

## NOTES TO CONTRIBUTORS

The European Bulletin of Himalayan Research welcomes for consideration manuscripts and short notices dealing with any of the following topics.

1. Reports on ongoing, or recently completed, research projects.
2. Information about archives with literary, historical, archaeological, ethnographic, botanical, etc. materials collected in the Himalayan region.
3. Reviews of books on the Himalayas, including books published in Nepal, India, Pakistan and China which because of poor distribution may be inadequately known in Europe.
4. Current political developments in Nepal, India, Pakistan and China and the implications of these developments for research carried out by European scholars.
5. News about recent or forthcoming conferences, and on funding opportunities for European scholars working in the Himalayas as well as for scholars from the Himalayan region itself to visit Europe.

Manuscripts should not exceed 5,000 words in length. All contributions will be published in English. Copy can be submitted in German or French with the understanding that the editors in Heidelberg will arrange for its translation. Anything submitted in English by a non-native speaker will be copy-edited in Heidelberg by a native speaker.

The deadline for submissions for our second issue is 30th September 1991. Anything received after that date will go into the third issue, expected in Spring, 1992.

The views expressed by individual contributors are their own and do not represent those of the Editorial Board. All correspondence to The Editors, European Bulletin of Himalayan Research, Südasien-Institut der Universität Heidelberg, Im Neuenheimer Feld 330, 6900 Heidelberg, Federal Republic of Germany.

# EUROPEAN BULLETIN OF HIMALAYAN RESEARCH

Number 1, 1991

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Südasien-Institut  
Heidelberg

## EUROPEAN BULLETIN OF HIMALAYAN RESEARCH

NUMBER 1

SPRING 1991

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At the final session of the CNRS-DFG conference on the History and Anthropology of Nepal, held at Arc-et-Senans in June of last year, several participants suggested that European scholars, actively engaged in Himalayan studies, get together to produce a bulletin that would keep us informed of current research and research opportunities in our field.

Given the inter-disciplinary nature of our work, it was decided not to exclude any particular field of study: be it from the humanities, social sciences or natural sciences. It was further agreed, after some discussion, that the regional scope of the bulletin should not be restricted to Nepal, but should include the lands and peoples of the entire Himalayas. By Himalayas is understood: Hindukush, Ladakh, Kashmir, northwestern India, Nepal, Sikkim, Bhutan, Assam, northeastern India and southern Tibet. Finally it was decided that the bulletin ought to be published in English, as this is the most common second language of scholars, not only in Europe but also in the Himalayan region itself.

As for the content of the proposed bulletin, the participants suggested a number of topics they wished to see regularly featured:

1. Reports on ongoing, or recently completed, research projects.
2. Information about archives with literary, ethnographic, historical, archaeological, botanical, etc. materials collected in the Himalayan region.
3. Reviews of books on the Himalayas, including books published

in Nepal, India, Pakistan and China which because of poor distribution may be inadequately known in Europe.

4. Current political developments in Nepal, India, Pakistan and China and the implications of these developments for research carried out by European scholars.

5. News about forthcoming conferences, research grants, new funding opportunities in post-1992 Europe, etc.

The representatives of the South Asia Institute, Heidelberg offered to produce such a bulletin over a trial period of two years on the understanding that we would retire with dignity at the end of that period, should the interest and commitment of a sufficient number of scholars prove illusory. Two sorts of commitment are required: first, we need contributions on the above-mentioned topics which merit publication; second, we need the financial support of our readership. Although we will try to make the bulletin a success, it is obvious that the success of this venture will largely be determined by the active support of everyone concerned.

Our plan then is as follows. We shall bring out two issues per year -- one in early spring, the other in early autumn. The present number, our very first, is being sent to all persons known to us who are interested in Himalayan research (and in this we acknowledge the help of Michael Hutt, Gérard Toffin and others who have provided us with mailing lists of scholars from their respective

countries). Included in your copy you will find a questionnaire concerning your current and past research. All persons who return the questionnaire, duly filled out, will receive free of charge our second issue of the Bulletin, due out in November of this year. Once the extent of European interest is established and the Bulletin has been costed, a subscription rate will be set. All recipients of the second issue will receive a bill, upon payment of which they will receive the third and fourth issues of the Bulletin, planned for 1992. The fourth issue will be our "sink or swim" issue. It will indicate whether we are financially viable (all subsidies from the South Asia Institute will lapse at this point). By this time we will also know whether the Bulletin will remain a newsletter or whether -- strengthened by book reviews, reports and articles -- it will circulate information of a less ephemeral character. The fourth issue will also serve to identify us as a scholarly community (a research index based on the returned questionnaires will then be published). If the Bulletin survives its two year trial period, the present editorship will then endeavour to share more equitably the editorial responsibilities with its European colleagues and to involve in some collaborative way scholars from the Himalayan countries themselves.

