is one of the poorest and least developed countries of the world as defined by IMF, World Bank and so-called "developed" and "rich" countries. Nepalese people are suffering from starvation and malnutrition and scarcity. Rural people, more than 90 per cent of total population, have no access to "modern" medicine. Chemical drugs, check up and surgery charges are very high. Education and health services should be free for the people but the situation is otherwise. Check up charges per doctor per visit are equal to one days salary of a civil service officer. The allopath doctor-patient ratio is 1:30,000, whereas indigenous folk healer/patient ratio is 1:20 approximately. It was only in the sixth five year plan that utilisation of these folk healers was discussed. As a consequence, the important practical contribution of the folk healers was ignored in theoretical discussions.

Nature care or healing from within is governed by laws of nature of human life. It has distinct processes and procedures of cure or treatment without side or after effects such as hydrotherapy, mudtherapy, dieting, fasting, psychotherapy, magnetotherapy, physiotherapy, light and sound therapy etc. Use of naturally occurring herbs is also applied. It seems similar to folk or indigenous healing systems with culturally accepted values and beliefs.

Nature cure and indigenous folk-healing practices contribute to community health and its sustainability. Its seems more reliable in communities in Nepal. In Nepal, it seems hardly possible to meet the goal of Alma Ata Declaration without community self-help programs. The essence of all the various healing practices

relevant in their socio-cultural contexts, whether separately or mixed up together, will certainly be an appropriate strategy for self-help sustainable health, as well as community development.

**Barbara Nimri Aziz (New York) Panel: *The State and The People*  
"Durga Devi: Another Woman's Tale from the Arun River Valley"**

Durga Devi was another political reformer from East Nepal whose work is remembered by her people, especially women, but unknown to the State. In this paper I recount the long career of the bold legal advocate from Palicot in East Nepal and consider how she is remembered, and forgotten. This is the second of two related biographies of Nepali political rebels from the Arun valley region of East Nepal.

**Anne Buggeland (University of Bergen) Panel: *General Anthropology*  
"Intercultural Relations in a Terai Village seen from a Santhal (Satar) viewpoint and how this affects Cultural Reproduction and Economic Adaptation"**

In the most eastern part of the Terai lives a tribal group called Satar or Santhal. They have migrated to this area from the Indo-Gangetic plains during the last 150 years. With the eradication of malaria and the recent resettlement programs, people belonging to various ethnic groups from the hills have over the last 25 years also migrated to this area for permanent settlement. I did seven months fieldwork in 1991/92 among the Santhals where I focussed on how they managed the coming of the hill-people and how this affected their social and cultural reproduction. This encounter led to economic and social deprivation; because of lack of education, citizenship and ability to use the political/administrative system most of the Santhals have sold/lost their own/contract land and are today working on other's land as daily labourers. Many have migrated to India, and most are known to be a tribe who have maintained a separate identity and distinct cultural features, and I was curious to see if this was the situation also in the marginal situation in Nepal. How do the Santhals work with the different cultural alternatives they confront, especially "the great tradition", Hinduism, represented by the caste people living around them.

**Ben Campbell (University of East Anglia) Panel: *The Anthropology of Resource Management*  
"Forms of Cooperation in a Tamang Community"**

With a few exceptions, the research of the last decades on the economic conditions of the rural people of Nepal has not included detailed work on, or theoretical consideration of, the importance of the range of institutions by which villagers coordinate their production activities on an inter-household basis. This paper presents some findings from Rasuwa district, Northern central Nepal, and discusses the implications of collective work groups for land use patterns, household subsistence strategies, and community organization.

Indigenous concepts of labour reciprocity can be seen to extend through an effective continuum of meanings and practical contexts, articulating with both the cyclic rhythm of transhumant agro-pastoralism, and the dependence of households on a variety of sources of cash income. Rotational exchange labour groups (Nepali "parma", Tamang. "nangba") predominate as the means by which households mobilise labour for the critical periods of subsistence agricultural production, while simultaneously they constitute a potential labour market for households with insufficient producers to work their fields.

Comparisons between the practice of exchange labour in the relatively homogeneous community on which the research was based, and that pertaining in ethnically heterogeneous mid-hill villages reveals significant differences in operations. In the former situation an individual's labour is valued equally without distinguishing age and sex, while in the latter separate groups tend to be formed that are based on such distinctions. It would thus seem that "parma" groups are an important focus for analysing variable cultural constructions of age and gender that enter into the division of labour.

**G. E. Clarke (University of Oxford) Panel: *The State and the People*  
"The State, Change, and Development in The Himalaya"**

This paper is a qualitative attempt at a sociological overview of state, change and development in the

Himalaya. It derives from work in progress, and is based on a number of periods of field, archival and applied work at local and national level in Nepal, other regions of the Himalaya and related areas of Central Asia, between 1969 and 1992. The main concern here is the impact of civilisation, including Buddhism but in the main part of modern industrial and market-based economy, on Nepalese society.

The paper presents various socio-economic and developmental theories of change, all of which are materialist rather than ideological. One conclusion is that while there is a dependency of local areas on the outside, this is not the dependency on external capital and market relations of "dependency theory" (Frank A G), but itself is a more formal relation and sign of a more general hierarchy. Another conclusion here is that while French Marxism (Rey G P, Meillasoux C) is useful and suggestive in examining the penetration of capital, in itself it does not cover the variations or economic relations that result in a high-montagne environment. There is a need to examine the system as in itself as a whole, in the anthropological fashion, to understand the systemic linkages.

The paper takes as one major feature of complex civilisations the degree of social differentiation and exchange, and examines these processes of change at a local and to a degree at a national-level. The central issue is the degree to which there might be long-term systemic social changes. One working conclusion is that economic changes appear more as temporary shifts in equilibria of a "steady-state" system, with raised levels of consumption based on a formal external dependency (remittances into and migration out of the region), than they reflect any long-term shift in balance of productive forces or elaboration of society in the region itself. A second and linked conclusion is that the distribution of material goods of industrial or other civilisations tend to be more expressive of the overall political linkage within the state, a sign of inclusion in a vertical chain or formal hierarchy from regional locality to centre, rather than they are indicative of any permanent internal social elaborations or changes in economic form.

The overall conclusion is that while civilisations do lead to social differentiation, in these extreme topographical conditions there is a long-term tendency for a reverse process of social condensation, that is of an undifferentiated "total exchange" in the sense of Marcel Mauss (*The Gift*) to reestablish itself. Given current technology, topographical factors (namely micro-variation and isolation) rather than economic factors appear as the dominant features of the overall system.

**Dilli R. Dahal (Tribhuvan University) Panel: *The Anthropology of Resource Management*  
"Poverty or Plenty: A Case Study of the Byansi People of Darchula District"**

One index of 'development' is decrease of poverty. In Nepal, poverty is commonly associated with landholding. Other indices are access to road, communication, and availability of basic social service facilities (like school, post office and health post). This research note provides a case study of the *Byansi* people of *Byans* Village Development Committee (VDC), one of the remote and least developed VDCs of Darchula district of Nepal.

The *Byansi* are a Tibeto-Burman group of about 2,000 people, who claim themselves to be 'Hindus'. The *Byans* area is covered by snow four to six months in a year. The average land-holding of a *Byansi* family is low and of poor quality and can feed the family only three to four months in a year. The basic social service facilities available in the area are minimal. Yet the *Byansi* people maintain a relatively good standard of living and are one of the most prosperous groups in Darchula district. This has been possible by maintaining the traditional trade links in the north up to Taklakot (Peoples Republic of China) and by gradually expanding the resource base in the south i.e. Darchula Khalanga.

**Ajit K. Danda (North Bengal University) Panel: *General Anthropology*  
"Ethnicity and Change: Nepal"**

The role of ethnicity as a factor for bringing about change in any society, so far has received only sparing attention. This appears to reflect more the prejudice of mind than the realistic assessment of any empirical situation. Ethnicity in the context of modern nation-state is by and large understood as an expression of narrow loyalty. Since its manifestation is apparently contrary to the post-world war II spirit of humanism, secularism,

and universalism, it is, with deference to the views of the concerned people, attributed with the quality of narrowness which is generally assessed as unwelcome. This apparent overwhelming negative opinion notwithstanding, the phenomenon of ethnicity as such appears only as the post-world war II development. This necessitates adequate explanation. Elaboration is also required in order to appreciate the significance of narrow and broad loyalty, since what seems narrow from the stand-point of a nation-state is certain to appear different from the perspective of minority communities. Under the circumstance, appropriate evaluation of the qualifier before its application seems imperative. Further, any association of ethnicity with loyalty, whether broad or narrow, generally presupposes ethnicity as if a static system of categorization. Contemporary socio-cultural and political developments the world over suggest a close reexamination of the issue. Ethnic movements as well as dynamics of demand and plurality assume extraordinary significance in this respect. The present paper proposes to highlight the issues with particular reference to Nepal.

**Ephrosine Daniggelis (University of Hawaii) Panel: *The Anthropology of Resource Management*  
"Forest Resources as an Adaptive Strategy in Sankhuwasabha, Eastern Nepal"**

This paper examines nutrition and foraging in subsistence agricultural and pastoral societies as adaptive dilemmas. Ethnic differences in the management and use of natural resources and an assessment of the entire food path, including forest foods, were other areas studied.

This research is being conducted in The Makalu-Barun National Park and Conservation Area located in Northern Sankhuwasabha District on Rai and Sherpa populations living within a similar environment. Preliminary results show that of the more than 70 forest plants collected and identified, 33 are consumed by the local population, 33 are eaten by livestock, 18 are used as medicine, five for religious and ceremonial purposes, five as building materials, three are bartered and/or traded. The large number of non-timber forest products used shows that they form an integral part of the indigenous population's life, culture and religion.

Forest resources are critical for the people's survival since food security and natural hazards pose major problems. Because of the importance of forest resources, it is suggested that many development projects could be assisted by including this information in the design and planning processes.

**Anne de Sales (Nanterre University) Panel: *General Anthropology*  
"The Chantel Claims for Identity"**

The Chantel are located on the Southern slopes of Dhaulagiri. All descendants of copper miners, they were landless errants of various origins who would hire themselves according to the availability of mine work. Called Agri Magar for a long time, they were allocated lands at the beginning of the century after the closure of mines by the government. Sedentarised in the village communities, they then claimed a new identity as Chantel. The paper explores this ethnogenesis.

**Basundhara Dhungel (University of Sydney) Panel: *Medical Anthropology*  
"The Qualitative Community Judgement: The Role of Intermediate Health Practitioners in Nepal's Family Health Services"**

Human relations and feelings are important factors in determining the success of health services in rural areas of Nepal. Rural people, in particular, place much importance on feeling at 'ease and comfortable' in receiving medical treatment. This paper is based on a case study in the Kavre Palanchok District carried out to investigate the availability of social services (health and education), their utilization and organization, as well as the opinion of the people who use them and the difficulties they experience in so doing. The study also investigated whether selected socio-economic and physical variables (ethnicity, occupation, education, household size, household income and distance) affected people's utilisation of and attitudes to these services. Only the findings relating to health services are extracted and presented in this paper.

This study found that most of the local people preferred private dispensaries, owned by so-called 'compounders' to the easily accessible, free health services provided by the District Medical Officer (DMO) at the Government operated health centre. The reason given for preferring private medical practitioners were

basically the qualitative role and their capability to understand the feelings and needs of local people. Private medical practitioners were known to the people and could get services and medicine at any time and would even visit the patient if necessary. The private medical practitioners or compounders were found to be the most popular and regularly used by the communities. There was relatively little variation in use of private dispensaries by the selected socio-economic variables. There was however some variation in use of the Government health centre. More Tamang, Brahmin and Thakuri used the Government health centre than Newar, Chhetri and occupational castes. There was little variation in use of private dispensaries in relation to occupation. The reason for not preferring the health centre was the absence or inaccessibility of the DMO, limited working hours, long waiting times, unavailability of medicine and unfamiliarity with the medical personnel. The people found this qualitative difference in service a significant reason for consulting the private medical practitioners, although these were less qualified and patients had to pay for the medical services.

**Robert J. Fisher (University of Western Sydney) Panel: *The Anthropology of Resource Management*  
"Indigenous' Forest Management in Nepal: Why Common Property is not a Problem?"**

In recent years there has been extensive discussion within community forestry circles of indigenous systems of forest management in Nepal. Much of the discussion has been motivated by a recognition of the potential value of an understanding of existing forest management practices to the Government's community forestry program.

Generally the literature has dealt poorly with organizational and sociological aspects of indigenous forest management. There has been relatively little contribution to an understanding of the way rural populations have reached consensus on resource conservation or of the reasons why people conform to agreements (contradicting the predictions of the theory of the "tragedy of the commons").

Anthropologists have contributed to the awareness that rural people in Nepal do successfully place restrictions on the use of forest products from "common" forests. However, theoretical discussion by anthropologists has been distorted by the failure to address the ideological assumption underlying "the tragedy of the commons" — that is the assumption that economic behaviour can be abstracted from social relations and culture.

This paper argues that anthropology has a contribution, of theoretical and practical importance, to make. Remembering the concept of *embeddedness*, a fundamental concept of social anthropology, will be a major first step.

**Martin Gaenszle (Heidelberg University) Panel: *Medical Anthropology*  
"Journey to the Origin: A Root Metaphor in Mewawang Rai Healing Rituals"**

The ritual transformation which Rai healing rituals are supposed to induce is often linked with a ritual journey along ancestral routes. The paper examines one such rite, held for the benefit of a pregnant woman whose soul (*lawā*) has been captured by the roaming spirit of a woman who died in childbirth (*ma: mangme*). The tribal priest undertakes a journey to the place of origin, where the ancestors come from and where the particular type of spirit originated. This kind of journey can be taken as paradigmatic for Rai concepts of illness and healing, which are intimately related to the whole of mythology.

It is argued that the rite may be seen as the enactment of a root metaphor: most myths deal with the problem of origin, and the rituals in general can only be understood against this narrative background. This raises not only theoretical anthropological issues, like the interrelationship of ritual and myth, but also questions of practical relevance, like that concerning the possibility of introducing medical systems with a different aetiology of illnesses, as it is often attempted in vain by modern health workers.

**David Gellner (Oxford University) Panel: *Medical Anthropology*  
"Priests, Healers and Mediums: Possession and Curing Specialists in Kathmandu Valley"**

This paper considers how far I. M. Lewis's theory of spirit possession illuminates material from the Kathmandu valley and suggests that it is revealing when the focus is on the narrow question of recruitment

to curing specialisms. Explaining the logic of local perceptions of possession and curing, however, requires other methods to be employed, but these methods reveal that Lewis's choice of a spatial (central/peripheral) metaphor is very apt. It is argued that concepts of gender are indeed a fundamental part of this 'logic' and that they set limits to the range of possibilities open to spirit mediums. Nonetheless, there has in recent years been a process of democratization of the means of religious legitimacy, which explains in part why the medium role has expanded in importance.

**David Gellner (Oxford University) Panel: *Urbanism in Nepal*  
"Shared Culture or Oppressed Outcastes? The Position of *Khadgi*, *Dyahla*, and others In the Spatial and Social Order of the Cities of the Kathmandu Valley"**

The interpretation of the social position of 'low' castes and 'untouchables' is a controversial matter among anthropologists of South Asia. While some have seen them as repositories of a tacit opposition to the hierarchical values of dominant groups, others, and most forcefully Moffatt (*An Untouchable Community in South India*, 1979) have argued that they reproduce as far as is in their power everything high castes do. More recently Deliege ('Replication and Consensus: Untouchability, Caste and Ideology in India' *Man* (N.S.) 27: 155-73, 1992) has claimed that Moffatt's conclusions are in important respects overstated.

The positions of the *Khadgi*, *Kapali*, and *Dyahala* in Newar society are examined in detail. All three are very important to the traditional Newar hierarchy, and each has a different relationship to the spatial organization of the city. Moffatt's general position is shown to be valid for the *Khadgi*, and arguably for the *Kapali*, but to require modification, in line with Deliege's criticisms, when the *Dyahla* are discussed. Nonetheless, data from the Kathmandu Valley provide little support for the older views Moffatt criticized so effectively.

Furthermore, when the alternative sources of specialist ritual services that these castes are obliged to use are examined, important ritual distinctions become apparent which are only implicit in the practices of high castes. This is a rather unexpected finding which can be interpreted as supporting Moffatt's position.

**Ingemar Grandin (Linköping University) Panel: *Urbanism in Nepal*  
"Urban Life: a Musical Perspective"**

This paper will examine what music will tell us about two varieties of Nepalese urbanism: the traditional urban culture of a small Newar town, and the urban locality par preference, the capital. This investigation will tell us something about the important features of urban life. For after all, music and musical life reflects, articulates, and contributes to the distinctively urban condition. The paper will explore the relations between urbanity and music in both directions:

1. What do urban opportunities, the fabric of ways of life and resources characterizing the urban setting, mean for music and musical life? 2. What are the musical contributions to the distinctive character of urban life?

The paper will consider the organisation of urban life as seen in the organisation of music, as well as urban life as portrayed in songs. It will present case histories of musical artists - both townspeople who have grown up with urbanity as a natural fact, and villagers who have joined urban life attracted by its opportunities. Genres of urban music, both traditional and modern, will be discussed. Other topics under discussion:

a) What are the specifically urban opportunities? b) In what ways do people make musical use of urban opportunities? c) Sophisticated arts - among them, music - are often held to be one hallmark of urbanity. Is a small Newar town really "urban" in this sense? d) What kinds of musical pathways do urban people make up or follow? e) What kinds of musical networks do they weave? f) What does urbanity mean for the social status of music and musicians?

The paper draws upon fieldwork in Kirtipur and Kathmandu in 1985-88 and 1992.

**Manandhar Sumitra Gurung (New Era) Panel: *The Anthropology of Resource Management*  
"Gender Dimension of Eco-Crisis & Resource Management in Nepal"**

The ecological crisis in the hill areas of Nepal is a reflection of the mismatch between gender differences in land resource management and the government's development approach. This problem-oriented process began in the 1950's and on landslides and soil-erosion increased progressively since the 1960's with deforestation seen as responsible for the ailing of the mountains region. However, an even greater part of the hill region's cultivated dry terraces began to face a severe and chronic soil erosion problem that threatened productivity. The greater part of such hill lands are currently and reluctantly being managed by women, a typical phenomenon of the hills where culture, caste and gender differences determine variations in work participation and resource management.

This paper, based on a cultural ecological study of the middle hills in Nepal, demonstrates how gender differences in work participation is affecting the pattern of resource management leading to ecological crisis. The paper stresses the need to understand the on-going processes of local adaptation in the hill areas by responsible authorities in order to reformulate rural development policies and translate them into practical actions. Delays in heeding the problem would further aggravate the socio-economic crisis of the hill societies which will put the country unnecessarily at high risk.

**Sharon J. Hepburn (Cornell; Tribhuvan University) Panel: *General Anthropology*  
"The Case of the Missing Trekker: Moral Geography and Miraculous Survival and Rodney King"**

James Scott went missing while trekking in Gosainkund last winter. Stories of how he was lost emphasize diverse, local, inter-ethnic/caste distinctions and evaluations. Stories about how he survived emphasize Scott's presumed characteristics as a member of that new arrival on the ethnic landscape, "the tourists". These stories, then, provide an example of the process by which groups of people are named and presumed to be homogeneous and how this serves as a basis for moral evaluation a process which is not unique to Nepal, as illustrated by the March 1992 Rodney King trial and its aftermath. They also give us a way of understanding how in one case "tourists", as representatives of the developed world, and as yet another named group, are understood in Nepal.

**Linda Iltis (University of Washington) Panel: *Women and Development*  
"Women, Goddesses, and Newar Representations of Geopolitical Space"**

Newar rituals are well-known for a preponderance of gendered symbolism expressing ideas relating to the power of place and local or regional national identity. In the Swasth'n» Sanskrit-Newari textual tradition of Nepal, ideas of place derived from the Hindu Sanskrit tradition are expanded and realized in both microcosmic and macrocosmic levels extending from personal experience to the geopolitical landscape. Expression is found in early and contemporary text versions, and in the contemporary ritual practice of women. In popular literature, films, and recent political demonstrations women, the Goddess Swasth'n» and women's vratas are used as symbolic imagery for underscoring notions of ethnic identity and national unity.

**Sharada Kharel (Nepal-Australian Community Forestry Project) Panel: *Women and Development*  
"Women's Participation in Community Forestry The Nepal-Australia Community Forestry Project Experience"**

Many International agencies, bilateral government projects in GOs and NGOs are involved in many developmental activities in Nepal. All of them have shown great concern for the involvement of women in all their activities. One such agency is Nepal-Australia Community Forestry Project (NACFP).

When the question of participation arises, women are indispensable in respect of community forestry. This is because women are the ones who go to the forest, collect fuel wood, lop the trees for fodder, gather fallen leaves for animal bedding and cut the grass for animals. They cook food, feed the family members and take care of feeding of household animals also. Thus they have a vital role in forest resources management and utilization.



Involving women in forest management activities who are illiterate or semi-literate, over-burdened with farm and household work, have little or no time to spare for new things, is a challenge faced by NACFP. Besides this, rural women lack general information. Generally whatever information they get is second hand and filtered through their fathers, brothers, husbands and sons. The women in the villages in Nepal are generally illiterate and most training is directed towards literate people and conducted at district level. Thus, women are not only deprived of opportunities for training but are also discouraged from leaving their homes for that purpose. Keeping this in view, NACFP started conveying development message and training to the village level. One such training program started with building smokeless stoves (*chulo*) out of materials available in the villages. It has been warmly received by the women.

The project has been able to communicate its community forestry message to the women participants in certain areas. On the basis of our field experience to date some of the emerging arguments are: we have to identify the priorities of women, which may not necessarily be directly related to forest. Secondly these priorities are to be set as goals to be achieved. Thirdly, a prescription of action to achieve the goal needs to be developed. Then only the active involvement of women can be achieved in community forestry.

**Vivienne Kondos and Alan Kondos (University of Sydney) Panel: *Urbanism in Nepal*  
"For a Better Life': Industrial Workers' Grievances and Collective Actions"**

Through an examination of some of the ways industrial relations have taken and are taking shape in Nepal, we attempt to make discernible some of the cultural elements articulated in the structurations of the triadic relationship involving workers, industrialists and Nepalese governments prior to and after the revolution of 1990. Our analysis of workers grievances and collective actions they take to redress them, and the responses to these by industrialists and Nepalese governments suggests that a distinctively Nepalese industrial culture has and is being created.

**Vivienne Kondos (University of Sydney) Panel: *The State and People*  
"Jana Sakti (people-power) and the Nepalese Revolution: Some Theoretical Considerations"**

The paper explores the possibilities that a certain modality of action is becoming widespread and that a new form of identity has emerged with and from the experience of the success of the 1990 revolution. It is argued that though the form of identity, a collective form, is new, its intelligibility rests on certain principles of an older knowledge. Furthermore, it would seem that while the new modality of action (with its orientations, values and procedures) queries the emplaced form of power.

**Tordis Korvald (University of Bergen) Panel: *General Anthropology*  
"Dancing Gods of Bhaktapur"**

The basis for this paper is information acquired among parts of the Newar population in Bhaktapur in the Kathmandu Valley. The focus is the *Navadurga Pyakhan* which is the annually recurring cycle of a religious dance drama. Members of different castes are involved in a formal way, fulfilling their prescribed duties for the arrangement of the dances. To mention the two most central; the male dancers are recruited from the gardener caste (*Nep: Banmala*), and the maker of their masks, is one household from the painter caste (*Nep: Chitrakar*). In addition I want to take into consideration non-professionals that are participating, that is the Newar audience in Bhaktapur and the other places visited by the *Navadurga*. The audience seem to derive different experiences from watching the dance drama, both enjoyment of its entertaining aspects as well as religious involvement. Here it is the relationship between the audience and the gods and between the audience and the dancers that I will concentrate on. In order to highlight some of these relations I shall try to analyze some exciting stories that are told about *Navadurga's* power. The stories themselves are basically about what happens when people do not behave in the proper way towards these gods during the performance of the *Navadurga* dance. The stories are considered true and are often related to actual historic events. They start with somebody showing disrespect for these gods, and continue to tell about the terrible consequences this has for the misbehaving audience. The story typically ends with disasters like fire, the vomiting of blood, and/or sudden death. These stories are told by both lay people, religious specialists as well as by the dancers themselves.

Through these stories I hope to be able to say something about the Newars religious life.

**Gisele Krauskopff (CNRS) Panel: *The Anthropology of Resource Management*  
"Unpaid Labor (*begari*) among the Tharu of Dang: Village mutual aid and collective organisation in the light of landownership's history"**

The paper focuses on the *begari* system, free days labor given by tenants and farmers to Tharu village chiefs, village priests and landlords. In the light of village and collective organisation for economic as well as religious purposes (village was one of the social basic units in Dang Tharu society), I should try to see how this unpaid labor was sustained by a traditional mutual and collective aid system; how it takes its roots in the peculiar landownership system of the Terai and the mechanism by which the Dang Tharu have been subject to the external political and economical power for centuries. I shall compare two villages whose landownership history is very different to analyse how *begari* has evolved and how a traditional conception of mutual aid and of leaders' duties has been distorted by the *jimindari* system. The paper will take into account the effects of recent upheavals (1990) in the village. I have been studying for ten years a village where unusually the landlords (*jimindar*) are Tharu and where, in 1990, *begari* was still in practice. The analysis will briefly review Dang's historical, political and economical situation before and after the 1964 land reform and the then new impact of "*pahari*" immigration. Focusing on *begari* is a way of analysing village Tharu social and spatial unit not as a given anthropological and cultural fact but located in the ethno-historical context of its genesis and present disappearance.

**Laura Kunreuther (University of Pennsylvania) Panel: *General Anthropology*  
"Timeless Traditions in a Changing Culture: An Analysis of Two Pre-pubescent Rituals for Newar Girls"**

This paper focuses on two distinctly Newar rituals, *ihī* and *baara*, performed for pre-pubescent girls. In an *ihī* ceremony, Newar girls are betrothed to a specific deity represented in the form of bel fruit. As one Newari woman stated: "After *ihī* there is no real meaning in marriage." In contrast to the Hindu, the Newar view *ihī* as the most important union. The ceremony theoretically ensures Newar women against widowhood and its stigma by means of a marriage to the god. In addition to practicing *ihī* the Newars have modified the Hindu rite performed at menarche. During *baara*, Newar girls are secluded in a dark room for twelve days and are forbidden to have any contact either with men or rays of the sun. There are wide differences in the performance of these rituals due to geographic, economic and educational factors. I maintain that *ihī* and *baara* relate directly to the elevated status of Newar women in Nepali society. The contemporary changes in *ihī* and *baara* develop from this same tendency. The implications of these changes in traditions present exciting possibilities for future research on women's rituals throughout Nepal.

**Keshav Lall Maharjan (Hiroshima University) Panel: *Urbanism in Nepal*  
"Effects of Urbanization on Periurban Households in Kathmandu Valley"**

Urbanization of Kathmandu valley, in particular Kathmandu city, has enhanced various economic opportunities for the people in periurban regions in the form of job opportunities in the secondary and tertiary sectors, and the creation and expansion of markets for farm products. This phenomenon has enabled the region to supply labour force and farm products, two main things demanded and consumed by the expanding urban region. As a result, the household income, along with cash-income generating household members have increased in the settlement of the periurban regions. Nakadesh, a Newar settlement is one of such settlements in the periurban region of Kathmandu valley. Households in Nakadesh have specially become able to increase income through supplying farm products (production and marketing) to the urban region. This has in general made the households more economically affluent than ever and their economic activities are ever-expanding. However, family cooperation in this settlement, unlike that found in the ideal traditional joint family, is rather weak and there are earlier and more frequent family break ups, even at the presence of parents and grand parents. The relationship between economic affluence and family break-up is the focus of this paper.

**Christian McDonough (Oxford Polytechnic) Panel: *The Anthropology of Resource Management*  
"The Management of a Canal Irrigation System in Dang, Southwest Nepal"**

The paper provides an account of a canal system which feeds the land of six villages in Dang. The system has been in place for a long time and is managed through local village meetings. The ethnic composition of the catchment area has been changing in recent decades but in the past and still to a considerable extent today the bulk of the population is Tharu. The other households are mainly Bahun-Chetri. The Tharu households own little land and instead work mainly as share-cropping tenants. Much of the land at the time of the study (1979-81, 1985) was owned by Bahun-Chetri households. It is striking, however, that the canal is managed by the indigenous Tharu population and more specifically by the Tharu headman and village committee of the village of Sukhrwar. The paper describes the mythological origin of the canal, which explains and underpins its close association with the clan of the Sukhrwar Tharu headman, and it details the organisational structures of the daily maintenance and control of the system. It is interesting that despite local social divisions deriving from caste and land ownership, the organisation of the canal has remained largely in Tharu hands. This case provides a good example of an apparently successful local traditional institution for the management of vital water resources.

**Donald A. Messerschmidt (Institute of Forestry, Pokhara) Panel: *The Anthropology of Resource Management***

**"People in the Forest: Recent Research at the Social/Natural Resource Interface"**

Anthropology has an important role to play in Asian forestry research and development activities. Anthropological Forestry as practised in Nepal in recent years has achieved some notable milestones, on development projects and at the Institute of Forestry.

This paper reviews the field generally, then focuses on important work conducted at Nepal's Institute of Forestry combining ethnographic and forestry expertise. The background for this work will be discussed along with the methodologies used. Brief case studies will also be presented.

Among the case examples cited are two recent studies conducted in the *Churia* Forest of Southeastern Nepal. The *Churia* is the new frontier of forestry R&D, and Institute of Forestry researchers have made significant progress on research conducted to guide future development planning.

Other cases include recent research on wood energy flows in a regional town, and several smaller anthropological forestry studies in the mid-hills region in and around Pokhara.

**Michael Muhlich Panel: *General Anthropology***

**"The Household, the Householder and the Neighborhood among Sherpas in Solu and Baudhanath"**

The household among the Sherpas is represented in the literature as showing the statistical and cultural prevalence of the nuclear family. As far as obvious statements from Sherpas as to their normatively expected independence of the connubial unit are concerned, this evaluation of the anthropologists is correct. However, taking into account the conceptual understanding of how households are related to each other in a neighborhood, this evaluation seems to be reducing the facts. From the perspective of the Sherpa householders we might rather ask, if a statistically notable increase of the extended family type in the city environment of Baudhanath is conceptually different from the situation in the setting of Solu.

**Tore Nesheim (University of Bergen) Panel: *The Anthropology of Resource Management*  
"Changes in Forest Management among the Kulunge Rai of East Nepal"**

The Kulunge Rai is an ethnic group living in the Eastern hilly region of Nepal. They can be described as having an agro-pastoral adaptation but like most of the hill populations of Nepal they are dependent on other income as well. Salary or pension from the Indian or British army is not important as the last serviceman to retire was in 1965. Strategically placed in the Southeast-Northwest route from the terai to the Mount Everest

region the Kulunge Rais are able to earn extra income from trade and tourism. Most of the goods that the Rais carries to the market in Namche Bazaar will be consumed by tourist. Some work as porters for tourist. Due to these, and other, income sources it has been possible for an increasing population to make a living in the valley. But for how long? Lack of land for food crops, can be compensated by purchase of grain from cash earnings. A much bigger problem is the diminishing forest resources and overuse of pasture. The importance of grass, fodder, fuelwood and building materials are vital for their adaptation. All forest that has been used by the Kulunge Rais was originally communal clan forest. This was in the past managed by the clans so that one would have to get permission from the clan leader in order to cut down a tree. I do not know whether this traditional management system ever worked properly, but now it does not. I saw aspects of a situation that the ecologist Garret Hardin might describe as a "tragedy of a commons". Uncontrolled used of forest is perceived by most of the villagers as a bad thing, and lately there has been a process of splitting up of clan forest into individually owned household shares. This can be seen as an adaptive response to pressure on resources, but since it is not legal the new arrangement will probably not survive the forthcoming cadastral survey. The Kulunge Rais failure to manage their forest resources might be a new phenomenon due to the power vacuum after the revolution, but I believe that it has always been organisationally difficult for them to coordinate the way a multitude of independent households exploit communal forest and pasture resources. This is due to the highly autonomous character of the Kulunge Rai society.

**Alfred Pach (University of Illinois, Chicago) Panel: *Medical Anthropology*  
"Gender, Culture and Disordered Experience in a High Caste Hindu Village"**

This paper discusses a disorder named *chhopuwa* which largely afflicts women, though is also noted to afflict a few men. It takes the form of losing full control of one's consciousness and body. It is most commonly manifested as either a fit of semi or full involuntary possession. It is usually believed to result from the attack of a human or spiritual agency. These attacks are often explained in terms of social conflicts and tensions, although physical infirmities and disturbing affective states are often associated with episodes of *chhopuwa*. Distinctions in responses to these behavioral manifestations, especially for women and men, are interpreted in terms of a set of relations and discourses that position individuals within similar, different and changing social contexts.

**Tulsi R. Pandey (Tribhuvan University) Panel: *The Anthropology of Resource Management*  
"Persistence and Change of a Farming System in Western Hill Nepal."**

Statistical records suggest a relatively higher growth of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and agricultural production in Nepal compared to its growth of population. In a country where more than 75 percent of the population works with marginal or small size of farmland for subsistence, whether the macro information on the increase in agricultural production suggests any improvement in their farming is a big question for the researchers. This paper analyzes the issues of subsistence farming in the Western Hills of Nepal with empirical data from four caste/ethnic settlements collected during a five months period of field research (June to October, 1989).

The paper looks at the farming system in terms of a relationship of the farming household in the community with a set of farm inputs, production activities and output-related activities, including the use of farm products. In this relationship, the farm household owns and/or supplies farm inputs, arranges labour for production and harvesting activities and determines the use of farm products. In these activities, it may lease, hire, share and exchange the inputs, labour and products within its neighborhood. The interrelationship between farm inputs, labour and production also determines the level of in-farm employment opportunities and food self-sufficiency to farmers and the level of pressure upon the resources contributing to either equilibrium or change in the system.

The study reveals that there has been: (1) an increase in the number of heirs over the generations among households leading to the shrinkage of family land through separating and sale, (2) an encroachment upon marginal land for cultivation, (3) a decline in livestock population due to the gradual loss of grass and grazing land and (4) out-migration of farm labour for subsistence earning within Nepal or other countries.

**Joanna Pfaff-Czarnecka (Wolfson College, Oxford) Panel: *The State and the People*  
"The Politics of Distance, Trust, and Cooperative Relations: State and Entrepreneurs  
under Marginality Conditions"**

Many developing countries are characterised by a significant "gap" between the "state" and the "society". This "gap", or distance, is, for instance, discernible when the state seeks to promote Cottage Industries in the remote areas of Nepal. While pursuing legitimating endeavours ("bringing development" being a necessary basis of political power), state officials seek to attract entrepreneurs with prospects of credit and technical assistance. However, more often than not, officials are considered to be successful after having distributed credits so that they are not urged to assist entrepreneurs after the initial stage. Inexperienced entrepreneurs in rural areas of Nepal, unable to cope with the emerging problems, are often left alone. While the state knows "neither space nor time" when it seeks access to people, only a few citizens manage to mobilise support when they seek access to the state.

Using the example of local entrepreneurs in the remote district of Bajhang I attempt to show the inadequacies in Nepalese institutional development, most notably significant deficiencies in the accountability of the administrative apparatus. Furthermore, it will be discussed how state officials take advantage of the existing distances and even strive to enlarge the already existing "gaps". On the other hand, the question emerges why citizens "trust" the state, and what kind of strategies they chose (intermediary structures) when they strive to approach the state. Thus, the final discussion centres around the absence of a link between the state and existing solidary structures, that is around the prospective new forms of social solidarity, institutions necessary to diminish the existing social distance as well as the requirements to establish a relationship of trust and confidence between the state and the people.

**W. Dennis Pontius (University of Michigan) Panel: *Urbanism in Nepal*  
"Living on the Edge of the City: Tamang Villagers Perspectives of the Urban Environment"**

The urban experience of the Kathmandu Valley is not limited to those living within the confines of its major cities. There are a number of ways in which those living in villages within the valley are involved with urban processes. These involvements have led villagers to form opinions of urbanisation which may be at odds with those held by those living in the urban centres themselves. As increasing expansion brings these centres ever closer to the perimeter of the valley it is important to consider how this expansion is perceived by those who are increasingly being incorporated into the urban environment. This paper explores how villagers opinions of the cities are formed through their economic ties to the cities. In it I will compare and contrast specific activities within two domains. As peasant cultivators villagers have long-standing ties with landlords residing in Kathmandu. These relations contribute to the separation of urban and rural components of the valley. Villagers also participate in a number of economic activities which bring them into close contact with the cities of the valley. These range from daily wage labour in the city to piece work done in villager's homes. This paper will trace the development of these two different kinds of labour activities for Tamang villagers living near Kathmandu. I will argue that these two types of labour have caused individuals living on the edge of the urban areas of the Kathmandu valley to experience urbanisation in specific ways which lead them to hold ambivalent views towards the urban process itself.

**Rajendra Pradhan (free-lance anthropologist) and Ujjwal Pradhan (International Irrigation  
Management Institute) Panel: *The State and the People*  
"Kathmandu Newars: State, Society and the Individual"**

This paper questions the validity of western notions of individual and collective orientations within South Asian communities. It is presumed that South Asian communities are collective in nature while "western" communities are individualistic.

Contrary to this presumption, this paper will examine the collective and individual orientations of Kathmandu Newars in their family, religious, and economic contexts. These issues will be explored historically with a focus on the role of the state and changes in the politico-economic and collective values. Analyzing

different socioeconomic contexts of Kathmandu Newars, the paper shows i) how there are distinct spheres of both individual and collective orientations, ii) how the state over time has changed, eroded, and confounded these orientations, and iii) exposure to the external has also brought about concomitant changes.