By accident, rather than design, our first issue has become something of a Nepal issue. We are especially indebted to Michael Hutt, for having provided us with a review of Nepali literature available in London and to Carol Tingey for having brought to

light the Bake ethnomusicological archive. The article on the so-called private Nepali newspapers, being collected by the South Asia Institute at Heidelberg, was put together by the editors with the help of information contributed from John Whelpton in Hong Kong and Silke Wolf in Kathmandu. Other reports were collected by Martin Gaenzle in Kathmandu, including an interview with Prof. Basudev Chandra Malla, the new Vice-Chancellor of Tribhuvan University. Future issues will take us west and east of Nepal, and hopefully into Tibet as well.

For the present we urge you to read this issue and to return to us the enclosed questionnaire. Since our mailing lists are anything but complete, we further request that you spread the word about the Bulletin and encourage those who have not received a copy to write to us. Finally please make the next issue a better one. Send us both your news as well as longer pieces that you would like to have considered for publication (see notes to contributors at the end of this issue).

Prof. Richard Burghart  
Prof. Dr. Andrés Höfer  
Dr. Martin Gaenzle

## PRIVATE NEWSPAPERS, POLITICAL PARTIES AND PUBLIC LIFE IN NEPAL

including a report  
on the collection of "private" Nepalese newspapers  
held by the Library of the Südasiens-Institut, Heidelberg  
Silke Wolf, John Whelpton, Martin Gaenzle, Richard Burghart

Nepal has a lively press scene of so-called private newspapers that serve to complement the views of the official, government-owned organs, *Gorkhapatra* and its English language counterpart *The Rising Nepal*. To document these various voices, the South Asia Institute began to collect a representative selection of newspapers in August 1989. The holdings were subsequently enriched by a gift of private newspapers that had been collected during the teachers' strike and Congress-led Satyagraha of 1984-1985. As the acquisitions document the abortive 1984-1985 attempt to bring about multi-party democracy and the 1990 successful attempt, the newspapers are not only a useful source of information on contemporary political debate in Nepal but also a valuable archive for students of Nepal's modern political history. The purpose of this report is to put these so-called private newspapers in the context of Nepalese political culture and to inform our readership of the newspapers currently held at the South Asia Institute.

**Private newspapers and public life under *pañcāyat* democracy**  
The dramatic political changes that took place in Nepal in the Spring of last year, costing some 500 lives, were the culmination of a struggle for power between the monarchy and

the political parties that began on the 16th December 1960 when Birendra's father, King Mahendra, used his emergency powers to dismiss the Nepali Congress government which had been elected with a substantial majority only eighteen months earlier. Arguing that parliamentary democracy was alien to Nepalese tradition and unsuitable for the development of the country, Mahendra in 1962 offered to the Nepalese people the 'gift' of a constitution in which sovereignty was retained by the royal dynasty but in which the people, through tiers of indirectly elected *pañcāyat* councils, could influence political processes. Meanwhile all political parties were banned; and their leaders were either imprisoned or went into voluntary exile. So began a twenty year period in which the political parties, driven underground, sought by means of force, but mostly by means of persuasion, to put an end to *pañcāyat* democracy.

During the 1960s and 1970s several assassination attempts, an airplane hijacking and covert activities mounted through front organizations, failed to weaken the government's resolve. Throughout this period, however, the political parties began to organize the student population; and after the 1979 public disturbances, in which university students played a prominent role,

King Birendra agreed to hold in the following year a referendum on the constitution. This was won by the *pañcāyat* side, but only by 2.4. to 2 million votes, and with all major towns in the opposition camp. The 1962 Constitution was retained, but in line with an announcement made in the run-up to the referendum, the system was modified to allow direct elections by universal suffrage to the National Assembly and to make ministers responsible to the assembly rather than to the king. Direct elections made it easier for groups within the legislature to appeal for support in the country at large, and the factionalism among panchas which had occurred even under the unreformed system was intensified. Moreover, the fact that the political parties were able to mobilize the electorate for the multi-party vote in the referendum meant that, although being "illegal", they were nonetheless tolerated within limits by the state. Both the factionalism of the panchas and the tolerance of the political underground serve to enliven the Kathmandu-based press scene.

In order to understand the role of private newspapers in *pañcāyat* democracy, one must appreciate the linkage between political factions and the press and what sense of public life made these newspapers "private". The most commonly used term in Nepal, corresponding to the European word 'public', is *sarkāri*. During (and prior to) the period of *pañcāyat* democracy the term figured in three different socio-legal contexts: it referred to something belonging to the person of the ruler (his Mercedes), something pertaining

to the state (*sarkāri* land as state property) and something to which all people had right of access (a *sarkāri* tubewell). The legal coherence of the 'royal person', the 'state' and the 'common' makes sense in a lordly political culture, in which the public domain is personally represented by the sovereign whose will was executed by his state agents for the common good of an indivisible body politic. His Majesty's Government legally and ritually represented this body politic, and public order was understood to exist in that unity. By contrast, political parties expressed the self-interest of their leaders, if not the collective self-interest of their followers. Putting self-interest above the common good, identified them with the private sphere. Indeed, it was because of their supposed unbounded self-interest that Mahendra banned all political parties. As for other "private" institutions -- literary societies, businessmen's clubs, newspapers, and so on --, they were allowed to enter public space only with the prior authorisation of the state. Every local meeting, publication and procession that was not sponsored by a state organization required government approval. The censorship was often severe, but it must be stressed that state repression aimed not at the control of private minds but at the public expression of the private. During periods of social unrest democratic activists were rarely arrested by local police so long as they remained in their homes; rather they were arrested as soon as they entered the public space of the market.

It follows that "private" newspapers were particularly subject to censorship, for newspapers exist, perforce, in public space. This space was already occupied by the two government newspapers, *Gorkhāpatra* and *The Rising Nepal*, both of which merely announced the sort of information that was appropriate for a state which defined public order in terms of social unity. By contrast, the private newspapers precariously entered public space with the self-appointed task of expressing a point of view and exposing the "real" workings of the *pañcāyat* system. This politics of exposure inverted public/private relations, as defined by the state, by playing on the distinction between the inner and the outer in the body politic. The "private" newspapers revealed the inner workings of the government, the "cover-ups" that the government wanted to keep from public knowledge. In so doing, these newspapers hoped to deprive the government of its moral authority to rule. Their criticism could be directed at all government personnel up to the office of Minister. The royal family, however, could not be criticized, for in this lordly political culture the law of treason did not distinguish between treason against the state and personal criticism of the king. In sum, the private newspapers censured the government by exteriorizing (making public, as it were) their knowledge of the inner workings of the system. Meanwhile the government, acting in defense of public unity, censored the private press. The journalists, however, were often courageous and enterprising. It happened not

infrequently that editors were arrested because of critical reports and that the same editors, after they had been released, published their paper under a different name, which they had already registered before as a precautionary measure.

It cannot be denied, however, that many "private" newspapers were, and are, the voice (lit. *mukhpatra*) of a political party or a faction. Indeed, nearly all prominent politicians attempt to establish a private newspaper or gain control of previously existing one in order to voice their views. A case in point is that of Surya Bahadur Thapa, Nepal's Prime Minister from 1979 to 1983. During his prime ministership Thapa sponsored the *Sāptāhik Mañc*, a paper loyal to his government. After being ousted from power in 1983, he supported the more critical *Sāptāhik Vimarsā*, enabling it to be published regularly. Thapa then used the *Vimarsā* to publicize the scandalous activities of the "invisible powers behind the curtains", the "underground gang" (*bhumigat giroha*), of which he had gained ample knowledge. In this way he sought to discredit the government of his successor, Lok Bahadur Chand, and pave the way for his comeback. Eventually, one of the editors of the *Vimarsā*, Padam Thakurathi, barely survived an assassination attempt from the forces he had helped to expose. The whole case was later uncovered and led to the arrest of numerous highly placed people. During the time when the *Vimarsā* was banned, because of its revelations, it started to appear as *Sāptāhik Nepālī Avāj*, and this eventually resulted in a split, when

the Vimarsa reappeared again. Surya Bahadur Thapa continued sponsoring the *Nepālī Avāj*, which was sympathetic to the Movement for the Restoration of Multi-Party Democracy. After the success of the movement Thapa founded his own paper, the *Nepālī Patra*, which is the major organ of the National Democratic Party, also founded by Thapa.