The focus will be on the preservation and demise of various Newar *guthis*, the fall of neighbourhood solidarity, the changes in power relations over the management of Kathmandu irrigation systems, the lack of economic partnership among the traders and craftsmen, and also the areas where the individual comes to the forefront.

The paper concludes with the evolving contemporary collective and individual processes interacting with state control and changing values.

**Declan Quigley (Cambridge University) Panel: *Urbanism in Nepal*  
"Urban Anthropologies: The Kathmandu Valley in Comparative Perspective"**

This paper will examine how recent research on the anthropology of the traditional urban settlements of the Kathmandu Valley illuminates more general themes in social anthropology.

One theme will be the explanation of caste. It is argued that the rich ethnographic and historical descriptions of traditional Newar settlements allow us to present a radically different interpretation of caste organisation from that normally favoured by students of South Asia. In Nepal it can be seen that caste has its roots in royal urban centres. By focussing on the nature of both kingship and preindustrial urbanism, a wider comparative frame is required than is usually adopted for the study of Hindu society.

A second theme will revolve around continuities and discontinuities between pre-industrial and modern urban formations. It is argued that what is conventionally referred to as "urban anthropology" is often excessively narrow because the modern city cannot be studied in isolation as a symbolic universe in the way that certain pre-industrial cities could be.

**Geoffrey Samuel (University of Newcastle) Panel: *General Anthropology*  
"Tibet as Part of Southeast Asia"**

The highland peoples of Southeast Asia are the subject of an anthropological literature stemming largely from Edmund Leach's *Political Systems of Highland Burma* and extending through subsequent research in Eastern India, Thailand, Laos, Vietnam and more recently Yunnan. Important themes of this research include the relative primacy of rituals and economics in social and political change, the dynamics of ethnic identity, and the relationship between indigenous religious systems and (mostly Theravada) Buddhism. Although there are linguistic and cultural differences between these highland peoples they share many common features and form a continuous belt between Theravadin states of Southeast Asian coastal regions and Tibetan societies of high plateau.

Despite the significant historical interaction between the Tibetans and these highland peoples (i.e. Lisu, Yi, Naxi), the anthropological literature on Tibetan societies has largely ignored them. I suggest in this paper that a study of these highland peoples is significant for Tibetanists not only because of their historical relationships with Tibetan societies but also because the theoretical issues raised in studying them can illuminate aspects of Tibet as a whole.

**T. R. Sareen (Indian Council of Historical Research) Panel: *The Anthropology of Resource Management*  
"Child Labour in Carpet Industry, Nepal"**

Started as a rehabilitation programme for the Tibetan refugees in the early sixties, carpet weaving has become a major industry in Nepal. It employs thousands of female labourers. The paper will focus on the mode of recruitment of children from the hills by the broker and the way they are lured to the valley. Under the so-called verbal contract the female children are forced to work in makeshift factories from 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. everyday for just two meals. Once employed there is no escape for them and they are virtually treated by the

middle man and factory owners as bonded slaves. Cut off from their families the only escape for them is prostitution or domestic slavery.

The emphasis will be on economic exploitation and the social evils which have emerged as a result of this unregulated but at the same time privately controlled labour.

**Rebecca Saul (I.O.F. Project, Pokhara) Panel: *The Anthropology of Resource Management*  
"Indigenous Forest Knowledge: Who Possesses it and Why"**

Anthropologists often work with specialists in cultures and communities because of their indigenous knowledge in certain areas. The information that indigenous knowledge holders in Nepal possess about their environment is vast and complex. This has been recognized, to some extent, by foresters and development workers, and these people are now trying to work with villagers in managing forest resources. Unfortunately, these outside experts often do not know who the knowledge holders in the community are, and do not have the time or resources to do an in-depth knowledge survey.

This paper will discuss the findings of ten months of research working with Nepal villagers concerning indigenous knowledge of forest resources and forest management. Findings reveal that distinct categories of people within village communities possess specialized forest knowledge. The amount and type of this knowledge is influenced by age, gender, caste, and socio-economic standing. It can, therefore, in a large number of cases, be predicted who the indigenous forest knowledge holders within a community area. It is hoped that this finding will aid foresters and development workers in their work with local peoples and their forest resources.

**Prayag Raj Sharma (Tribhuvan University) Panel: *Urbanism in Nepal*  
"Emergence of a Hill-Town Urban Development in the Rural Hinterlands of Nepal"**

In my paper I have set forth some points of discussion relating to certain settlements as being the examples of pre-modern towns, and being faint attempts at urbanization in the hills of Nepal during the 19th and the first half of the 20th centuries. A broad and cursory survey has been done in it of the hill-towns in general and of the Chainpur bazaar in particular. The circumstances leading to the establishment, growth and decline of Chainpur as well as hill-towns in general provide the main theme of the paper. The luck of the individual hill-towns with regard to their growth, expansion and their attainment to the municipal status in the recent years, has been an extremely variable one. Despite the similar circumstances in the past in which they came to be established, or appropriated in use, they have run an uneven course of growth and face an uncertain future for themselves. They have been affected either by the periodic administrative reorganization of the districts or overtaken by the new market trends unleashed by the extensive construction of vehicular roads in Nepal from the 50's on. It is basically a historical presentation trying to suggest how the hill-towns represent an indigenous form of urban movement.

**Yesodha Shrestha (Wincom, Kathmandu) Panel: *Women and Development*  
"Socio-Cultural Constraints of Working Women in Nepal."**

Women behind the 'Purdah' system have today gradually emerged to join the competitive work force in the outside world. But, in spite of the social changes taking place within the society, Nepal still remains a male dominated, undeveloped country with its unique cultural values intact. It is clear that increasing number of women are engaged in different types of jobs and they face a dual responsibility at home and at work. But, unfortunately not adequate studies have been conducted on the problem and perspectives of working women. The present study aims to highlight the socio-cultural constraints of women workers especially in hotels, hospitals, travel-trade and field based workers.

It is true that due to the stereotyped cultural norms a woman's duty is first confined to the four walls of her home and whatever job she holds outside the home is considered secondary in nature. But despite this fact women today are ever-ready to join the work force. So what are the factors leading women to work? Are women

satisfied with the kinds of jobs they are pursuing? If not, what are the criteria for job preference for the working women? And how can the working conditions of women be improved? So, the present paper aims to give some insight to the above mentioned questions.

**Julia J. Thompson (University of Wisconsin) Panel: *Women and Development*  
"Ritual and Resistance Among High Caste Hindu Women in Kathmandu"**

Women all over the world use various forms of resistance to protest against the prevailing cultural order, they are not just "passive victims" nor are they merely "active acceptors" of male dominance and cultural constraints (MacLeod 1992). In this paper, I explore how high-caste Hindu women in Kathmandu use their religious activities, such as daily worship, weddings, filial rites, or fasting, as forms of resistance which range from the very overt to the extremely covert. These women may have socially constrained lives but many of them find latitude in their religious activities for strong expressions of personal resistance which then have direct and indirect effects on their lives. Although they appear to conform to Hindu ideals through their religious activities, these women are actually able to express dissatisfactions, show their resistance and, in essence, not conform.

**A.W. van den Hoek (Leiden University) Panel: *Urbanism in Nepal*  
"The Return of the Divine Dancers: The Significance of Bhadrakali Pyakhan in Kathmandu's Ritual Structure"**

Speaking of urban images within a Nepalese context one inevitably thinks of Kathmandu as the city of gods. It is claimed that the amount of divine images in the old city, from the unhewn stones in front of every house to the beautiful icons enshrined in temples, surpasses the number of its inhabitants. The reputation is well deserved: on the basis of its permanent, mostly stone images alone an elaborate sacred geography of the city can already be construed. I will only briefly touch upon this aspect. Even if taken together, all permanently visible images of Kathmandu present only a fraction of what the city has in stock. Some of its images are never brought out into the open, but a great many of them are, be it only on special occasions. These occasions, mostly called the festivals of Kathmandu, bring to light a pattern completely different from the one expressed by its more permanent legacy of images. Instead of a sacred geography which integrates, surrounds and encompasses the city, the festivals (*yatra*) show an antagonistic pattern in which the Northern half of the city is opposed to its Southern counterpart, with each of them having its own "king" now-a-days a purely ritual title. Between the two paths the centre is situated as a broad boundary line which includes the old royal palace. In the *yatras*, the processions of the goddesses of the Northern and Southern parts of town, the boundary line is being crossed with pomp and circumstance. For this occasion the brass statues of the goddesses and their following - which are kept inside "gods houses" all through the year are brought out and paraded through the city. The music accompanying them is specially vocal in the parts of town that do not belong to their own divine realm. The pattern manifested by those garish processions reflects a deeper structure. The social organisation of Kathmandu city is based on caste-bound death societies, which express the same North South division, with each half having its own cremation *ghats*. This leaves us with the centre including the old palace which is still used as the seat of power by the present dynasty on ritual occasions. Yet the centre by itself would be empty without its external ritual relationships, some of which stretch over long time periods and distances. The emblem of the central goddess whose temple is situated within the palace compound is carried every year to the most sacred *pitha* of Guhyesvari located in a small piece of jungle ten kilometres east. Every year the king himself is empowered by the blessing of the same goddess in the form of a young virgin of goldsmith caste. But the king is filled with *sakti* (power) from still other sources, and by witnessing the yearly cycle of rituals one would still miss essential features of the *tantra* of the web in which the centre is enveloped. Every twelve years the king of Nepal exchanges swords with the goddess Bhadrakali who, in the normal yearly ritual cycle, belongs to the Southern part of town. On this special occasion, however, the goddess and her following are impersonated by dancers of the gardeners' caste who wear the masks of the respective divinities. The king thus receives one of his most enduring blessings from one of the lower castes. The images which are brought out here, the divine masks of the dancers, are of the most temporary nature. They will be burned in a ceremony resembling a cremation, but not before they have made a tour of the whole valley of Kathmandu. By their round



of the area which was called Nepal before the modern nation-state came into being, they exhibit another essential feature of the wider social structure of the area. Although most of the inhabitants are engaged in agriculture, it would be mistaken to view Nepal as a village society. It is in the most literal sense of the word, a cosmopolis, in which every smaller or bigger town or village has to play its part. In the intricate network of ritual relationships the local level is subordinate to the cosmopolis. The tour of Bhadrakali dancers provides one of the clearest examples of the urban nature of a seemingly agricultural society. As the Bhadrakali dancers exchanged swords with the king last autumn (1991) and are completing their tour of Kathmandu valley right now, it is an appropriate time to give due attention to one of the most passing and yet so distinctive images of the city of Kathmandu

**Susanne van der Heide (Museum of East Asian Art, Cologne) Panel: *The State and the People*  
"The Democratic Movement and its Influence on Contemporary Art in Nepal: Two  
Precursors and their Aims"**

The revolution of 1990 brought back democracy to Nepal. The first democratic steps had already taken place decades before. But after the first election in 1959 the Panchayat system took over power in 1960. The democratic movement had started from India where the Indian Nationalists opposed the British ruling government.

Well known political leaders from Nepal like B. P. Koirala and Ganesh Man Singh started their campaigns against the Rana regime in those days from India. At that time certain Nepalese artists came into contact with these political activists. That had its influence on the contemporary art movement in Nepal and brought also several social changes for the traditional castes.

I want to show the relation between the changing political climate after 1947 (when India became independent) and a new evolving attitude towards art in Nepal which could pave the way for contemporary ideas. These changes would not have occurred without the efforts of two artists, Tej Bahadur Chitrakar and Chandra Man Maskey, who were precursors for today's art movement.

Both were born in 1900 and both got at the same time a scholarship from the Ranas to study at the Calcutta Government School of Art. The various under-currents and influences of the Bengal School of Arts left deep impressions on the two men. In particular, at the time the school was a cultural centre of the Indian nationalists opposed to the British. The intellectual elite of the country were then active in the school.

Under Percy Brown, the British Principal of the Government School of Arts, Chitrakar and Maskey started their studies and continued under Nanda Lall Bose, the next Principal of that school, who belong to the movement of the so-called Revivalists. Their centre was Santiniketan, founded by Rabindra Nath Tagore. Bose was a friend of Avanindra and Rabindra Nath Tagore and supported with his works the Indian National Congress. In India Chitrakar and Maskey met besides the Revivalists several activists from Nepal who had close contact to the Indian Congress Party.

Chitrakar for example knew Dharma Bhakta, one of the martyrs who was killed later under Juddha Sumsher Rana, and Maskey was a friend of Ganesh Man Singh, who is now the Supreme Leader of the ruling Nepali Congress Party in Nepal.

**Gert-Matthias Wegner (London University) Panel: *The State and the People*  
"The Traditional Performing Arts: A Chance for Survival?"**

It has become fashionable to mourn the decline of traditional performing arts in changing societies. I think, we should go a step further and develop strategies in order to give these arts a chance for survival. There is a school of thought which holds that change is inevitable and thus any sort of interference bound to be unwise and ridiculous. But, on the other hand, can a country like Nepal really offer to let its traditional arts and music sink into oblivion? After all, it is the very charm of the people of Nepal with their various cultural expressions that attract scholars and tourists from all over the world - not the hybrid forms of commercial films, songs, etc. If carefully managed,, tourism and traditional performing arts could promote each other

The state of traditional music can be a subtle indicator for the state of a people, a society. In ancient China sages and rulers were convinced that the state of music not only reflected but directly affected the situation of the empire. Music was an essential instrument to balance, unify, maintain, and create supreme delight as well. Consequently, when music is neglected, it disintegrates, and so do state and society.

Concern for the disappearing music traditions caused Tribhuvan University to accept a proposal for establishing a Department of Musicology, where theory and methods of Ethnomusicology will be taught to Nepalese students. This department will be the first of its kind in South Asia, as it is concerned not only with the so-called Classical Music (*sastriya sangit*), but with all the local music traditions.

The paper discusses the major causes of the decline and suggests possible measures to promote a survival of Nepalese music traditions.

**Hayami Yasuno (London University) Panel: *Medical Anthropology***

***"Dos (faults) and Danda (fines): Consultations with the Masta Deities in Western Nepal"***

The *Masta* deities in the Karnali Basin, Western Nepal have, as manifesting gods (*parbat devata*), a more direct influence on people's lives than the so-called "Sanskritic" gods which are regarded as hidden gods (*gupta devata*). Interpersonal conflicts, often focussing on land and women (*mau mati*) are brought in seance and the *Mastas* give solutions through a human medium, the oracle called *dhami*.

The key concept in oracular speech is *dos* (faults, guilt; sin; accusation). In Ayurvedic tradition illnesses are thought to be caused by a disruption in the equilibrium of the three humours (the *dosas*) within the body--*bai*, "wind": *pitta*, "bile": and *kapha*, "phlegm" [see Raheja 1988, 44-45]. In Sinhalese culture the term *dosa* also refers to other "trouble" or misfortune that results from the actions of supernatural beings [Obeyesekere, 1976 206]. In the *Masta* cult *dos* designates not only misfortune (often disease) as a result of divine anger (*devata lagnu*) but also moral offence or violence of the social order (*thiti*) as a cause of divine anger.

Guilty action is believed to pollute a god. The doer is required to compensate the victim and to purify the god (*devata suddha garnu*) paying a fine (*danda*).

This paper aims, through analysis of several cases of consultation with the *Masta* deity which were collected during 1983 to 1984 and in 1986, at considering how purity/pollution and fault/punishment are interconnected in the *Masta* cult.

## 21st Annual Conference on South Asia

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### Himalayan Panels

*Crisis in Nepal's Economic Development*

*Goals, Modifications, Plans for the Advancement of Education in Nepal--1992-2000*

*Newar Trade with Tibet*

*Social and Cultural Boundaries in Nepal I*

*Social and Cultural Boundaries in Nepal II*

*Visual Anthropology of Newar Religion (Pre-Conference)*

### Paper Abstracts

**Vincanne Adams (Princeton University) Panel: *Social and Cultural Boundaries in Nepal II*  
"Khumbu Sherpas and Transnational Boundaries"**

Khumbu Sherpas identified themselves through strategies of both boundary and dissolution land boundary maintenance. The Sherpa effort to remain distinctively Sherpa, involved use of "traditional" modes of social interaction as well as appropriation of foreign tropes about "the Sherpas." Sherpa boundary issues in this way revolved around for a distinctive Sherpa "other" among foreign researchers and became a form of consumer nostalgia while the production of Sherpa "otherness" became in part, for Sherpas, a strategy for economic and cultural profit.

**Kamal Adhikary (University of Texas, Austin) Panel: *Social and Cultural Boundaries in Nepal II*  
"Where do Magar Women Stand?"**

Anthropologists working in Nepal report that the status of women among groups such as the Gurung, Rai and Magar is different from that of Brahman-Chetri women. Women in the former groups are thought to enjoy more freedom, to more frequently be entrepreneurs, and to be more highly regarded for their entrepreneurial activities by their men.

However, my study among the Magars of midwest Nepal shows that Magar women do not enjoy more freedom than their Brahman-Chetri counterparts. Nor are they encouraged by their men in their entrepreneurship. This paper describes the experiences of Magar women who tried to raise loan-money in order to start a project to generate women's income by drawing to their existing skills in knitting and sewing. It also analyzes the responses of Magar men to the women's request for their support.

**Paul Benjamin (Indiana University) Panel: *Crisis in Nepal's Economic Development*  
"Local Development and Governance in Nepal Since the Demise of the Panchayat System"**

**Sarada Bhadra (Tribhuvan University)  
"Development of Secondary Education in Nepal"**

Secondary education has included grades 6 through 10 and it has shown rapid growth from the 1950's to the 1990's. The National School Leaving Certificate Examination has been a vital examination for individuals completing this phase of their education. The number taking this examination has grown from just a few hundred in the 1950's to over 120 000 in 1991. During this period of time certain secondary schools were selected to be Multipurpose Schools offering in addition to the general education program a specialty in one or more of four vocational areas. A strong effort has also been made to develop secondary schools in all regions of the country and to meet the needs of a growing population (12 million in 1970 and 18 million in 1990). In 1971 a goal was set to make every secondary school a vocational school. This had varying degrees of success

and a more traditional curricular program has been reinstated. More recently several Technical Training Schools have been built where applicants have had to have completed 10 years of schooling but not the School Leaving Examination. There is evidence that these new Technical Schools are meeting a real need in terms of preparing more individuals to work in a growing number of technical areas.

**Barbara Brower (University of Texas, Austin) Panel: *Social and Cultural Boundaries in Nepal II*  
"History, Geography, and Variability among Solukhumbu Sherpa"**

Geography and the flow of history have served to separate the Sherpa populations of Junbesi Khola and the Bhote Kosi valley for close to fifteen generations, giving rise to a group allied by language, livelihood, and longterm bonds of marriage and trade, yet distinguished by an array of differences explicit in the cultural landscape of each place. Political ecology provides a framework to interpret the range of variation in land use and landscape. This example of internal variability within a group that calls itself by a single name illuminates the processes of cultural adaptation and differentiation so strikingly apparent in the Nepal Himalaya.

**Mary M. Cameron (Auburn University) Panel: *Social and Cultural Boundaries in Nepal I*  
"Asking (Maagnu) and Waiting: The Constitution and Meaning of Intercaste Boundaries in Far Western Nepal"**

The long-standing and inherited *riti-bhagya* relationship between upper caste landowners and lower caste landless households in Bajhang District or western highlands Nepal creates bilateral ties of economic dependency that heavily favor the landowners. In asking (*maagnu*) for biannual harvest shares (*khalo*) and other material goods, persons of lower caste (*bhagya*) behave and communicate with upper caste patrons (*riti*) in ways associated with their lower social status and dependent economic roles, while simultaneously manipulating the *maagnu* context to their desired goals. This paper explores the practice of lower caste *maagnu* as a form of social action that dramatizes complex cultural meanings about persons, rank, 'impurity', giving, objects, prestige, and kinship. The practice of *maagnu* sustains intercaste social hierarchy, yet demonstrates lower caste resistance to domination.

**Robert Canfield (Washington University)  
"Changing Political Configurations in Greater Central Asia"**

This paper is about the transformations in society that have shaped the course of affairs in Greater Central Asia -- Central, Southwestern and South Asian -- and that promise to continue to shape affairs in the region in the future. Cheaper shipping on the high seas in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, imperial railroad systems in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, electric and electronic communications devices in this century, are technologies that have influenced the configuration of politics. The transport and communications facilities and devices that are now, or soon to be, coming into use will further transform the geopolitical configuration of Greater South Asia. The effect of transport improvement will be the bridging of the traditional north-south divide in Greater Central Asia; and effects of the introduction of the new information management technologies will be a major re-figuring of popular images and ideals and possibly a rearrangement of loyalties toward communal groups to the detriment of state power. As such, it will alter our concepts of national and regional security.

**Ter Ellingson (University of Washington) Panel: *Visual Anthropology of Newar Religion*  
"Research Media in a Multimedia Culture"**

In a cultural milieu as richly infused with interacting visual and auditory communication media as that of Newar ritual performances, our use of audiovisual media adds new layers of ambiguity and symbolic interaction, and problematizes traditional notions of realism and documentation. Viewing selected video representations of aspects of Newar rituals, we will consider some of the problems raised by the inherited mythology of ethnographic film, and attempt to identify new issues raised by the use of video rather than film, and by the kinds of interactions the medium facilitates. Rather than a straightforward tool of documentation,

video emerges as a medium of visualization of the flow of cultural energies, in an interactive process that need not necessarily lead to any finished product.

**Kathleen M. Erndl (Lewis and Clark College)**

**“The Goddess and Female Empowerment in Kangra, India”**

This paper explores the extent to which Hindu conceptions of female power (sakti) translate into religious empowerment for women in Kangra, a region of India well known both for its patriarchal social structure and for the pervasive influence of Goddess worship. A fascinating but little studied feature of Kangra culture is the degree to which women take on religious leadership roles through Goddess possession, healing, mediumship, and leading devotional song groups. Almost every village has women of extraordinary religious attainments who function as leaders in their communities, even in the absence of institutionalized roles for them to do so. This paper explores some ways in which these women have carved out niches for themselves as religious practitioners, outside the traditional male roles of priest and renunciant as well as outside or in addition to the traditional female role of conducting domestic rituals for the welfare of their families.

**Jack W. Graham (Southern Illinois University at Carbondale)**

**“Development of Higher Education in Nepal”**

In the early history of Nepal, students would have to go to India to complete higher education. The first college was organized and arrangements were made for students to complete their college examinations at Patna University in India. Tribhuvan University was organized in Kathmandu in the early 1960s and has had several styles of organization. It has organized campuses across the country and has made use of affiliated private campuses at different times in its history. Its enrollment has grown and now exceeds 60,000 students. Its program of offerings has increased to include institutes of law, medicine, engineering, business, social studies and humanities, agriculture and other programs.

The financing of higher education has come from the Government of Nepal. Tribhuvan University, with its affiliated campuses, is the major university. Research is an increasingly important part of the University system. The quality of instruction has improved with faculty receiving additional preparation in Nepal, India, in various other Asian countries, in Europe and in the United States.

**Brian Greenberg (University of Chicago)**

**“Agricultural Ecology and Peripheral Economy in Late Colonial Kangra (Western Himalayas): Intensification, Transformation and Deterioration”**

Self-sufficient subsistence agriculture supplemented by a modest flow of long distance trade characterized the economy of the Kangra valley in the western Himalayas prior to about 1820. The hill area Rajas of the period had levied in-kind land rents on a sharecropping basis. Subsequently, the Sikh regime in Lahore and the succeeding British administration imposed policies upon Kangra which increasingly reflected external political and economic forces, and the revenue and raw material needs of the colonial government. These policies had the secondary effect of intensifying and transforming traditional agricultural ecology.

Essential to this change was the tendency to conceptualize and to reconstruct the complex and diversified indigenous agriculture through British colonial categories of agronomy, economy and land ownership. The resulting administrative policies, such as a land revenue system intended to incorporate subsistence agriculture into the cash economy and to tax it on a commercial basis, and the introduction of exotic plants and animals, had dramatic effects on agricultural ecology. Other factors, such as an expanding population, limited arable land, and a delicate mountain environment compounded these destabilizing influences. Indigenous farmers were forced to respond by intensifying agriculture according to their traditional systems of knowledge. However, that level of intensification demanded an “ecological subsidy”, a borrowing from the longterm fertility of local forests and fields.

**Arjun Guneratne (Chicago, IL)**

**“Building a Base: Community Development and Peasant Resistance in Nepal’s Dang Valley”**

This paper describes a form of peasant struggle that is neither a violent challenge to the established order nor what James Scott and other have called everyday resistance. Instead, the Tharus in Dang have utilized the rhetoric and practices of “development” in Nepal to create for themselves a space in which to struggle for emancipation from a situation of quasi-serfdom. A Tharu Community development organisation known as BASE (Bold Action for Social Education) emerged in the political space created by the 1990 democracy movement in Nepal, and has worked to unite landless Tharus in the Dang valley to resist exploitation by the region’s Brahmin-Chhetri landlords. BASE is a genuine “grass-roots” movements whose leadership, organization and programs originate from within the Tharu community itself.

The paper describes the origins, development and activities of BASE. I discussed the relationship between BASE and various sources of foreign funding of its activities, and how BASE attempts to maintain its independence and its own agenda. The origin of BASE lies in a series of literacy classes organized by its present leader in 1987, under the auspices of a USAID community development program, and two thirds of the beneficiaries are women. BASE has also attempted to halt the more egregious forms of exploitation of Tharu labour, particularly corvee labour and bonded labour which continue to be prevalent in the western Tarai. The paper concludes by describing a cultural performance organized by BASE in January 1991, which was attended by over 1500 villagers. The program was at one level an assertion of pride in Tharu culture, but it was also an act of defiance against local Brahmin landlords, who were publicly lampooned on stage.

**David Holmberg (Cornell University) Panel: *Social and Cultural Boundaries in Nepal I***

**“Untouchability in Egalitarian Society: Tamang/Blacksmith Relations from a Tamang Perspective”**

Prominent approaches to caste in greater Nepal stress ritual impurity as a primary basis for the low status of the *paani nachalne jaat*, or untouchables. *Paani nachalne jaat* are commonly found in Tibeto-Burman speaking non-Hindu populations in hill Nepal. Articulations of purity and impurity among Tibeto-Burman speaking populations like the Tamang are strikingly different from Hindu conceptions and do not account for caste-like social interactions. This paper examines how the western Tamang, who are ideologically egalitarian and symmetrically reciprocating treat low caste blacksmiths or *kaami*. *Kaami* are found almost universally in hamlets attached to Tamang villages. The paper examines how Tamang and *kaami* are tied economically and how Tamang construct *kaami* more as jealously dangerous than ritually impure. Thus, this paper explores the boundaries between Hindu and Tibeto-Burman in the construction of caste.

**Laurie Hovell (Syracuse University)**

**“Travel and Tibet: Horizons Lost, Found, and Transgressed?”**

Collage, “postmodern ethnography” or performance, this paper explores the notion of travel and its relation to representations of Tibet. Through a juxtaposition of slides with a critical examination of various Western travel texts on Tibet dating from 1774, the paper explores the ways in which Tibet was constructed to British and American travel accounts as well as the possibilities for contemporary representations of Tibetan cultures.

In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Tibet was largely forbidden to outsiders; Tibet then, became the still point in a Western myth of spirituality and ancient wisdom. Accounts of Tibet tended to emphasize the hazards of the journey there as well as Tibet’s enduring and unique qualities. To borrow some terms from James Clifford, Tibet *dwelled* while the West *traveled*. Through a critique of this configuration of cultural representation, the paper asks several questions: Given the diaspora of Tibetans since 1959, what does it mean to study “Tibetan culture”? Does the present situation of Tibet suggest new approaches to culture construction and ethnic identity? Perhaps a movement towards studying Tibetan culture as traveling will undermine the nostalgic romanticism of many Tibetan representations, work to situate Tibetan culture and ethnicity within

a larger political context, and explore the “unresolved historical dialogues between continuity and disruption, essence and positionality, homogeneity and differences (Clifford, 1992: 108).”

**Linda Iltis (University of Washington) Panel: *Visual Anthropology of Newar Religion*  
”Ritual Action and Cultural Expression in Classical Newar Dance Dramas”**

Since the 16th century, the Newars of Nepal have created and patronized over 40 distinct ritual dance drama traditions that are still performed. Ritual actions incorporated in these dramas continue to evolve new meanings for both performers and audiences. Sacrifices and pøj's embedded within these contexts provide climaxes for the events and involve physical interchanges between the sacred and secular worlds. Articulation of these distinct ritual dance groups through interrelationships or the avoidance thereof is also examined as part of the greater or macrocosmic Newar religious worldviews. This paper explores these issues through my photographic and video research examples from 1982 onwards in Newar communities throughout Nepal.

**Calla Jacobson (University of Texas, Austin) Panel: *Social and Cultural Boundaries in Nepal II*  
”Folklore and Cultural Boundaries in Nepal: Tensions of Identity”**

It is a commonplace in talking about Nepal to refer to its enormous geographical, ethnic, cultural, religious, and linguistic diversity. It is problematic, however, to conceive of this diversity as a collection of clearly bounded communities with mutually distinct cultural expressions. Expressive culture provides both a challenge to such a representation of Nepal’s diversity and a fruitful site for exploring the ways it is experienced and articulated at local levels. The paper will explore negotiations of local and national identity in expressive culture in a Sherpa-Tamang village of Nepal’s middle hills. Complexly intertwined expressions of Sherpa and Tamang identities are emergent in the expressive materials I examine. Similarly, these materials show clear traces of engagement, however complex and ambivalent, with national hegemonic processes and Hindu cultural practices as well. Contradictions and tensions of identity are revealed through the close examination of the form, content, and contexts of the materials of expressive culture.

**Barbara Johnson (Smithsonian Institution) Panel: *Visual Anthropology of Newar Religion*  
”Jyapu Traditions of Thetcho”**

**Govinda Raj Joshi (Minister of Education and Culture, Nepal) Panel: *Goals, Modifications, Plans for the Advancement of Education in Nepal--1992-2000*  
”Brief Overview of Need for Change”**

Nepal adopted a new constitution in the fall of 1990. This has resulted in several self-studies throughout the government of Nepal including one for education under the direction of the National Planning Commission. A report was made on July 1, 1992, with the help of leading educators in the country. The growth of various sectors of Nepal has necessitated a review of the strengths of education in Nepal with the goal of continuing to improve the total program. This is a time to look to the future.

**Dane Kennedy (University of Nebraska at Lincoln)  
”Translating the Landscape: Hill Stations in British India”**

This paper will examine the British effort to translate—in words, images, and deeds—the highland landscapes where they established hill stations into terms that served their needs as an expatriate elite in an alien land. When the British first directed their gaze to the mountainous regions of India, what they saw was mediated by what their cultural heritage had taught them to see the picturesque. Not only did the picturesque aesthetic influence British representations of the highland landscapes; it also informed their efforts to reshape those landscapes through the creation of artificial lakes, the introduction of English plants, and so on. Later in the nineteenth century, as a growth of hill stations put pressure on natural resources, it inspired conservation measures. The British inscribed a meaning on the highland landscape that emphasized its contrast to the plains, accentuating its value as a refuge from the pressures of the colonial encounter.

**Todd T. Lewis (Holy Cross College) Panel: *Newar Trade with Tibet*  
"A Lhasa Trader's Photograph Collection"**

**Todd T. Lewis (Holy Cross College) Panel: *Newar Trade with Tibet*  
"Newar Merchants, Buddhist Networks, and Tradition in Diaspora"**

Since antiquity, Kathmandu Valley merchants have been middlemen controlling the flow of Indo-Tibetan trade goods going by caravan in between the Gangetic plains and highland Tibet. To trade effectively in Tibet, Newar families sent their brothers or sons to the major cities to live for years at a time. These men learned to speak Tibetan, took part in the cultural life centered on Buddhism, and many married Tibetan wives. Newars in Tibet were of many sorts and business competitors, but they also did cohere as a group, creating *guthis* to celebrate their own festivals and organize themselves in dealing with Tibetan officials. The first part of the paper surveys the Newar traditions in the Tibetan diaspora community.

Part II demonstrates how the logic of the trans-Himalayan Buddhist network affected the evolution of both Nepalese and Tibetan civilizations. A long-standing trade/art connection represents an ancient trans-regional pattern: the material culture of Buddhist decoration and devotion as important trade commodities. The devotional alliances and wealth generated by Newar trade affected the entire network region, including political alliances.

Newar diaspora merchants also became the patrons of lamas visiting the Kathmandu Valley and built monasteries to insure their spiritual traditions' transmission locally. Beyond transplanting highland institutions, they also invested their often great mercantile profits back into Kathmandu's economy, primarily through religious patronage. Thus, we cannot fully understand Buddhist history in the Himalayan region or in the Kathmandu Valley without taking into account the trans-regional relationships that diaspora Newar merchants sustained across the Indo-Tibetan Himalayan frontier.

**Todd T. Lewis (College of the Holy Cross) Panel: *Visual Anthropology of Newar Religion*  
"The Twelve-Year Buddhist Samyak Festival"**

**Kirin Narayan (University of Wisconsin, Madison)  
"Woman as Plant: Competing discourses on Sailsi (Tulsi) in Kangra"**

The sacred basil plant, popularly known as *tulsi* has long been a focus of domestic ritual among twice-born castes. In most regions of India she is regarded as a Mother goddess and the consort of Vishnu. While scattered references to *tulsi* worship exist in ethnographies and accounts of Hinduism, there has to date been no detailed study of the stories and rituals surrounding this plant from the perspective of the worshippers.

In this paper, I examine the varied meanings ascribed to the plant in Kangra, North West India. As *sailsi*, "the green one" of local women's ritual practice, the *tulsi* mythology of Sanskritic texts is subverted and transformed into a commentary on the lives of women. Yet due to a lack of systematization, many competing versions of *sailsi*'s identity coexist. I argue that through marrying of *sailsi* each year, and telling stories about her, women build meanings around the patriarchal constraints on their lives, and the regions' growing participation in a cash economy and mass-media.

**Bruce Owens (University of Chicago) Panel: *Visual Anthropology of Newar Religion*  
"The Art of Ritual in the Kathmandu Valley"**

**Anne Zonne Parker (University of Oregon) Panel: *Social and Cultural Boundaries in Nepal I*  
"Multi-Ethnic Interface in Eastern Nepal: A Study from the Kosi Hills"**

A multi-ethnic community in the Kosi Hills provides a context to examine ethnic and caste boundary maintenance. Brahmin, Chetri, Rai, Limbu, Gurung, Tamang and Sherpa have lived together and in close contact for several centuries. This paper explores the significant impact each group has had on the other. Although behaviors associated with the individual groups are changing, ethnic boundaries remain distinct.



The diversity of the groups and the range of change—from highly Hinduized Gurung to the relatively recently downward migrating Sherpa—contribute to the interesting comparisons that can be made in this study.

**Bhuvana Rao (Syracuse University)**

**“Women’s Selves and Punitive Spirits: Gender Identity in Tehri Garhwal, North India”**

Among the *pahari* a traditionally polyandrous community of Tehri Garhwal numerous girls and women are identified as suffering from illnesses caused by the affliction (*dos*) of a type of spirit known as *maatri*. Once afflicted, women can never free themselves of the spirit. *Maatri* is a punitive spirit that afflicts young girls who display improper behavior. The affliction occurs in specific spaces that are far from the village, near a river or in the jungles. These are also sites associated with women’s work. This paper attempts to interpret the illness due to *maatri* affliction and women’s participation in it. I explore issues concerning *Pahari* notions of femininity, feminine identity and selfhood. The focus is also on the experience of illness as an expression of *pahari* moral and ethical beliefs and their interpretation in everyday life. Specifically, I show how spirit affliction can provide a symbolic medium through which women readjust and integrate themselves to what Peter Claus argues, is an “appropriate order” of established ethical values.

**Theodore Riccardi, Jr. (Columbia University) Panel: *Nevar Trade with Tibet***

**“Gorashar: A Life in Two Worlds”**

This paper deals with the life of Tej Ratna Tuladhar, one of the important Lhasa traders of Kathmandu. Tej Ratna was the grandson of Dhanna Ratna Tuladhar, the founder of a family business that came to be known as Gorashar. The paper concentrates on how Tej Ratna’s life and that of his family were shaped by the two cities of Kathmandu and Lhasa, two very different cultural worlds, and how the Chinese invasion of Tibet changed the relations between these worlds forever

**Jennifer Rodes (University of Southern California)**

**“Trekking on Tradition”**

This video explores the effects of mountain tourism on a small village in rural Nepal. The video examines the encounters between the trekkers and the Nepalese, and the ensuing results. Although the Nepalese often feel that tourism engenders positive changes within their community, the Western travelers are concerned that their presence is, in fact, harmful. This video is concerned with cultural exchanges, or clashes, and the often ironic nature of this form of cross-cultural communication.

**Madhav Sharma (Bloomsburg University of Pennsylvania)**

**“Development of Elementary Education in Nepal”**

Elementary education includes grades 1 through 5. Its curriculum and accompanying textbooks have been developed by the Ministry of Education. Schools started in Kathmandu and over 2 000 schools have now been established throughout the 15 zones of the country with schools in each of the 75 districts. Enrollment has been growing including a significant increase in the number of girls completing elementary education.