It must be mentioned, though, that the politics of exposure perpetrated by party politicians through their "private" newspapers took place in the small world of the Nepalese intelligentsia, where everyone knows each other. In this respect the "private" newspapers differ considerably from the mass circulation dailies of Europe, where national and provincial newspapers inform the citizenry of issues and offer from their editor's perspective judgements on key issues. By contrast, the information printed in Nepalese newspapers is for a much smaller readership -- the intelligentsia, based in Kathmandu and the district capitals, who are literate, politically mobilized and often already aware of the news in the form of gossip. Thus, the astute political observer reads the newspaper not (or not merely) to be informed of the news, which he has probably already heard on the 'grapevine', but to see what hitherto private information is being brought into the public domain and made an issue in the hope of making political 'capital'. News of a scandal might be an open secret for weeks; but when one reads about it in the paper, one knows that a particular political faction is publicizing this information

and trying thereby to make a political issue of it. Thus every text, published by a politician carries with it a subtext of party strategy, constituted by the reader.

#### Private newspapers and the popular rejection of *pañcāyat* democracy

The activities of the private press, in exposing the "real" workings of the *pañcāyat* system, became critical in the 1980s, the *pañcāyat* system itself became more and more a counterfeit reality. By this is not meant that it lacked popular legitimacy (for it obviously had supporters) or that it was ineffective (or, at least, any less effective than parliamentary democracy), but rather that the inevitable disjunction between the rules that govern a system and the way in which the system actually works had become so great that the structures of *pañcāyat* democracy began to acquire a fictional character.

The fiction began with the referendum. By having to fight against political parties to win the referendum, the "Panchas" -- that is to say, the local leaders who were reputedly above party politics -- had to fully immerse themselves in it. By fighting against the collectively organized parties, the Panchas became effectively a political party of partyless people and Nepal was transformed from a partyless democracy to a one-party state that was run by the partyless party. Meanwhile, despite their illegal status, Congress and various leftist groups were able to operate fairly openly within the country. Congress boycotted the 1981 and 1986 general

elections, objecting to the ban on standing avowedly as the representative of a party and to the requirement that all candidates be members of one of the 'class organisations' set up under the *pañcāyat* system. It did, however, field candidates (as partyless individuals) in the 1987 local elections and won a number of seats, including the mayorship of Kathmandu. The duly elected party members, however, were later removed from office by the government upon their refusal to take part in the public processions celebrating Mahendra's gift of (*pañcāyat*) democracy to the people. Meanwhile, some leftist groups campaigned in the national elections, and managed to return candidates in a few cases where their network of activists was particularly strong, as in the Bhaktapur constituency in 1981 and 1986 and Chitwan in 1986. In the minds of the Nepalese intelligentsia -- that is to say, the newspaper reading public -- the work of the political parties had become an "open secret" and that of the state a "counterfeit reality".

The fiction became morally bankrupt in the last few years of the 1980s when corruption scandals caused growing discontent even among liberal supporters of the *pañcāyat* system. Moreover, the exposures of the private newspaper *Sāptāhik Vimarsā* that constitutional process was being manipulated behind the scenes by an 'underground gang' with palace connections gained considerable plausibility after the assassination attempt on its editor. At the same time, the dramatic changes in eastern

Europe not only encouraged hopes among Nepalese political activists generally, but also led some of the Nepalese Communist factions to reassess their view of 'bourgeois democracy' and to consider cooperation with the Congress party. At the Nepali Congress Conference in Kathmandu in January, 1990 plans were announced for a Movement for the Restoration of Multi-Party Democracy to be launched on February 18th, the anniversary of the 1951 establishment of the interim government after the overthrow of the Rana regime. The United Leftist Front (ULF), an alliance of seven Communist groups established early in the month, joined with Congress in organizing the campaign.

The movement began with demonstrations by party supporters, among whom students were again predominant. Clashes with police led to a number of deaths and thousands of arrests in Kathmandu and elsewhere in the country. In mid-March the campaign appeared to be flagging, but it was revived with a call to the general public to extinguish their lights at set times. This enabled the majority to register their protest in safety, whilst darkened streets emboldened an activist minority to confront the police. Protests from professional groups and human-rights activists, as well as expressions of concern by foreign-aid donors also heightened pressure on the government. Here the medical staff at the Institute of Medicine, Tribhuvan University played an important role vis-à-vis the world press by giving public witness to the number of activists

and innocent bystanders brought to clinics, wounded or dead.

The inability of the government to control the situation was reflected in the distribution of newspapers during the campaign. Normally when there is social unrest, "private" newspapers are banned and the *sarkāri* newspapers make no mention of the unrest. Such was also the case at the start of the relaunched Movement on the 18th February. Out of all the different weeklies collected by the South Asia Institute, only five issues were received in February (*Sāptāhik Vimarsā* 2.2.90; *Mātr̥bhumi* 2, 9.2.90; *Samīkṣā* 2.2.90; *Āraṭī Sāptāhik* 3.2.90), and these date from before the start of the campaign on the 18th. Then ensued the usual period of silence from Nepal, from which foreign observers could infer something was happening but not what was happening. By mid-March, however, the "private" newspapers were again being published, and they remained so during the critical April period as well.

The turning point came at the end of March when anger over police firing led the inhabitants of Patan, immediately south of Kathmandu, to set up a Public Safety Committee, expel the police and block all access roads with ditches. Demonstrations continued elsewhere in the Valley towns, and at 7 a.m. on Friday, 6th April King Birendra broadcast to the nation announcing the dismissal of Prime Minister Marichman Singh and the appointment of Lok Bahadur Chand. He promised discussions with the opposition and the setting-up of a Constitutional Reform Commission. This, however, was not sufficient to

satisfy public opinion and later in the day around 200,000 people demonstrated in Kathmandu for an immediate end to the ban on political parties. A smaller body of demonstrators marched toward the royal palace, some shouting slogans directly against the king. Apparently believing that the palace itself would come under attack and having failed to stop the crowd with tear gas, senior police or military officials ordered marksmen to open fire. Firing also occurred elsewhere in the city, killing perhaps fifty people in all. The Valley towns were placed under curfew; but after consultations with party leaders, who had up till now been under house arrest, it was announced on Sunday, 8th April that the ban on parties was rescinded. On 16th April the dissolution of all *pañcāyat* institutions and the resignation of Prime Minister Lok Bahadur Chand was announced. On 19th April veteran Congress politician Krishna Prasad Bhattarai was appointed Prime Minister, with a cabinet of three ministers each from Congress and the ULF, two independents and two royalists. The Cabinet was invested with the legislative powers of the dissolved National Assembly and was to run the country until elections next spring. Full freedom of speech was also established, with papers even free to criticise members of the royal family.

#### The government, the parties and the press in parliamentary democracy

The official entry of political parties into Nepalese public life not only makes anachronistic the continued

designation of these Nepalese language newspapers as being "private"; it also spells a new relationship between the parties, the government and the state that will change the identity of the official newspapers. In the past *Gorkhāpatra* and *The Rising Nepal* stood 'above politics' in the sense that both government organs claimed the space of the common good and excluded from public discourse the points of view of private interest groups; that is to say, of politicians and their parties. Presumably after the forthcoming May elections a party, or coalition of parties, will come to constitute the government. What will then happen to the *Gorkhāpatra* remains to be seen. Will it remain a state newspaper or will it become a government newspaper, strongly identified with the views of the party called to form the government? The rebirth of multi-party democracy after two decades of underground existence has led to the birth of numerous political parties. In the past political observers had only to keep track of the various factions within the Nepali Congress Party and the factions, splinter groups and parties that emerged from the Nepal Communist Party. In the past year, however, more than fifty new political parties have been formed, each with a leader representing a particular interest: liberal, socialist, popular, progressive, ethnic, regional, national, environmental and so on. Of these parties, 47 intend to contest the May election, and to this effect had by January 1991 applied for registration with the Election Commission. As for newspapers, there are presently 554 registered in

Nepal. Some serve as the mouthpiece of a political party; others are more independent, but leaning towards a party or supporting it on particular issues; others are one-man shows, representing the political interests of the editor and appearing only sporadically.

What follows is a breakdown of Nepal's contemporary political spectrum into five main interests -- the state, the Nepali Congress Party, various leftist parties, the former Panchas and political organizations representing ethnic interests -- and a short note on where some of the more popular newspapers, that may be purchased from New Road newsdealers, fit into this spectrum. Bearing in mind the proliferation of parties and the changeable nature of political affiliation in Nepal, the following classification must also remain somewhat provisional. The particular newspapers regularly collected by the South Asia Institute through its Kathmandu branch office and archived in Heidelberg are indicated by an asterisk, with the dates of the holdings in parenthesis.

#### The Nepalese State

*Gorkhāpatra*. Kathmandu: The Gorkhapatra Corporation.

This government-owned newspaper is the country's largest. It has been a daily since 1960. Although founded by Maharaja Dev Shamsber Rana in 1901 with the avowed intention of giving the people a platform for their views, it is essentially a government mouthpiece with extensive coverage of official pronouncements and speeches by pro-régime politicians. Foreign news is generally translated from agency reports. The paper is

written in a highly Sanskritised Nepali. There is considerable overlap in content with the English-language *Rising Nepal*. The paper is primarily read not for the news of political, economic or cultural events, but for government job advertisements and contracts put out to tender

*The Rising Nepal*\* [SAI 1979-present] Kathmandu: The Gorkhapatra Corporation.