**Peter Sutherland (Oxford School of Social Anthropology)**

**“The Bestiary of Power”**

The paper examines the significance of sacrificial food offerings, or *balis*, as the focus of collective political agency in one example of west Himalayan Hindu ritual, the great-world ordering sacrifice called *Sant Mela*, performed once every 25 years by each dominant caste *Kanet* community in the *Pabar* valley. The material, based on ethnography recently completed in a part of the little kingdom of *Rarnpur Bashahr*, raises an important methodological question for the sociology of South Asia: is there such a thing as corporate social action by groups such as castes, villages, or cooperative communities of several villages, and if so, what form does it take? Or, are all notions of social collectivities mere theoretical abstractions that must ultimately be reduced to the behavior of individuals? The material I will present shows that, in pre-independence times,

collective agency was articulated by the ritual actions of the tutelary deities of localised caste communities, and that the movement of sacrificial food prestations between different caste communities described a complex circuitry of political relations, which also defined pathways for the distribution of elemental cosmic force, *sakti*, through the various constituent bodies of the historical kingdom of *Bashahr*, linking individual persons, castes, communities, and the state in a locally defined cosmic ecology.

**Siddhartha Tuladhar** Panel: *Newar Trade with Tibet*

**"Dharma Sau, Sons and Grandsons: A History of a Newar Trading Family"**

**T.N. Upraity (UNESCO)** Panel: *Goals, Modifications, Plans for the Advancement of Education in Nepal--1992-2000*

**"Goals of Education for the Year 2000"**

Nepal has made great progress in designing and establishing a national plan of education from grade one through the University including graduate study and professional preparation in a number of fields. It has also designed programs to assist in preparing a number of technical specialists in areas needed for the development of many facets of the total society. With the anticipated changes resulting from a new Constitution and the studies that preceded these changes it was most appropriate to look to the past and build for the future in terms of a revitalized national plan of education. The National Education Planning Commission in Nepal has made its recommendations for the 21st Century. It is important to share the plans with key leaders in the country as Nepal gets ready for the next century.

**Michael Witzel (Harvard University)** Panel: *Visual Anthropology of Newar Religion*

**"An Agni Ritual from Patan"**

**Hugh Wood (American-Nepal Education Foundation)** Panel: *Goals, Modifications, Plans for the Advancement of Education in Nepal--1992-2000*

**"Administrative and Curricular Changes in Education"**

Any program as involved as that suggested for Nepal by the National Education Planning Commission in Nepal for the 21st Century must include ideas for the transition period. It also contains implications for administrative and curricular changes that must be refined by teachers and administrators at all levels of education. The historical heritage and the new demands of democracy give cause for creative thinking to develop a plan that will meet the needs of the country and be in keeping with the expectations of the people as well as the resources of the country (human and financial) to move steadily towards these new goals.

Administrative and curriculum changes as being proposed will be discussed with their implications for teacher training, motivating students to become involved in their learning, and for financing various levels of education.

**Hugh Wood (American-Nepal Education Foundation)**

**"Development of Teacher Education in Nepal"**

Teacher education began in 1954 in Nepal. Following the suggestions of Wood and others, steps were taken to start a College of Education which opened in 1960. This college became the Institute of Education within Tribhuvan University in 1971 and filled an important need in preparing teachers for the rapidly expanding primary and secondary school system of the country.

A variety of programs to increase the number of trained teachers developed in addition to the teacher training programs in the College of Education. This even has included the Radio Education Teacher Training Program and other distance learning formats. It has been a challenge to prepare the teachers for the vocational high schools and more recently for the Technical Schools. Nepal has made headway to meeting the demand for new teachers and of upgrading the quality of current teachers through an ongoing program of workshops and training sessions. The new structure of moving the secondary school to include years 11 and 12 will continue to provide new demands upon the teacher training program into the 21st century.

## American Anthropological Association

San Francisco CA, December 1992

### Himalayas Panels

*New Perspectives in the Anthropology of Nepal*

*New Research from the Central Himalayas*

### Himalayas Panel Abstracts

*New Perspectives in the Anthropology of Nepal*

**Organizers/Chair: Kamal R. Adhikary (Texas-Austin) and Andrew Russell (Oxford)**

Recent political developments in Nepal, such as the demise of the palace-dominated panchayat system and the apparent success of subsequent party-based elections make it appropriate for anthropologists to rethink some of the assumptions made about Nepalese culture and society. Literature on Nepal from other disciplines has been similarly casting new light on our understanding of fields such as development and ecology in the country. This session gives anthropologists the opportunity to address the political and epistemological changes which are occurring and to examine the extent to which the issues they raise have relevance beyond the Himalayan area.

*New Research from the Central Himalayas*

**Organizer/Chair: William S. Sax (Canterbury)**

Until recently, the Central Himalayan regions of Garhwal and Kumaon were geographically and culturally isolated from the rest of North India. As a result, local customs and forms of social organization were often perceived as archaic. In the last five years, a number of young scholars have investigated such purportedly archaic practices as polyandry, brideprice, and theocratic forms of government. This panel will provide an opportunity to present the results of this research to the anthropological community.

### Himalayas Paper Abstracts

**Vincanne Adams (Princeton U)**

**"Power and Practice in Transnational Tibetan Buddhist and Shamanic Healing"**

Asian medical practices arrive to international markets partially as images or simulations no longer attached to things but as commodities in their own right. However, Tibetan Buddhist healing and shamanism both find commercial success in the West not merely as simulacra, but also as different techniques of power, one discursive and the other dialogic. This paper uses field and archival materials to explore what specific practices of power these medical techniques offer to the markets of late capitalism in order to discuss degrees of commercialization within, versus the subverting of, modern forms of power.

**Kamal R. Adhikary (U. of Texas-Austin) Panel: *New Perspectives in the Anthropology of Nepal***

**"Quivers in the Quiet Hills: Voices Against Development Politics in Nepal"**

For nearly three decades, development discourse infused with nationalism was a device for panchayat-system politicians to quiet alternative views. National media highlighted government promises and exaggerated development achievements, sustaining this process. However, as Nepalis increasingly noticed the discrepancies between the proclaimed gains of development and the realities they experienced, even the normally quiet people in the hills began to protest. This paper analyzes local responses to development politics in Nepal, focusing on two protests that took place in Palpa district near the end of the panchayat period.

**Ravina Aggarwal (Indiana)**

**"The Serpent and the Veil: Poetics of Womanhood in Ladakh, India"**

This paper explores the construction of gender identity in Ladakh by focusing on the female body, particularly on hair, as an agent of sexual and social power. It is based on fourteen months of field research in a Himalayan village in which the inhabitants practice either Islam or Buddhism. My study is related to a theoretical framework within feminist and Himalayan anthropology which juxtaposes domestic politics with regional politics and sexual stratification with social stratification.

**Paul R. F. Benjamin (Indiana U/WPTPA) Panel: *New Perspectives in the Anthropology of Nepal***

**"Local Governance in Nepal since the Demise of the Panchayat System"**

For thirty years, the Panchayat System in Nepal monitored and control led village development and governance. With the end of this political system, villages in Nepal have an opportunity to define themselves, find finance for development and public goods projects from sources other than the central government, and find political expression in ways that are not determined by policy in the capital city. This paper discusses changes in national political structure with regard to the local level and local development in Nepal.

**Marcia Calkowski (Lethbridge)**

**"Convincing Actions and Authoritative Monologues: Tulkus, Oracles, and the Reciprocity of Legitimation in Tibetan Society "**

Cloch (1989) argues that the disconnection between systems of rank and systems of power arises where hierarchy is sustained by reciprocal and ambiguous patterns of legitimation. This argument works well for the Tibetan case, where a pattern of reciprocal legitimation authorizes the investment of individuals in distinct charismatic offices (such as those of reincarnate lamas and oracles) and where competition emerges between bureaucratic and charismatic authority. This paper explores the construction of reciprocity and competition among charismatic and bureaucratic institutions in Tibetan society by analyzing the discursive and performative idioms that express their respective authorities.

**Mary Des Chene (Bryn Mawr)**

**"Convertible Currencies: Self-Abnegation and Social Reproduction"**

Gurung men of Nepal are famous as Gurkha soldiers, but service in foreign armies is just part of working lives otherwise less celebrated. I trace careers of several related men through disparate soldiery and migratory labor contexts, setting these biographies within a political-economic context in which wage labor intersects with a local exchange and reciprocity economy. Focusing on the cultural work of converting wage labor and its fruits—cash, commodities and knowledge—into currencies of local value highlights a paradox: wage labor is now essential to Gurung social life, yet men must abjure that life to enable its reproduction.

**Alan Fanger (Kutztown) Panel: *New Research from the Central Himalayas***

**'Jagar in Garhwal'**

This paper will examine the structure and content of *jagar*, a spirit possession seance widely participated in among the Rajputs and Silpakars of Kumaon. A performance minimally requires the combined efforts of a drummer or oracle medium (*dangariya*). *Jagars* may be performed in conjunction with cyclical ceremonies and rites of passage, but their most frequent occurrence is the exorcism of malevolent ghost possession especially among young married but childless women. Discussion will include a social psychological explanation for this pattern.

**Eddie Farwell (Assoc. for Progressive Communications)**

**"Even the Baby Helps: Birth in Tibetan Cultures"**

The knowledge needed to ensure a safe birth in Tibetan cultures is collectively given by members of the family and community. A lama recites auspicious chants, a grandfather offers prayers, a midwife's expertise

is sought, a father encourages the mother to follow the natural rhythms of her body, while the baby takes rebirth with these articular parents according to the laws of karma. All of these people's contributions are valued, and the baby is assumed to be coming into the world for a karmic purpose, and possibly with knowledge from previous lives.

**William F. Fisher (Harvard)**

**"To Shoot an Arrow in the Air: Aiming for Community in Central Nepal"**

The formation of a nation-wide Thakali association which codified the cultural practices of the Thakali and excluded non-Thakalis as well as some who claimed Thakali status, had unanticipated consequences for the local celebrations of the Thakali archery festival of Torongla. By considering the consequences of this attempt to set firm boundaries of a Thakali community on other levels of social interaction and integration, this paper raises the question of how overlapping and interrelated notions of identity, status, and community are shaped and transformed in everyday social contexts.

**Jana Fortier (Wisconsin-Madison) Panel: *New Perspectives in the Anthropology of Nepal***

**"Production Webs and Nepalese Exchange Relations"**

Production strategies in western Nepal will be described as metaphorical webs of social relations. Understanding Nepalese practices of sharecropping, labor exchange, work parties, free and bonded labor, seasonal migrancy, and jajmani patron-client ties means stressing the interrelationships of these practices rather than formulating each as a particular bounded system. Studying jajmani (and other) practices rather than a jajmani system allows us to see how women's work and variations in labor practices fit into productive relations. There is virtually no, written account of women's jajmani work and this issue will be addressed. Also, I suggest that rural Nepalese have long been pursuing migrancy, market trade, and productive practices which Western researchers incorrectly assumed indicated the demise of indigenous exchange relations.

**David N. Gellner (Oxford) Panel: *New Perspectives in the Anthropology of Nepal***

**"Newar Ethnicity and National Politics"**

Among predictable consequences of the legalization of political parties in Nepal was the rise of explicitly communal and regional movements. It is noteworthy that the Newars, though possessing arguably the strongest cultural nationalist movement in Nepal, not only gave no support to such communal parties, but did not even organize them. In pursuit of the reasons for this, the nature of Newar ethnicity, which is contested both by Newars themselves and by scholars, is examined, and its role in recent political processes is assessed.

**Joel Gittelsohn (Johns Hopkins) and Meera Thapa (Morgan State)**

**"Caloric and Micronutrient Sufficiency: A Study of Intrahousehold Food Allocation in Rural Nepal"**

This study examined food allocation within 105 Nepali households using both recall and observation methods. While a relationship exists between caloric sufficiency and sufficiency of key micronutrients (vitamins A and C and iron) for the population as a whole, it is weaker for adolescent girls and women. This gender differential is linked to specific food beliefs and practices plus an overall pattern of disfavoritism of females in food allocation. While staple foods are distributed fairly equally, side dishes are often preferentially allocated to adult males and small children.

**Ethan D. Goldings (Stanford)**

**"Reforming the Faithful: Tibetan Religious Practice during Chinese Political Campaigns"**

Life histories collected during two years fieldwork in Khams Eastern Tibet PRC, show how both the imposition of and resistance to normalizing ideologies turn on tangible activities not disembodied ideas. The displacement of bodies and performance of acts not only signify but also constitute belief. By focusing on practices this paper seeks to take religion seriously as a thing in itself and challenge functionalist and reductionist interpretations of religion as instrumental politics or ethnic marker.

**Arjun Guneratne (Chicago)**

**"The Role of Elites in the Creation of Ethnic Identities: The Tharus of Nepal"**

The Tharus of Nepal's Tarai region are linguistically and culturally a diverse people organized in geographically dispersed endogamous groups. Today, Tharus elites are promoting a sense of shared identity among all Tharus based on their self-identification as an indigenous people of the Tarai who have been reduced by immigration to an economically exploited minority. This paper describes the measures, such as the abrogation of group endogamy, by which elites attempt to create this identity, and supports the view that ethnicity is historically constructed rather than primordially engendered.

**Eleanor Cross Harrison (UC-Los Angeles)**

**"Resonances with the Other: The Human Body and Divination in Nepal"**

In Nepal and elsewhere the movements of breath, body markings, and 'thrillings' are regarded as phenomena integral to the body which Hindus and others have used to prognosticate or to discover something hidden from, not readily available to the inquirer in the ordinary discursive style of everyday thinking. The author considers the 6th century astrological and divinatory text, the *Brhat Samhita*. This paper addresses the question of how these divinatory practices relate to patterning in the analogical thought mode, the system of analogies, used by the Nepalese.

**Dorothy Holland (UNC-CH) and Debra Skinner (UNC-CH)**

**"Songs and the Making of Gendered Selves in Nepal"**

For the Tiji festival of Nepal Hindu caste women create novel songs which are performed before the entire community. These songs have long expressed criticisms of patriarchal Hindu ideologies and practices. Today in the wake of the Democracy Movements the festival has been appropriated by some to the world of governmental politics. Here we examine the work of individuals and groups who are (re)forming Tiji songs and through this process themselves, in the midst of these contested social and ideological domains. We argue that the self-reforming aspects of cultural production are now undervalued within theories of practice.

**Craig R. Janes (Colorado-Denver)**

**"The Transformations of Tibetan Medicine"**

Drawing upon interviews with both urban and rural-based health officials and Tibetan medical practitioners in Central (C) and West-Central (Tsang) Tibet, I describe the transformations that Tibetan medicine has undergone as a consequence of the political domination of the Chinese, and more recently, the expansion of European-based health development organizations into Tibet, specifically the Swiss Red Cross. As a result of these regional and global forces, Tibetan medicine has been alternately discouraged, secularized, rationalized, expanded, and "re-traditionalized" since 1951. The processes of domination and resistance are described and analyzed.

**Judith Justice (California-San Francisco) Panel: *New Perspectives in the Anthropology of Nepal***

**"Politics and Health in Nepal"**

Dramatic changes have taken place in Nepal's political structure since 1990. Despite the peaceful transition to a multi-party system, democracy has not yet resulted in more equitable distribution of resources or improved services at the local level. This is particularly true in the health sector where there are indications that the availability and quality of services actually have deteriorated. This paper discusses the relationship between Nepalese culture and politics and its impact on health before and after the democratic movement in Nepal.

**Monika Krengel (Frankfurt) Panel: *New Research from the Central Himalayas***

**"Property Relations and Moral Codes for Conduct in Kumaoni Society"**

This paper will examine the different kinds of spheres of property. It demonstrates that the indigenous

perception of property is at great variance with our ideas of dealing with the relationship between property rights and rights over people, conflicts between traditional and modern law and the presence of property metaphors at the different levels of society (politics, kinship, household, gender relations).

**John Leavitt (Montreal)**

**"Language and the Precipitation of Imaginal Worlds: Virtual Realities in the Central Himalayas"**

While plot and characterization have been heavily studied relatively little interest has been given to the settings in which narratives take place, the "fictional worlds" precipitated through the recombinant play of linguistic signs. The settings of myth, legend, imaginative literature are maintained in a variety of relations to empirical experience. This paper presents several imaginal settings with which rural Central Himalayans interact on a regular basis and seeks to map the differing characters of these interactions.

**Mark Liechty (Penn)**

**"Body & Face: Mass Media and the Reconstruction of Gender in Kathmandu"**

This paper describes how, via Indian and Western pop media (cinema, video, popular music and press), key English words enter urban Nepali youth discourse. These words act as windows onto a changing cultural landscape in which gender categories and roles are redefined. The paper explores how media may be implicated in new patterns of gender objectification and segregation, visual eroticism, styles of the body (e.g., "beauty" and "body building"), notions of "freedom," sexual aggression, and male juvenile delinquency.

**Ernestine L. McHugh (Pitzer College)**

**"Locating the Forest Man: Meaning and Cultural Models in Nepal"**

The Gurungs of Nepal share a belief in a troll-like creature called a ban manche or "forest man." This belief is only occasionally addressed by Gurungs but during one of my research trips it achieved unusual salience among villagers. Elaborate and frequent reports by one woman of encounters with these creatures provoked much discussion as well as practical action in the community, as people sympathized with the woman and attempted to help her keep the ban manche at bay. The case nicely illustrates the intersubjective nature of belief, and shows how cultural models are activated and refined in response to particular situations, bridging both public and private worlds.

**Amy Mountcastle (Rutgers)**

**"Women's Place in Tibetan Political Culture"**

In this paper I examine the place of women in the creation of the political culture of Tibetan refugee communities. Based upon fieldwork conducted in the U.S. and India from January to August 1992, I explore the political significance of the everyday lives of women toward constituting Tibetan national identity. Politics, typically examined in its public manifestations, was historically ready exclusively a male realm, and scholarly work to date reflects this. Women behind-the-scenes influence has not been explored. From an historical perspective, I investigate how women influence the present political culture of Tibetan refugees.

**Bhuvana Rao (Syracuse) Panel: *New Research from the Central Himalayas***

**'From Sharing Men to Being a Co-Wife: Views on Family and Economic Changes in the Himalayas'**

This paper examines the role male outmigration plays in increasing the devaluation of Pahari women in Tehri Garhwal, North India. Existing literature however, argues that female headed households created by male migration increases autonomy of women. Accelerated male migration especially among the landed, creates a need for labor that is fulfilled by bringing in a second wife. Traditional practice of a combination of fraternal polyandry and polygyny is now being replaced by polygyny. The commodification of women subsequently decreases the autonomy of women as it is now dissipated between the co-wives.

**Janet R. Richardson (California Institute of Integral Studies)**  
**"Reincarnation and Child Development: A Tibetan Perspective"**

Unlike the linear, biologically based movement through sequential stages toward the rational which constitutes the Western perspective of child development, the Tibetan perspective emphasizes spiritually based movement, over many lifetimes, toward realization. Reincarnation theory is central to this perspective. Based on taped interviews and ethnographic fieldwork data, this paper discusses its implications in the theory and practice of lay and monastic child-rearing among Tibetan refugees in Northern India.