The Nepal Government's English-language newspaper, overlapping in contents with its older, sister-publication, the *Gorkhāpatra*, and reflecting the same official line. It was founded in 1965. The readership consists predominantly of resident foreigners and tourists. A guide to some of the articles published in the last years of King Mahendra's reign and the opening ones of King Birendra's is provided by Bruce J. Belknap, *A selected index of articles from the Rising Nepal from 1969-1976*, Kathmandu: Documentation Centre, Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies, 1978.

#### The Nepalese Congress Party

Oldest and most important of the parties. Founded by Nepalese dissident exiles in India in 1947 as the Nepali National Congress. Adopted its present name on amalgamation in 1950 with the Nepal Democratic Congress, an organization set up by estranged members of the Rana family. Played a leading role in the 1950/51 overthrow of Rana rule. Won an overall majority in the 1959 general election, but ousted by Mahendra in 1960. Mounted violent resistance to the royal regime up to 1962, thereafter extra-systemic

opposition of varying effectiveness till last year's successful movement in which it collaborated with the United Leftist Front. The party chairman, Krishna Prasad Bhattarai, is currently Prime Minister, with three other Congress members in the cabinet: Yogprasad Upadhyaya (Home and Communications), Marshal Julum Shakya (Supply, Construction and Transport) and Mahendra Narayan Nidhi (Water Resources and Local Development). Bhattarai is at odds with party general secretary, Girija Prasad Koirala. 'Supreme leader' Ganesh Man Singh, a senior figure in the party since its foundation, holds the ring. The party is professedly socialist, but in effect, like the Indian Congress Party, a coalition of divergent interests and ideologies.

*Nepāl Pukār*\* [SAI 1985, 90-present] has been the official organ of the Congress Party since its foundation in 1947, but was banned (along with the Party) in 1960. It reappeared in recent years on a free-lance basis, but is now re-established as the party's official mouthpiece.

*Rāṣṭra Pukār*\* [SAI 1985, 89-90] which tried to take the place of *Nepāl Pukār*, has been published since 1968. Its former editor, Hom Nath Dahal, has now moved to the *Gorkhāpatra*.

*Sāptāhik Vimarsā* (also published as *Sāptāhik Vimañc*, *Viśa Janjyoti*, *Nepālī Āwāj*) [SAI 1984-85, 89-present]. Founded in 1971, this weekly, the most influential in the private sector (present circulation ca. 25,000), has undergone various changes of name, partly as a result of

falling foul of the press regulations. It was known as *Sāptāhik Mañc* for the first two years of publication, but it has no connection with another paper which now bears that title. Initially financed by Surya Bahadur Thapa, prime minister from 1979 to 1983 the paper tended to follow, in general, his 'liberal' *pañcāyat* line whilst also giving some space to advocates of a multi-party system. It also waged a constant campaign against 'the underground gang' (*bhumigat giroha*), a coterie said to be manipulating the political system by extra-constitutional means. Its prestige and circulation were boosted following the attempted assassination of its guest editor in 1986 and the arrest of prominent alleged gang-members and their subsequent conviction for the crime. Since 1990 the paper tends to support the Congress Party, although remaining critical of certain policies within the Party seen as betraying the original party line, such as the opening up to ex-Panchas. Its publisher, Keshab Raj Pendali, was once personal secretary to the Congress leader B.P. Koirala.

*Deśantar Sāptāhik*\* [SAI 1989-present]. This independent newspaper is close to the Congress, though opposing certain individuals within the Party. After *Sāptāhik Vimarsā* and *Drṣṭi* (see below), it is probably the third largest weekly in circulation. Internal quarrels have recently led to its reorganisation: it will now appear under the new name *Suruci*.

Other papers supporting the Nepali Congress Party are *Sāptāhik Nepālī Avāj*\* [SAI 1989-present],

*Punarjāgaran*, *Janmabhūmi Sāptāhik*, *Arati*\* [SAI 1989-present], *Janamañc*, *Gāndiv* and *Rājamati* (Newari). The daily *Pariveś* is supported by the Finance Minister Dr. Devendra Raj Pandey.

#### The Political Left

The Nepal Communist Party, founded in India in 1949 by Pushpa Lal Shrestha, has since Mahendra's 1960 coup splintered into fifteen or sixteen different factions. Splits have been caused by tactical disagreements on participation in the *pañcāyat* system and collaboration with the Nepali Congress, ideological disputes (often linked with divisions within the international communist movement) and by simple personality clashes. Seven of the groups agreed in January 1990 to collaborate in a *United Leftist Front*, which then worked with Congress in the democracy movement and now shares power with it in the interim government. In December the four parties in the ULF, which did not have cabinet representation, quit the Front, charging that the other three had been advancing their specific party interests rather than working for the Front as a whole, and that money collected from the public had not been properly used. Two of the remaining parties in the ULF merged in January this year. Not all the parties on the political left are represented by significant papers. Of the parties within the ULF, the United Nepal Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) was formed in January 1991 by the merger of the two most significant groups within the ULF: Nepal Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist) and the

Communist Party (Marxist). The former Leninist (the 'Mah Lehs') is usually regarded as the most important leftist group, and is represented in the cabinet by Jhalanath Khanal (Agriculture, Land Reforms and Forestry and Conservation). Originated as the 'Jhapali' group in the early 70s, when it was involved in Naxalite terrorism in Jhapa district; later renounced murder as a tactic but remained committed to armed revolution. Put up candidates in the 1986 election, winning four seats (in Kaski, Chitwan, Tehrathum and Jhapa), while a sympathiser (who later deserted to the *pañcāyat* camp) was elected from Ilam. Its 1989 party conference renounced Maoism and expressed support for a multi-party system, thus helping to pave the way for the 1990 movement. Favours 'naulo janbad' ('new republic' or 'new democracy') as a long-term goal but accepts a purely formal role for the monarchy in the interim. Many cadres, including veteran leader Mohan Chandra Adhikari who was imprisoned from the 1970s until this January, are thought to remain Maoists at heart; and it is official policy that 'reactionaries' and 'anti-nationals' should not be allowed freedom to organise. The party also backed the Chinese government's suppression of the democracy movement last year. On the other hand, there are members, or 'fellow travellers', on the party's more liberal wing, wishing to abandon the name 'Communist' in favour of 'Socialist'.

The former Nepal Communist Party (Marxist) cultivates close relations with its Indian namesake,

which is in power in West Bengal. It is led by veteran Communists, Man Mohan Adhikari and Sahana Pradhan. The latter, the widow of Pushpa Lal Shrestha, is Chairwoman of the United Leftist Front and Industry minister in the interim government.

The newly constituted United Nepal Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), clearly dominates the left scene. It receives support from *Drṣṭi Sāptāhik\** [SAI 1990-present], *Chalpal\** [SAI 1985], the daily *Samālocana* and the *Mukhpatra Navayug* (the official publication of the NCP:M-L). The *Delī Dāyari Sāptāhik\** and *Mātrbhumi*, which also belong to this group, originally supported the Marxist faction (led by Man Mohan Adhikari). Also in the ULF is the Nepal Communist Party (Manandhar), a pro-Soviet grouping, named after its leader and represented in cabinet by Nilambar Acharya (Law and Justice, Labour and Social Welfare, Tourism), who was once a student in the Soviet Union. The views of this party, whose stronghold is in the Tarai, are expressed by *Madhyam*.

The following parties quit the ULF in December 1990. The Nepal Communist Party (Fourth Convention) is a Maoist grouping, still ideologically close to the Mashal and Masal (see below) groups with which it was united until the 80s. Accepts a multi-party system for the present, but not as a long-term goal. Its leader until recently, Nirmal Lama, member of the Constitutional Recommendations Commission attracted some criticism for a seeming attempt to attack the direction in which the Commission

was going without first resigning from it. Lama has now apparently been replaced as leader since the *Gorkhāpatra* (12.12.1990), reporting the break-up of the ULF, refers to Lilamani Pokhrel in that position. It has now joined the Mashal group (see below) with whom it has formed the *Ekata Kendra* (Unity Centre).

The Nepal Workers and Peasants Organisation is led by Narayan Bijukchheu ('Comrade Rohit'), who split from Pushpa Lal Shrestha in 1975/6. Apart from some limited support in the far west, draws nearly all its strength from Bhaktapur, where it has a firm grip on the Jyapus (Newar cultivator caste). One of the first leftist groups to adopt an 'entryist' approach to the *pañcāyat* system, it won the Bhaktapur seat in 1981. When its victorious candidate broke with the Party, allegedly after succumbing to the blandishments of Prince Dharendra, a new candidate was put up successfully in 1986. Following the 1987 killing of the 1981 candidate, Rohit and many associates were kept in prison until the victory of the democracy movement. The party remains officially Maoist but is simultaneously committed to a multi-party system! Its views are expressed through the paper *Avaj*.