**Lars Rodseth (Michigan)**  
**"The Lamaist Lineage: An Organization of Spiritual Expansion"**

Local communities are united within regional power networks not only by kinship, trade, or military conquest, but by the spread of transcendental religious institutions (Bloch 1992). Locally detached religious figures, such as Muslim saints and Southeast Asian gurus (sensu Barth 1990), are often the key interstitial actors who mediate disputes, disseminate cosmopolitan values, and provide "spiritual kinship" as an alternative to national clan and village organization (Paul 1987; Shapiro 1988). The history of Tibetan theocratic expansion in the Himalayas provides examples, from the planting of Lamaist lineages within Hindu Nepal (Ortner 1989) to the formation of full-fledged Lamaist states in neighboring Sikkim and Bhutan.

**Andrew Russell (Oxford) Panel: *New Perspectives in the Anthropology of Nepal***  
**"Rethinking Human Ecology: Anthropology and Environment in the Nepalese Context"**

Recent anthropological writings on ethnicity and identity in Nepal, when allied with work from other disciplines concerned with environmental issues in the country, suggest fresh approaches for human ecology, the study of the relationship between people and their environment. This paper reviews this literature in the light of recent ethnographic research conducted in East Nepal. It argues for the need to question what is meant by 'people' and 'environment' in a particular context, and to consider the relationship between them in terms broader than the conventional materialist discourse that has characterized human ecology.

**William S. Sax (Canterbury) Panel: *New Research from the Central Himalayas***  
**'The Pandav Lila of Garhwal: Ritual, Theater, Politics'**

Pandav Lila is a form of ritual theatre, a representation of India's great "epic" *Mahabharata* that is simultaneously a form of ancestor worship believed to have positive effects on people, livestock, and village well-being. This paper analyzes Pandav Lila as political action, a form of counter-hegemonic discourse wherein the locally dominant caste challenges Brahmanical hegemony through a display of symbolic capital.

**Peter J. S. Sutherland (Oxford)**  
**"Psychic Terrorism and the Politics of Divination in the Indian Himalayas"**

This paper examines the political implications of three divergent diagnoses as spirit attack, by three diviners of different castes, of a fall that caused a spinal fracture. In a six hour conversation, the victim of the fall described a west Himalayan version of the Hindu concept *sakti* (elemental force) as the power of indigenous tutelary deities and demons, who act on behalf of individuals and communities in the factionalism of local politics. The material reveals the intentional symbolism of a regional Hindu pantheon as a dramatic personas for expressing relations of social inequality as relations of psychic terrorism.

**Julia J. Thompson (Wisconsin)**  
**"Ritual and Resistance: Conformity and Non-Conformity in Kathmandu"**

Scholars have documented how women's ritual possession can be a form of cultural resistance. I explore how less dramatic religious activities, such as daily worship, weddings, filial rites, or fasting, can be overt and covert forms of resistance for high caste women in Kathmandu Nepal. These women may have socially constrained lives but many of them find latitude in their religious activities for strong expressions of personal resistance. Although they appear to conform to Hindu ideals through their religious activities, these women are actually able to express dissatisfactions, show their resistance, and in essence, not conform.



## 22nd Annual Conference on South Asia

Madison, Wisconsin November 1993

### Himalayas Panels

*Building Indigenous and Sustainable Development in Democratic Nepal I: National Perspectives and Structure*

*Building Indigenous and Sustainable Development in Democratic Nepal II: Rural Institutions Consumption, Order and Social Status in India and Nepal*

*Encoding and Overcoding in the Tantras*

*Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal I*

*Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal II*

*Languages and Culture of Northern Pakistan and Afghanistan*

*Mandalas in Buddhism: Structure and Function*

*Recent Research on Dialogue, Discourse, and Unequal Power in Nepal*

### Paper Abstracts

**Ambika Adhikari (Tribhuvan University) Panel: *Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal II*  
"Foreign Aid, Housing Development, and Urban Planning in Kathmandu Valley"**

Nepal is one of the least urbanized countries in the world, with only 10 percent of its population living in settlements designated as urban centers. Despite such a low level of urbanization, Nepal has not been able to avoid many of the typical urban problems facing most underdeveloped countries, such as haphazard housing construction and suburbanization, shanty town formation, poor infrastructure development and accessibility, land speculation, and degradation of precious agricultural land. All of these problems are directly and indirectly related to the absence of proper urban planning. This paper will deal with some of these issues focusing on the Valley of Kathmandu which consists of Nepal's three major urban centers: Kathmandu (Capital City), Kirtipur, and Bhaktapur. In the past three decades the Valley of Kathmandu has experienced rapid urban growth - both spatially and demographically. Land speculation has been rampant and there has been a tremendous growth in the construction of new houses (fancy bungalows). Both of these activities are significantly tied to the growing inflows of foreign aid and to the consistent increases in the number of foreign residents in the Valley.

**Gudrun Bühnemann (University of Wisconsin-Madison) Panel: *Mandalas in Buddhism: Structure and Function***

**"Some Remarks on the Structure of the Mandala According to Indo-Tibetan Sources"**

The lecture discusses the structure of the mandala, beginning with specimens from the Ngor Collection, a set of 132 mandalas produced during the latter half of the nineteenth century at Ngor Monastery, Tibet. Structural elements of the painted mandalas, such as the outer circles of fire, diamond scepters (vajra), lotus petals and the various parts of the palace, are then identified in contemporary three-dimensional mandalas of wood or brass. A comparison with mandala patterns as described in earlier Indian Buddhist sadhana texts reveals a similarity of basic structural elements, but several patterns for the mental creation of the mandala. The relevant passages in the classical works on mandalas, Abhayakaragupta's *Nispannayogavali* and *Vajravali* (ca 1100 A.D.), show the author attempting to bring into harmony different, partially contradictory opinions and traditions on the mandala structure, such as the dharmodaya ("origin of phenomena") theory, already existing at his time.

**Michael Calavan (Agency for International Development) Panel: *Building Indigenous and Sustainable Development in Democratic Nepal I*  
"Local Government and Central Bureaucracy: A Crucial Nexus in Democratic Nepal"**

The paper is based on case studies in three Village Development Committees (VDCs) in three districts: Rasuwa, Tanahun, and Dang. The VDCs vary in terrain, ethnicity and social organization, dominant political party, quality of services, access to markets, education and sophistication of leaders and citizens, and major development challenges. Variations among the cases are reviewed briefly and are clearly significant for long-term development prospects. But the paper isolates and focuses on a common thread among the cases, the continuing dominance of bureaucratic organizations and their agendas over local politics. While the basis point - a dominating bureaucracy undercuts local democracy - will strike most observers as obvious, this issue has seldom been examined in detail across multiple development sectors. Eight orienting concepts have been assembled and further developed for analyzing "democracy and development": open politics, accountability, and autonomy pluralism, democratic culture, entrepreneurship, appropriate administration, and reinventing government. The paper utilizes the concepts in examining specific instances in which local initiatives has been frustrated or undercut, and develops specific palliative measures, notably some approaches to gaining greater bureaucratic accountability.

**Keila Diehl (University of Texas-Austin) Panel: *Diasporic Words and Images: Uses of New Space*  
"The Musics of Tibetans in Exile: Keeping Alive the Tension of Nostalgia"**

To explore the relationship between artistic practices and the identity-challenging experience of being separated indefinitely and involuntarily from one's homeland, I analyze various examples of contemporary Tibetan music being produced by Tibetans in exile — from touring "choirs" of monks, to blues guitar, the folk operas of the Tibetan Institute of Performing Arts, to original compositions played on "traditional" instruments, to Tibetan rock groups in India. I also explore the power of nostalgia — particularly the dominant theme of the "the Return" — as an affective force that is at once of enabling and constraining, creative and potentially self-destructive.

How can we celebrate and learn from this genre without romanticizing the condition of exile? What happens to Victor Turner's notion of "the betwixt-and-between period" as a "fruitful darkness" when this period lasts over thirty years and, rather than being "interstructural," begins to develop deep, complex and "natural" structures of its own? Tibetan exilic music, and hopefully this paper, contribute to keeping the dream of a "homeland" (whether this is a place, or a thesis that holds water) alive, with the understanding that it might not turn out to be where or what you imagined it to be.

**Ann Forbes (Harvard University) Panel: *Recent Research in Land and Labor*  
"The Intersection Between Local and National Systems of Governance and Land Tenure"**

In 1932 a Rai headman in Hedangna Sankhuwasabha District, Nepal claimed a wooded area above the village as his own. Thirty-six households considered the area to be their kiptat land, however, and they sent a representative to the district court to assert their claims. Though the representative returned saying that the villagers' had won the case, in fact he had obtained a court document claiming the empty land was his own. Now, sixty-one years later, his great-grandson is using this document to claim the land on which forty houses have subsequently been built. Though legally abolished in 1968, the kiptat system will continue to operate in Hedangna until the cadastral survey arrives in 1993/1994. In Hedangna the kiptat system is primarily a system of self governance in which rights to land are embedded in the social and political system. A series of land regulations have gradually detached the land from this local system. The cadastral survey will be the final step in the dissolution of this customary system of governance.

This paper will examine the intersection between customary and national systems of law and land tenure. I will use this land dispute to illustrate the gradual replacement of a customary system, characterized by use rights and unwritten claims, with one in which written documents, disembedded from the context in which they were created, form the basis of one's claims to the land. In conclusion I will discuss the implications of

these changes for relations of the villagers with their land and the national government.

**Jana Fortier (University of Wisconsin-Madison) Panel: *Recent Research on Land and Labor*  
"Political Changes in the Nepalese Countryside: From Status to Contract"**

This paper reviews reactions of Nepalese landlords, tenants, and small farmers to recent transitions toward democracy and a multiparty political forum. I propose that Nepalese agrarian labor relations are based on social status, fundamentally incompatible with emerging ideals of democracy. Inversely, contractual labor relations founded in wage labor break the ties of immobile social status while ideologically wielding a rhetoric of democracy. Large landowners should therefore encourage democratic reforms since it relieves them of responsibilities based on their social status. Small and near landless households will hypothetically move toward wage labor opportunities if those opportunities are clearly present. Households slightly above subsistence levels should be the most reluctant to move toward contractual relations since they are optimizing current indigenous labor practices. In June/July '93 I interviewed Nepalese farmers who utilize traditional farming practices in order to document noticeable labor shifts toward wage labor. I explore the material conditions surrounding status to contract labor transitions, such as land holding size, caste denomination, migrancy opportunities, educational opportunities, and changes in trade/market strategies.

**Brian Greenberg (University of Chicago) Panel: *Recent Research in the Environment*  
"Ecological Imagination and Landscape Transformation in the Western Himalayas"**

Archival evidence suggests that indigenous agriculture in the Himalayas has intensified over at least the past 300 years, dramatically altering the mountain landscape. While agricultural changes have accelerated markedly over the past 200 years, and particularly in the period since Independence, they cannot be attributed simply to colonial administration or to linkages with regional and global economic systems.

Rather, evidence suggests that the reshaping of mountain agriculture is primarily a product of two factors: 1) local knowledge and techniques intended to make agriculture more intensive, and 2) the continuous incorporation into indigenous agriculture of the exotic plants and animals which have become available through global flows of biological materials. These factors have interacted to transform "traditional" agriculture, and have generated ecological changes of enormous magnitude.

Ethnohistorical awareness of this agricultural history and ecological change is limited, so that contemporary farmers have a difficult time "imagining" the changes which archival records suggest have taken place. Local knowledge tends to conceive contemporary agricultural patterns as similar to the past, thereby "normalizing" or overlooking processes of ecological change and degradation. Similarly, most contemporary outside observers have tended to imagine that the region has a stable "traditional" system of agriculture, and have attempted to implement "modernizing" changes. These have further exacerbated and accelerated the negative ecological impacts of mountain agriculture.

**Arjun Guneratne (University of Chicago) Panel: *Consumption, Order and Social Status in India and Nepal***

**"The Modernizing Matwalis: Liquor and the Declining Significance of Ritual Ranking in Chitwan Tharu Society"**

In the old Legal Code of Nepal, which regulated the lives of Nepalese from the mid-nineteenth century to the mid-twentieth, the Tharu were categorized as a liquor-drinking (*matwali*) and enslaveable caste, and accordingly of low status. The consumption of alcohol distilled from rice is viewed by Tharus as an important component of hospitality. It is also used in the worship of native deities. Although increased, intensive contact with high caste Hindu society has led to a degree of sanskritization among Chitwan Tharus, particularly local elites, Tharus, including those who have most extensively adopted high caste Hindu ways, show no desire to abandon their use of liquor. On the other hand, many high caste people in Chitwan have themselves taken to drinking liquor, in violation of traditional notions of appropriate caste behavior. This paper discusses the consumption of alcohol by sanskritizing Tharus as well as by some Brahmins as an index of the increasing

secularization of values on the multi-ethnic society of Chitwan, and the decreasing significance of ritual ranking in ideas of status. The promotion by the state of the language and culture of the high castes as the paradigm of national culture has been an important component of this secularizing process.

**David Henderson (University of Texas at Austin) Panel: *Recent Research on Dialogue, Discourse, and Unequal Power in Nepal***

**"Talking About Music in Nepal: Eddies in Soundscape"**

In ethnomusicology, it is common practice for musical behavior to be taken as in some way representative of deeper levels of meaning. This is a structuralist paradigm that also implicates language about music as being on one hand simply descriptive of the actual musical sound and on the other as being itself a clue to internal structure. But what is often missing in ethnographies of local uses of music and language is an adequate portrayal and analysis of the discourse events in which statements about musical practice, meaning, and theory appear.

This paper is a look at one particular kind of talk about music—the use or lack of use of specialist musical knowledge in constructing individual styles in Nepal. I argue that in ethnographically charged moments as well as in everyday interactions, individuals choose elements of their musical knowledge that convey particular facets of their musical style, and that it is impossible to distill broader cultural practices without detailed consideration of these moments of discourse. I draw primarily on the work of other ethnomusicologists working in Nepal, but also on my fieldwork from the summer of 1987 in the Kathmandu Valley.

**Calla Jacobson (University of Texas-Austin) Panel: *Dialogue, Discourse, and Unequal Power in Nepal***

**"The Dialogic Production of Gender: A Yeti Story in Highland Nepal"**

The paper, based on original field research, analyzes the collaborative production of a narrative by a husband and wife in a Sherpa-Tamang village of highland Nepal. The overlapping, cooperative, and dialogic narration of this story was both an enactment of and iconic with a general overlap of sexual spheres, practices, and expressive genres in this area. Both the dialogic narration and the content of the story foreground the expressive nature of gender and de-emphasize it as a system of self-evident differences between men and women, their activities, their expressive resources, their attributes. Analysis of such a narrative provides important clues to understanding gender in highland Nepal and moreover contributes to current theoretical debates on gender, discourse, and power.

**Joseph Loizzo (Independent Scholar) Panel: *Encoding and Overcoding in the Tantras***

**"The Buddhist Anuttarayogatantras: A State Specific Science of Creative Genius"**

Drawing on sources such as Candrakirti's *Yuktisatikavritti* and *Pradipoddyotana* the paper argues for approaching the tantras as a genius-oriented mode of psychobiology which integrates the *Prasangika-madkyamika*'s empathetic insight with an altered-state science of poetic and creative ecstasy. Two phases of this Consummate Creative Process will be proposed: a Creative Imagination model for the *utpattikrama* and a five stage Psychobiologic Integration model for the *nispannakrama*. The presentation will close with some remarks about the intimate communication of therapeutic and creative influences in terms of the *Guhyasamaja*'s hermeneutic schema of seven ornaments.

**John Metz (Northern Kentucky University) Panel: *Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal II***

**"Foreign Aid and Forestry Development Projects in Nepal"**

Since the mid 1970's concern over Nepal's deteriorating natural forest resources has led most foreign aid donors to design projects which include forestry and natural resource management components. These include bilateral, multilateral, and NGO project. During this same period independent researchers and project practitioners have refined and modified their understanding of the causes and results of deforestation, and this has led to major changes in forestry projects. The initial goal of forestry projects, the large scale planting of

trees on deforested common property/government lands, has been replaced by the current emphasis on (1) helping farmers plant trees on private lands and along field edges and (2) creating or strengthening community management of common property forests. Nepal's extremely progressive forest legislation, which allows forest user groups to take legal control of forests, has permitted and encouraged these changes. Nevertheless, surprisingly few communities have taken advantage of these opportunities. This paper reviews the history of forestry development projects, explores why community forestry development has been so slow, and seeks to identify what factors promote successful forestry development. The analysis relies heavily, though not exclusively, on the examples provided by two projects with which the author has experience: Nepal Australia Forestry Project and Resource Conservation and Utilization Project

**Stephen Mikesell (Tribhuvan University) Panel: *Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal II*  
"Aid and Development: A Process of Undermining Local Institutions and Production in Rural Nepal"**

Large numbers of studies are now showing that the last 40 years of development in Nepal have actually represented a process of infiltration and subversion of local institutions and ways of doing things. Local people's knowledge, technology, and capabilities, developed over decades and centuries of practice, have been ignored because they have not been scientifically sanctioned and they are not controlled within the marketplace. The process has represented the creation and expansion of urban mercantile, industrial, and bureaucratic classes, based on previous exploitative relations in the villages and with strong orientations and interrelations towards international business and agency interests. The result has been destruction of productivity, harsh uprooting of rural communities, and environmental degradation rather than sustainable development. As has preceded in colonial areas of Asia, there is the development of Western-appearing cities sitting atop and violently sucking the life-blood out of the rural population. Development theory and prescriptions, including a recent emphasis on NGOs and buzzwords such as "participation", "consciousness raising", etc. have tended to blame the victim and offer apologies for the process. The answer lays in initiating self-education and organizing among the rural producers themselves, with outsiders who commit themselves to living among the villagers and sharing their conditions.

**John Mock (University of California-Berkeley) Panel: *Languages and Culture of Northern Pakistan and Afghanistan*  
"The Cannibal King and His Family: Folk Tales and Legends from Gilgit and Hunza"**

Folk tales and legends from Gilgit and Hunza in Northern Pakistan are, in many cases, versions of recognized tale-types widely known throughout the world. These northern Pakistani tales and legends can no more be viewed as unique to the Grimms' Germany. Nor should characters in the tales and legends be identified as historical figures. The autotelic character of relevant that of how tales and motifs have been adapted to a local context and retold to express local sensibilities. This paper discusses several well-known tales from Gilgit and Hunza that have parallels in both South Asia and Central Asia and considers why they have remained popular and how they have been adapted to the local context.

**Kirin Narayan (University of Wisconsin-Madison) Panel: *The Person in the Story: Gender, Narratives, Histories*  
"Lives Sung, Lives Told: Genres and Histories in Kangra Women's Self Representations"**

Drawing on the personal narratives of ten Kangra women who are also prolific singers of women's folk songs, this paper examines the intersections and intertextualizations between told and sung representations of women's lives. In this context, life stories focus on what sets a woman apart; songs assert trajectories of expected gendered experience. Yet, life stories are communally shaped and shared, and collectively performed songs can evoke deeply personal resonances. In this paper, I explore how these two discourses enable different statements about the nature of personal experience, the politics of gender, and the forces of history.

**John R. Newman (New College of the University of South Florida) Panel: *Mandalas in Buddhism: Structure and Function***

**"The Kalacakra mandala: a symbol of the integration of cosmos, self, and gnosis"**

The Kalacakra tantra was the last major Vajrayana Buddhist system produced in India, and its mandala displays the extreme complexity of the entire preceding Buddhist tantric tradition. Like all Buddhist mandalas, the Kalacakra mandala is primarily a symbolic matrix for soteriological practice. The Kalacakra mandala, however, reflects the unique Kalacakra doctrinal scheme: the mandala represents the homology of the cosmos (*lokadhātu*) and the self (*adhvatman*), realization of which induces a salvific gnosis (*jnana*). This paper examines the place of the mandala in the theory and practice of the Kalacakra tantra with a focus on its role as a central integrative device.

**Stacy Leigh Pigg (Simon Fraser University) Panel: *Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal***

**"Acronyms, Translation, and Power in International Development: the Case of 'Traditional Medical Practitioners' (TMP) in Nepal"**

International development draws on a globalized vision of "traditional medicine" when constructing country-specific programs that use local practitioners to further health objectives. This paper examines the tension between this mobile notion of "the traditional" and the local social ground. Using the case of programs in Nepal, I examine the categories of the Traditional Birth Attendant (TBA) and the Traditional Medical Practitioner (TMP) as they are employed in the design of training programs for "indigenous practitioners." I trace the layers of translation contained within these acronyms: how traditional healers are conceived in international health policy, how these conceptions are made to fit with existing Nepalese healers in national planning, how research on "local ideas and practices" become authoritative knowledge about "traditions," which then, in turn, form a basis for the planning and implementation of training programs. The case study of training programs for TMPs and TBAs in Nepal shows how the universalizing principles inherent in development discourse systematically dismantle and decontextualize different socio-cultural realities in the course of taking them into account. I argue that translation is a social act that, through the management of the circulation of discourses, reinforces the particular global-local power relations of international development.

**Paulus Pimomo (Georgia Southern University) Panel: *Ethnicity and State***

**"Imperialism in the Postcolony: The Case of Jawaharlal Nehru and Nagaland"**

The history of the Nagas in North-Eastern India falls into three periods: (a) Pre-colonial—during which, for an unknown length of time, Nagas lived isolated from the rest of the world in their village-status; (b) Colonial period—1832-1947 under British administration; (c) Neocolonial—post 1947 or Indian annexation of Nagaland.

My paper will concentrate on events in 1947 and after and will show how India's occupation of Nagaland and treatment of the Nagas duplicated those of the British toward Indians and Nagas alike under colonialism. I will discuss specific pronouncements, events, and policies touching Nagaland that illustrate Nehru's interpellation in British imperial culture and politics even as he was, at the same time, a leader of Indian national liberation and later became its first Prime Minister. India's occupation of Nagaland under Nehru problematizes the easy colonial/postcolonial dichotomy we sometimes make. Nagaland's continued subjection by India even after the end of British colonialism amounts to a repeat colonizer-colonized history in which both Indians and Nagas are locked in the oppressive apparatuses of colonialism. The fact that Nehru could not see that India is to Nagaland what Britain was to India confirms India's blindness as well as inability to be truly free of the legacy of colonial imperialism. A postcolony that has a colony is a contradiction, and is in for trouble, as events in independent India have shown.

**Kalyani Rai (University of Wisconsin-Madison) Panel: *Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal*  
"Foreign Assistance to Educational Planning of Nepal: How Empowering is it?"**

Educational planning in Nepal is inextricably linked to foreign assistance in education. Foreign aid has informed and guided our thinking and practice of educational planning over the past few decades. The aim of this paper is to analyze and evaluate the role of foreign aid in educational planning of Nepal. The paper argues that foreign assistance has helped to perpetuate passive and instrumental knowledge creation and utilization in education. Alternative planning approaches with an emphasis on, empowerment, will be proposed.

**Theodore Riccardi (Columbia University) Panel: *Kim Anena Samskrtena? Recent Research in Sanskrit and Indic Studies Part II*  
"Licchavi Inscriptions in Nepal"**

This paper describes in brief the chief linguistic characteristic of the Sanskrit inscriptions found in Nepal dating from the 5th century to the ninth century A D.

**Leo Rose (University of California-Berkeley) Panel: *Building Indigenous and Sustainable Development in Democratic Nepal I*  
"Decentralization: A Necessary Ingredient in Socioeconomic Development"**

The concept of decentralization as an integral aspect of both decision-making and implementation of development programs has been accepted in Nepal during most of its existence as a united state encompassing numerous religions, ethnic and linguistic communities. During the pre-1950 royal and Rana periods, a non-democratic form of decentralization existed on a limited basis but was restricted to relations between the Kathmandu Establishment and local elite families. A process of democratic decentralization was introduced after 1951, but only on a limited basis as the governments from 1951-1959 were still dominated by the Kathmandu elite. It was only 1959 that the elected Nepali Congress government introduced a series of political and economic policies that were specifically designed to provide local publics with some voice in policy decisions that were important to them. This was immediately reversed by King Mahendra in late 1960 when he dismissed the Nepali Congress government, with the support of the Kathmandu political and bureaucratic Establishment. Mahendra then introduced what was termed a decentralization policy of his own, but this constituted in fact a more effective concentration of power in the Center through the Kathmandu-controlled local and district institutions that were established. This remained the case essentially until the fundamental political changes in 1990-1991.

While King Birendra never substantively modified the highly over-centralized Mahendra decision-making system, he did at least attempt to improve on the quality and scope of the major socioeconomic policies he introduced by bringing younger, well-educated Nepalese from traditional elite families into the Palace system. Several well-designed and comparatively liberal policies were introduced on a variety of subjects — education, environmental issues, cross-border trade, etc. Unfortunately, under the palace system, no one bothered to consult with the public on these issues that greatly affected their well-being. These policies were highly-publicized and over-financed (from foreign aid sources usually), but they were never implemented with any effectiveness.

This 20-year record of non-achievement in basis developmental policies demonstrated clearly the need for some kind of consultive process with the public - i.e., a democratized, decentralized system. Such programs are now being introduced by the government elected to office in 1991, but we still have to wait to see if it will constitute real decentralization within the Kathmandu elite, including several high officials in the Nepali Congress, the various communist factions, and the old Panchayat politicians and bureaucrats. But there is also strong support for the program among the Nepali MPs and cadres from outside Kathmandu (the large majority), as well as from the Terai and most ethnic political factions. This may prove to be the most critical and divisive issue in the multiparty democratic system, but it can also be argued that effective decentralization is also an absolute necessity for any successful development programs. The "people"—loosely defined in non-Marxist

terms—have to be an integral part of any developmental program if it is to have any change for success in strengthening Nepal's economic and social system.

**Nanda R. Shrestha (University of Wisconsin-Whitewater) Panel: *Foreign Aid and Development in Nepal***

**"Enchanted by the Mantra of Development: Some Self-Reflections"**

Economic development is not just a concept or a process; it is a distinct ideology. As an ideology, it takes on a cultural dimension in that its first act is to create a certain mindset and establish certain behavioral and attitudinal norms, thereby molding people's thinking process and outlook. The most dominant ideology of development, as currently practiced in most "underdeveloped" countries, is intrinsically rooted in what I call the Truman Plan designed to contain communism and maintain capitalist control over countries emerging from colonialism. The underlying cultural or ideological dimension of this plan is the notion that capitalist development emphasizing individual material gains as the ultimate measure of progress is most superior. The present paper will show, through my own personal experience and reflections, how the Truman Plan managed to create and propagate such ideology and culture of development in Nepal (and in other countries). It will also show that foreign aid was deployed as the most potent instrument to implement the Truman Plan.

**Julia Thompson (University of Wisconsin-Madison) Panel: *The Theoretical Potential of Life Stories***

**"Gender, Genre, and Mutuality in the Construction of a Life Story from Kathmandu, Nepal"**

In this paper, based on over 2 1/2 years of research in Kathmandu, I present a joint life story from a high-caste married couple. This life story demonstrates that cultural meanings can arise both in the construction of individual narratives and from the interactions and discourses between women and men. Not only do the couple's different and gendered voices emerge, but a strong sense of balance, mutuality, and trust is also evident; the narratives they told me when alone are remarkably similar to the versions told in the presence of the other. In these interactions, I am situated as both researcher and as a trusted "little sister" allowing a freedom of exchange between them (and me) not normally shared with outsiders. Much of the literature on personal narratives focuses on the gendered nature of this genre. Indeed, recent work has argued that gender is genre (Appadurai, Korom and Mills 1991; Grima 1992) bringing further into question the unified nature of culture. In the presentation of this joint life story, I will underscore the "polyphonic nature of belief, interpretation and presentation" (Lawless 1991 :36) between researcher and narrators while also emphasizing the possibility of mutually shared constructions of meanings between women and men.

**Reeta Chowdhari Tremblay (Concordia University) Panel: *Reflecting on Fundamentalism: Theoretical and Empirical Considerations***

**"Hindu-Muslim Relationships and the Secessionist Movement in Kashmir"**

How does one interpret the Kashmiri secessionist movement? Does the present "Azadi" movement aim towards creating an Islamic state or do its objectives of independence, as the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front maintains, hold irrespective of any connotations? Since the inception of the political insurgency in 1989, there has been a large exodus of Hindus from the valley, leaving behind a more or less homogenous Muslim population in the Kashmir region. Consequently the two communities' religious identities have been sharpened at the expense of the centuries old distinct cultural identity of the called- Kashmiriyat. While this has allowed the valley's Muslim population to demand, openly more or less, an Islamic state, the displaced Kashmiri Hindus, on the other hand, demand a separate homeland in the valley, a solution based on religious apartheid. This paper will analyze complex Hindu-Muslim relations both in the valley and the Jammu region and suggest that the solution to the Kashmiri problem has indeed become more difficult given the increased emphasis on religious affiliations of three communities of the state—Kashmir Muslims, Kashmir-Pundit-Hindus, and Jammu's Dogra-Hindus.



**Joanne Watkins (University of Wisconsin - Madison) Panel: *Recent Research on Dialogue, Discourse, and Unequal Power in Nepal***

**"Tales of Warriors, Virgins, Buddhists and Yaks: Gender Representations and Cultural Identity of the Nyishangba Manang, District, Nepal"**

This paper examines the genderized discourse of the Nyishangba (Manangi), a Tibetan Buddhist ethnic group from north central Nepal, and explores how the emerging conflict between current trade practices and religious goals has shaped gender identities in the community.

The development of the gender metaphors is paralleled by a renewed emphasis on particular oral histories and ritual observances which link women with the founding of Buddhism in the homeland, and conversely, link men to a martial past—a warrior tradition that is highlighted during the week-long Paten festival. These gender representations contrast the inherent qualities of females and their higher moral status, with the innate tendencies of males toward violence, brashness, fearlessness—necessary qualities of the warrior/trader in the multicultural setting and competitive world of transnational trade.

The elaboration of these folk models and indigenous frameworks reflects a collective concern with changing gender roles and ideologies, and new attitudes about appropriate kinds of work, as well as a pervasive nostalgia for the 'simple, good life' of the past. The native models have taken on added significance as Nyishangba individually and collectively struggle to make sense of the changes sweeping through their community, in a world that is rapidly being transformed by translocal forces and global/Western representations.

I suggest that gender representations and notions about gender roles are part of a larger system of meaning that allows Nyishangba as individuals and as a group to proclaim a distinctive ethnic identity. This discourse seems to reflect the convergence or intersections of women's own gendered interests with that of the Nyishangba group as a whole, and is another instance where gender, cultural identity and ethnicity seem to be coded together.

**Robert Yoder (Associates in Rural Development, Inc.) Panel: *Building Indigenous and Sustainable Development in Democratic Nepal: II***

**"Using Local Indigenous Governance Experience for Sustainable Development"**

Project design for rural development has embraced the idea for user participation in project development and implementation. NGOs have successfully moved to participatory approaches and agency staff are increasingly open to experimentation with participatory concepts. Implicit in the movement toward user participation is acceptance that user experience with local institutions provides sufficient background for their effective involvement.

Methods for enlisting participation seldom allow for the diversity in experience with decision making and local governance that exist across rural Nepal. Experience in improving management of farmer-managed irrigation and development of water powered grain milling is examined to identify viable methods for strengthening local institutions that accept diversity in past experience.

# American Anthropological Association

Washington DC, November 1993

## Himalayas Paper Abstracts

**Ravina Aggarwal (Indiana)**

**"Knocking on Open Doors or How Not to Enter a Ladakhi House"**

This paper explores the construction of place in a Himalayan village in North India. Although houses and fields belong to individual families, they are not discrete, insular spatial entities. In the Ladakhi house, there are different levels of entry and exit, both symbolic and material. Entering the door to the site of a funeral feast can precipitate a charged confrontation, revealing not only the tension and ambiguity between idealized privacy and hospitality in ritual and in quotidian life, but also the discord between peasants and the urban elite in negotiating the place of the dead. Doors can become dangerous arenas of liminality between local prexis and national allegiance, between village hosts and ethnographer guests. Thus, the position of the ethnographer becomes crucial for defining the parameters of space, which are shifting, not fixed.

**Susan S. Bean (Peabody & Essex Museum)**

**"Cloth, Display and Nationalism: Bhutan"**

In recent years textiles and costumes have come to play a special role in the establishment of an officially supported national identity in Bhutan. In particular, in 1988 an edict was issued by the king requiring all citizens to wear national dress ("gho," the man's robe, and "kira," the woman's wrap around dress) on virtually all public occasions. At the same time, Bhutanese textiles have gained a conspicuous international desirability among collectors, especially since the late 1970s when significant numbers of Bhutanese textiles began to be available to museums and collectors outside Bhutan, and have become among the few internationally recognized emblems of Bhutan. This paper considers how the display of textiles, as dress in Bhutan, and as art and artifact in museums and private collections, contributes to the establishment of Bhutanese national identity at home and abroad, and how these issues are to be represented in a special traveling exhibition, "Changing Patterns: Cloth and Life in Bhutan," scheduled to open in late 1994.

**Carolyn Henning Brown (California State, Chico)**

**"King and Caste in Colonial India: Darbhanga Raj and the Srotriyas"**

My concern, in this study, is with the inverse relationship between political autonomy and rank elaboration in Mithila. As the rulers of Mithila were increasingly relieved of their political authority by three imperialist powers over the span of 600 years and two local dynasties, the internal ranking system of their own Brahman caste grew correspondingly and increasingly complex. Moreover, with every major shift in internal lines of authority, a new elaboration of rank was superimposed on the old system. My argument is that in the context of colonialism, as possibilities for fulfilling the political and military expressions of dharmik kingship were attenuated, rank and purity preoccupations intensified. Although this process can be seen at work elsewhere, it took an extreme form in Mithila because over a period of 600 years there were only two dynasties, and both were Brahman. As Brahmans, they preserved, read, wrote, and produced commentaries on their inheritance of texts on statecraft. They knew what kings should be, and tried to be that. They were responsible for dharma both in their roles as Brahmans and in their roles as kings. They were obliged to adjust to mlechcha powers without and preserve dharma within. Such a political climate was a hothouse for new growths of structures for preservation of purity.

**Ter Ellingson (Washington-Seattle)**  
**"Induction of Trance in the Tibetan State Oracle"**

Anthropology is hardly needed to problematize the oracle and the shaman, for they are ambivalent, controversial figures in their own societies. Nor does the anthropological literature on the Tibetan State Oracle in itself present special problems; for the limited studies available present mainly descriptive data still in search of interpretations, but with sufficient historical grounding to avoid primordializing and detemporalizing stereotypes. The Oracle is certainly problematic in the larger framework of Western representations of Tibet, particularly the imagery of a near-inhuman strangeness that has made Tibet generally an object of intellectual avoidance. Oracles are doubly problematic in that their extraordinary status and behavior heightens any sense of strangeness or otherness inherent in cross-cultural perceptions and interactions, while the intensity and multivalence of their performances reduces hope of theoretical remedies.

Trance induction in the Tibetan State Oracle is a complex multimedia process that resists unitary explanation. Conceptual and symbolic elements from calendrics to visualizations coalesce with physical deprivations and stimuli from music to hyperventilation, in a ritual process played out against the multilayered social networking of Tibetan monasticism and the dynamics and crises of the traditional state. The Oracle and his intensively-trained assistants give authoritative explanations of the process that seem to accord well with external observations: thus, for example, in the complex ritual syntax of cultural energies and symbolic markers, music is the attractor that pulls forward from one "Great Time" to the next. Yet, in a system traditionally conceived in terms of interacting specializations, with the Oracle's experiences inaccessible at one level to outsiders, at another level to himself, the results of any given induction remain problematic, initiating dialogues of many discursive and negotiatory alternatives. The video shown with this presentation itself becomes part of these alternatives, the subject of interpretive discourses and negotiations on the ongoing interpretation of the Oracle's trance induction.

**Ann Forbes (Harvard)**  
**"Deconstructing "Conservation": National Parks and Sustainable Development in the Nepalese Himalaya"**

The Makalu-Barun conservation Project Nepal is an attempt to protect the biological diversity of the upper Arun River Valley of northeastern Nepal while also developing models for sustainable conservation and development. The project is to be implemented through the participation of villagers living in the project area.

This project is responding to a perceived conflict between humans and nature, and seeks to create a middle way out of this conflict through the conservation of natural resources. Conservation in the west, however, is based on research, planning and management. Its success depends on maps and boundaries and regulations about what activities can take place where.

In this paper I argue that in fact this conflict between humans and nature is not the central issue. For the villagers in the project area, these categories are not even particularly relevant. The more fundamental conflict unfolding in this region is over control, and the more meaningful distinction is between that which can be controlled and that which cannot be. For villagers this distinction involves the question of who controls the decisions on their lands. It also means recognizing that there are limits of control and developing ways to incorporate this awareness into belief and land use systems. In this paper I deconstruct the categories that have defined the terms of the environmental debate. I show that until westerners recognize the embeddedness of these concepts in our historical traditions, conservation projects are fundamentally no different from the development projects or the colonial activities that preceded them.

**Karen Gaul (Massachusetts-Amherst)**  
**"Stories from the Himalaya: Perceptions and Uses of Forest Resources"**

In the Himalayan hill area of Himachal Pradesh in northern India the beliefs and practices of professional Forest Department administrators, officers and guards concerning forest resources vary not only among themselves, but often greatly from the beliefs and practices of nonprofessional, village level users of these same

forest resources. Widespread corruption, illegal tree felling and smuggling exist in a cultural setting contentiously alongside environmental activism, Social Forestry programs and the actions of concerned individuals. In such a setting, both dissembled and veracious accounts of “the state of the forest” as related by those involved are multifarious, contradictory, and often result in considerable acrimony among the various constituencies involved. In comparing these different accounts of forest resources and usefulness, among professional and nonprofessional, female and male, town and village users, I explore the dynamic ways that these fluid perceptions and uses affect, intermingle, and clash with one another. I focus particularly on the exercise of power in controlling access to these resources (through legal and illegal means) and the collusion and cooperation among variously positioned groups and individuals.

**Premalata Ghimire (Bryn Mawr)**

**"Class and Gender Identities: An Interpretation of Uxorilocality among the Satar"**

The Satar of southern Nepal have a patrilineal ideology. Following the norms of patrilineality, in most cases, they practice virilocality. However, in cases of parents having younger sons and older daughters or only daughters, they practice uxoricity or serial uxoricity. Among the ten different forms of Satar marriages, each with a distinct ritual, this paper focuses on their ghardi jawae marriage, which creates a change in residence from virilocal to uxoricity. Although the occurrences of uxoricity are few, such postmarital residence is culturally approved especially because it results from the ghardi Jawae marriage ritual. This paper examines the consequences of the ghardi Jawae marriage. It explores, first, how a change in residence from virilocal to uxoricity affects the class and gender identities of the Satar, and second, how it sets a different pattern in constructing the personal identities of their children. And lastly, how these identities, in turn, lead to the weakening of the patrilineal bondage and challenge their patrilineal ideology.

**Craig R. Janes (Colorado-Denver) and Cheryl A. Reighter (Colorado-Denver)**

**"The Corruptions of Desire: The Embodiment of Social and Political Conflicts in Modern Tibet"**

In classical Tibetan medical theory disorders described as involving an imbalance of *rlung*, (“air” or “life force”) are caused remotely by the mental poison of desire, that is by emotional attachments to people and things. With the rapid social changes that have accompanied the Chinese transformation of the Tibetan state, *rlung* has come increasingly to represent in both lay and professional medical discourses the embodiment of the subsequent social changes and conflicts. Based on fieldwork conducted in central Tibet from 1991 to 1993, we describe the epidemiology of *rlung*, patterns of its expression, and lay and professional attributions of causality. We argue that methods of *rlung* diagnoses and treatment provide an avenue for the legitimation and amelioration of a kind of distress that could not otherwise be expressed.

**Mark Liechty (Pennsylvania)**

**"According to the Demand of the Times': Media Assemblage, Modernity, and 'Teens' in Kathmandu, Nepal"**

Based on research conducted in Kathmandu, Nepal, this paper focuses on a popular youth magazine and its readership to explore links between a commercially constructed “youth culture,” a state promoted ideology of modernization, and the processes by which middle-class youth experiment with possible identities and come to imagine themselves and others as “modern teens.” Through an analysis of the magazine—its content, its commercial backers, and the relationships between the two—I develop the idea of a “media assemblage.” Rather than treating separate media as isolated meaning systems, I emphasize how various mass media (both local and transnational) mix with and play off each other in a sphere of mutually referencing, mutually reinforcing ideas and images. I show how this “media assemblage” offers up an image language and a set of shared, consumer-based “teen” experiences. Finally I look at how this “media assemblage” interdigitates with and fills out the conceptual space of modernity opened up, but left largely unimagined, by the state’s self-justifying ideology of development, progress, and modernization. For many middle-class youth in Kathmandu, modernity is a peculiarly material phenomenon; young people are often able to imagine themselves as

“modern” only with recourse to a range of objects, ideas, and practices conveyed in the media assemblage, and perceived by youth as the “demand of the times.”

**Ernestine McHugh (Rochester)**

**"Situating Persons: Honor and Identity in a Himalayan Village"**

Honor as an ideal comes to bear strongly on identity among the Gurungs of Nepal, intersecting both personal and social domains. Honor is a quality of complex origins for Gurungs, partially inherited and partially earned. Honor implies evaluation of worth in the eyes of both self and other, and comes to bear powerfully on definitions of personhood and constructions of identity. Over time, the bases of honor have altered in response to changing social and political conditions, so that there are contrasting value systems in reference to which people cultivate honor and construct identities. This paper will examine specific instances of the negotiation of honor among Gurungs, looking especially closely at the metaphoric use of space in conceptualizing social hierarchy and personal identity. Consideration of this process will contribute to a more multifaceted understanding of “identity” as an analytic construct.

**Charles McKhann, (Whitman)**

**"Nature and Society in Naxi Cosmology"**

The Naxi are a Tibeto-Burman people numbering 280,000 in northern Yunnan and southern Sichuan provinces, People's Republic of China. Naxi settlements occur between 5,000 and 11,000 feet in a rugged mountain environment renowned for its extraordinary zoological and botanical diversity. My paper is a study of the Naxi classification of natural species in its relationship to recognized social categories (principally based in gender, kinship and ethnic distinctions), and to the several classes of supernatural beings (gods, demons, and mountain spirits) thought to inhabit and/or exert influence over the natural and human realms as the Naxi conceive them. The study is based in an explication of relations expressed in the extensive corpus of Naxi ritual texts, and on interviews with Naxi ritual specialists conducted over a seven year period.

**Stephen Mikesell (Tribhuvan, Kirtipur)**

**"Anthropologists, Foreign Aid and Counterinsurgency: The Tragic War against Peasants and their Environment in Nepal"**

The last half-century of foreign aid and development in Nepal witnessed a dismantling of the rural community and production relations, expansion of existing ruling interests and creation of new exploitative ones. Elaboration of bureaucracy extended control of a growing bureaucratic class into rural society and subverted existing production—domestic, arboreal, agricultural, pastoral—of peasant society according to the needs and values of urban and foreign aid bureaucrats, not villagers. Mercantile classes, serving as agents of foreign industrialists and responsible for de-industrialization of the villages, but presented as a national capitalist class, asserted political control over the state—through a formal democracy in alliance with the old regime and the military-police apparatus. Foreign aid, driven by finance capital and steered by narrowly trained foreign consultants calling themselves “experts” served to extend the control of these interests deeper down into rural society, bringing old systems of production into ruin and destroying balances and relations with the environment, resulting in deforestation, destruction of grasslands, sale of two hundred thousand rural women into sex labor, and ruin of production rather than its development. Anthropology, through methodological assumptions and priorities which presumed the rural community as isolated, integrated, traditional, and undifferentiated (except according to caste, ethnicity and factionalism), which excluded the state and international processes from analysis, and which has often offered itself as consultant and apologist, has largely failed to analyze the process for what it is. Nevertheless its intimate methodology, combined with a praxis of collaboration with villagers rather than with exploiters and more inclusive historical, geographical and theoretical perspectives, offers the best potential among the disciplines.

**Bruce McCoy Owens (Chicago)**

**"Contestation in Communitas: The Politics of Participation in a Kathmandu Valley Procession"**

This paper considers current uses of the concepts of "contestation" and "resistance" in analyses of collective religious activity that acknowledge dissent among ritual participants. Work that employs these concepts has seriously questioned the long-prevalent notion that public religious festivity reaffirms social solidarity. However, conceptualizing dissension as contestation or resistance can obscure the plurality and multiplexity of centers of social solidarity and the parameters of the conflicts among them. The ethnographic basis for this argument is a study of the largest festival in the Kathmandu valley, the annual chariot procession of Bungadya, in which both intra- and inter-group conflict and dissent are salient aspects of the cooperative ritual practices of many different kinds of social groups. The many festivals in the Kathmandu Valley are potentially catalytic of social change as well as powerful statements of traditional continuity, even as they serve as arenas of social negotiation and are transformed by shifts in relations of power at the state and local levels.

**Julia J. Thompson (Wisconsin-Madison)**

**"Gendered Spaces, Local Places: The Transformation of Tradition, High-Caste Women, and Beauty Parlors in Kathmandu, Nepal"**

The impact on Nepal of worldwide changes in transportation, information, and global cultural flows (Appadurai 1990) has accelerated with the transition from monarchy to democracy. These changes are also transforming the conservative Hindu traditions which regulated society; women in urban centers are among the first to experience new ideologies resulting from these influences. Based on 2 ½ years of research among Brahmin and Chhetri women in Kathmandu, I examine a local beauty parlor to unpack assumptions regarding women, tradition, and social change. Beauty parlors are generally thought of as sequestered localities that represent traditional Hindu gender ideals, yet in reality they are the places where women have the most freedoms and are able to interact with changing gender models. While getting facials, women tell ribald jokes; marriages are negotiated under hair dryers; women phone their lovers while paying the bill; copies of international fashion magazines, such as *Cosmopolitan*, are shared; foreign goods are bartered; news and misfortune are told. Like village water taps where women gather, urban beauty parlors are spaces in which women can express their power through interactions with other women in both traditional and modern forms. Changing ideals of gender, beauty, and the relationships between appearance, morality, and power emerge most clearly in this setting. I discuss how women incorporate new models into traditional beliefs and their responses to the practical and moral dilemmas that arise from conflicts between old values and new expectations. These multiple discourses demonstrate that change does not affect culture uniformly even within class, caste, and gender lines, nor can the influences of social change be predicted.

**Unni Wikan (Oslo)**

**"Managing Turbulent Selves: Multiple Concepts, Singular People in Egypt, Bali, and Bhutan"**

The argument has been made that the unitary, autonomous individual as conceived in European cultures since the Enlightenment is a culturally and historically limited construct. Geertz, for example, points to the variety of naming practices in Bali, Java, and Morocco as evidence for the peculiarity of the European view of self in cross-cultural context. But do naming practices and other such symbols provide a good way of understanding the subjective experience of self in these societies? I will compare self symbols with (as it seemed to me) self experience in Egypt, Bali, and Bhutan to reconsider the problem of the universality/ethnocentrism of the "Western" unitary self.

**Edwina Williams (Lehman College, CUNY)**

**"Tibetan Economy: A 1953 Tribute-Bearing Expedition from Drayab, Kham, East Tibet to Lhasa, Central Tibet"**

Many complex societies studied by archaeologists have tributary economies, or tributary relationships within their economies, but few ethnographic examples of how such economies may have functioned are available. Tribute is generally assumed to be primarily extractive, but, at least in East Asia, the relationship between tribute givers and receivers is a complex exchange. Tribute receivers offered return gifts, often worth more than the tribute itself.

This paper depicts a tribute-bearing expedition of over eighty tents undertaken by the head Lama of Drayab, Kham, East Tibet to Lhasa, Central Tibet in 1953, the last such journey before the Chinese takeover of Tibet in 1959. Data is drawn from the unpublished biography of Nima Dorjee, born in Drayab, East Tibet in 1937. Mr. Dorjee, whose father was secretary of economic record-keeping for this trip, traveled with his father and observed the economic transactions.

Two classes of goods were collected from the noble families and people of the 72 counties of Drayab. Individual gifts sent to monasteries and lamas in order to gain merit were given in the form of metalwork and other objects produced in Drayab. Tribute to the Lhasa government from the Drayab government was collected by noble families from both pastoral nomads and agriculturalists; it was then converted into Chinese silver coins carried by over 125 mules. For this monetary tribute the Drayab Lama was expected to return double value to the givers in the form of craft goods.

## **Association for Asian Studies**

**Washington, D.C. April, 1992**

**Panel: *Fashioning Female Lives in Himalayan Nepal***

**Kate Gilbert (Amherst College)**

**"Nepalese Women/Nepalese Woman: The Role of National Laws in the Construction of Women's Lives"**

**Mary Des Chene (University of British Columbia)**

**"The Saga of Bhauju: Fate, Domestic Authority and Women's Wills"**

**Kathryn March (Cornell University)**

**"Points and Counterpoints: Three Daughters-in-Law Speak about the Separation of their Patrilineal Brother-Husbands"**

## **Seminar on the Limbu Language and Literature**

**Royal Nepal Academy  
Kathmandu, Nepal, April, 1993**

### ***Inaugural Session I:***

**Chair: Ishwar Ballav (Royal Nepal Academy)**

**Ram Saran Darnal (Royal Nepal Academy)  
"Welcome Address"**

**Bairagi Kaila (Royal Nepal Academy)  
"Keynote Address"**

**Kedar Bhakta Mathema (Vice Chancellor, Tribhuvan University)  
"Inaugural Address"**

**Keshab Man Pradhan  
"A Vote of Thanks"**

**Ishwar Ballav (Royal Nepal Academy)  
"Address from Chair"**

### ***Session II:***

**Chair: Nirmal Man Tuladhar (President of Linguistic Society of Nepal)**

**Padam Singh, Subba ('Apatan', Sikkim)  
"The Development of the Limbu Literature"**

**Bal Muringla (Sikkim)  
"The Limbu Poetry: A Review"**

**B.B. Subba (Sikkim)  
"The State-of-art of the Limbu Alphabets"**

**S.R. Khujum (Sikkim)  
"The Coined Words in the Limbu Literature"**

### ***Session III:***

**Chair: Padam Singh Subba ('Apatan')**

**Madhav Prasad Pokharel (Tribhuvan University)  
"The Limbu Language Among Nepal's Languages"**

**Bairagi Kaila (Royal Nepal Academy)  
"Assimilation in the Limbu Language and its Rules"**

A special cultural programme on the Limbu dance and song was held for the participants of the seminar.



## American Oriental Society

202nd Meeting, Cambridge, Massachusetts, March 1992

### Paper Abstracts

**Michael Aris**

**"The Buddhist Monasteries and Rituals of Tibet: A Unique View from Within"**

A collection of six large picture maps and twenty-five drawings (Add Or 3013-3043) preserved in the India Office Library and Records, London, may represent the most ambitious pictorial survey of Tibetan topography and culture ever attempted by a local artist. However, despite its importance the collection has received little notice to date. From internal evidence, it is clear that the drawings were commissioned in the early to mid-1860's by an unidentified British traveler, whose notes supply the "house name" of the Ladakhi monk-artist as 'Kurdun Chuizut' (? mKhar-ldan Chos-mdzad). The picture maps extend from Zangskar and Ladakh to parts of south-east Tibet, and much attention is given to the profusion of monasteries along the course of the Tsangpo river. Of particular interest are the many scenes of rituals and festivals in central Tibet. These include the festival of the *mDosde mchod-pa* at bSam-yas; the rope-slide episode (*byank-khal* [? *bya-mkhan*] *thag-shur rgyug-pa*) during the New Year ceremonies in Lhasa; the sacred dances of the gNas-chung oracle; the ritual obeisances performed by the Tibetan regent at the Chinese temple dedicated to Kuangti in Lhasa; a detailed sequence devoted to central Tibetan marriage rituals; and even the Shari Jatra festival in Kulu. Besides drawing attention to this neglected material and its historical significance, the aim is to show that although the collection was put together under British patronage, it succeeds in revealing an authentically Tibetan world view.

**Linda L. Ittis**

**"The Power of Place in the Hindu Kingdom"**

The practice of defining, demarcating and recreating places is of central importance in Hindu rituals of South Asia, ranging from microcosmic rituals of self and home worship, to rituals of well-being, protection, and auspiciousness for the macrocosmic kingdom and community at large. In the Swasthani Sanskrit-Newari textual tradition, ideas of place derived from the Sanskrit tradition are expanded and realized in both microcosmic and macrocosmic levels extending from personal experience to the geopolitical landscape.

Representations of classical ideas such as the asvamedha "horse sacrifice" and the royal abhisekha "consecration" shape the experience of ritual participants and reflect outward, injecting renewed vitality into the ongoing reconceptualization and reconstitution of the Hindu state.

**Todd T. Lewis**

**"Newar-Tibetan Trade and the *Sinhalasarthabahu Avadana*"**

The paper presents a translation and analysis of a popular didactic story (*avadana*) characteristic of Indian Mahayana Buddhism that is still important in the living Buddhist community in Kathmandu, Nepal. This work, the *Sinhalasarthabahu Avadana*, is a pan-Buddhist tale of merchants shipwrecked, seduced, then devoured by alluring cannibalistic demoneses...except for one hero who is saved by the bodhisattva Avalokitesvara and lives to avenge the evildoers. The lively story built around sex and violence can be read didactically as well as allegorically; the text also contains discourses on ethical and political themes central to Mahayana Buddhism. This narrative content is summarized in Part I.

Part II draws upon anthropological research in Nepal and Tibet to demonstrate the text's multifaceted historical relationships in the Nepal-Tibetan context. The *Sinhalasarthabahu Avadana* has special relevance to the large mercantile community of Kathmandu, where long distance trade with Tibet was an important undertaking throughout the last millennium. The hero of the story is regarded as a protector of local merchants, a relationship institutionalized in one of the city's oldest Buddhist temples (Vikramashia Mahavihara) and

celebrated in a yearly festival. Shrines and ferries along the trade route from Kathmandu to Lhasa also have been adapted with references to this text.

The paper concludes by focusing upon one dominant theme in the domestication of this tale: a caution against intermarriage outside the Newar community. Through an analysis of the unique narrative redaction in the Nepalese diaspora merchant community, the paper points to broader historical processes of sociocultural adaptation in Buddhist history.

**Michael L. Walter**

**"The Spiritual Ecology of Tibet"**

Tibetans have several methods of interpreting their physical environment. The purposes of these methods vary, but the result is a revaluation of nature in terms of her signs and virtues. One may be described as exoteric, others esoteric.

The first is very similar to, and no doubt influenced by, Chinese geomantic practices. It assigns gender and other human qualities to complementary aspects of the same physical object (e.g., a mountain). Another method invests natural features with symbols from Buddhist and Tantric Buddhist culture. Their application is found in an array of revelatory procedures; one of these is the gter ma system, wherein those who can interpret signs in rocks, hillsides, etc., will benefit by discovering religious treasures. Other natural signs are useful to pilgrims on their travels or to those searching for the incarnation of a holy person.

Of interest in comparing these systems is the fact that, beginning from a common basis in Tibet's natural environment, they serve an array of purposes and spring from different origins. Tibetans seem to have not just one method of interpreting their environment, but several.

A variety of textual materials will be used in this analysis, which has as of yet received little attention from students of Tibetan culture.

**Michael Witzel**

**"Nepalese Hydronymy: Towards a History of Settlement in the Himalayas"**

Very little has been done so far in studying the names of rivers and other points of topographical interest in Nepal. It is well known that place names, and especially so the names of rivers, are very tenacious. They often reflect the languages spoken before the influx of present populations. A similar undertaking in Nepal is bound to provide some insight into the settlement patterns of the present and past populations of the area, and to provide materials to test the many and elaborate theories about the early inhabitants of the country. However, the Nepalese evidence is obscured by the medieval and still continuing expansion of Sanskrit and Nepali nomenclature, and a Tibetan overlay in the extreme North as well as Indian influences in the South.

In the middle "hilly" belt of the country, the main settlement area, we can distinguish eight or nine regions distinct in their hydronymy. The westernmost one represents the core of the Nepali speaking population while the others reflect various Tibeto-Burmese tribes. These areas are discussed in some detail, and special attention will be paid to those names which do not fit the general pattern of the particular area under investigation. In a few cases, evidence from early Indian and from medieval Nepalese sources can be compared; this sheds light both on the age of the names as well as on their early forms.—An interpretation of the materials at our disposal opens the possibility to investigate some early strata of populations in the area, and the results are apt to start a discussion which I would like see carried further by specialists of the various Tibeto-Burmese languages spoken in the Himalayas.

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