Other parties, who left the ULF, include the Nepal Communist Party (*Amatya*) based mainly in Patan and supported by *Nepāli Samācār Sāptāhik* and *Astitva*; The Nepal Communist Party (Tulsilal), an allegedly pro-Soviet group, something of a one-man band whose leader Tulsilal Amatya was the only Nepalese politician to express support for Saddam Hussain after the

invasion of Kuwait; and the Nepal Communist Party (Varma), a small, pro-Soviet grouping, led by Krishna Rai Varma. It seems to have no newspaper of its own

Other leftist groups who remained outside the ULF, include the Nepal Communist Party (Mashal), probably the most influential of the 'hard-line' Communist groups remains committed to Maoist revolution and denounces the Marxist-Leninists for selling out to 'capitalist democracy'. Its leader, known only as Parchand split from Mohan Bikram Singh's group, to which it is still close ideologically, in the early 80s. It has now been joined by the NCP (Fourth Convention) to form the *Ekata Kendra* (Unity Centre). This group is represented mainly by *Prṣṭhabhūmi\** [SAI 1990], further by *Yojanā, Jyālā, Nepālbhūmi, Usā Sāptāhik*, and the Newari *Ināp*.

A second group is the Nepal Communist Party (Masal), a hard-line Maoist party led by Mohan Bikram Singh, who became well-known nationally during the referendum campaign. Weakened by the splitting off of the NCP (Mashal) group (about 1981) and 4th convention group (1984). Objections to Singh's personal behaviour, he is reputedly a womaniser and hard-drinker, rather than ideological differences may have been responsible for both splits. The party publishes *Mahimā* and *Ugāntar*.

Other groups, of considerably less significance, include the Nepal Marxist-Leninist Party, Proletarian Workers Organisation, and the Shambhuran, Haihar Junj Shah, 6th Convention and Nepal Communist Party (Unity Centre) groups.



### The former Panchas

Many Panchas have now joined the Congress party (to which many of them had belonged before 1961) but two former prime ministers under the *pañcāyat* system came together to found a party largely incorporating other ex-activists under the old regime. Named the National Democratic Party (Rastriya Prajatantra Party), it split on the very day of its formation into two factions, each of which has registered separately with the Election Commission.

The National Democratic Party (Chand) is led by Lok Bahadur Chand, a veteran *pañcāyat* politician, the last of several terms as prime minister being in April this year between the dismissal of Marichman Singh and the appointment of the current premier Krishna Prasad Bhattarai. Backed by Pashupati Shumshere J.B. Rana, generally regarded as one of the more capable *pañcāyat* leaders and a key figure in the negotiations leading to the establishment of the interim government, the party is rumored to have received funds from the Queen. It is thought to have extensive support in the western hills, where many apparently regard it as 'the king's party'. The views of the National Democratic Party (Chand) are voiced mainly by *Samikṣā\** [SAI 1985, 1989-present], as well as by the *Sāptāhik Mañc.\** [SAI 1984-85, 89-90], *Navaras*, and *Cakṣu\** [SAI 1989-90].

The National Democratic Party (Thapa) is led by Surya Bahadur Thapa, once a close collaborator of King Mahendra under whom he served as premier from 1966 to

1969. After Birendra's accession he began agitating for reform within the *pañcāyat* system and was imprisoned for a year. Drafted in again as premier following the 1979 disturbances, he was one of the architects of the *pañcāyat* side's victory in the 1980 referendum. Removed after a vote of no-confidence in 1983, generally seen as engineered by the palace, he again acted as an opposition within the *pañcāyat* system. Widely seen as corrupt, though also with genuine liberal leanings, he now probably has much less support in the country than Chand, who replaced him as prime minister in 1983. After the success of the Movement Thapa founded his own paper, the *Nepāli Patra\** [SAI 1990-present], which now is the voice of the National Democratic Party (Thapa). In August 1990 its editor Padam Thakurati (the journalist who - while with *Saptahik Vimsa* - had been the intended victim of assassination by Bharal Gurung and Co) resigned and joined the Nepali Congress. He was succeeded by Janardan Acharya. The party is also supported by *Janajyoti* and the daily *Hindu Dainik\** [SAI 1990-present]. Another paper close to the Thapa group is *Sāmracanā*.

### Political Organizations Representing Ethnic Interests

The number of papers published by 'ethnic' parties seems to be rather small. The weekly *Chaharā\** [SAI 1991] is close to the 'Mongol National Organisation'. The Hindi paper *Viśleṣaṇ* represents the views of the Nepal Sadbhavana Party, based in

the Tarai; and *Janamukti* is the paper of the Rastriya Janamukti Morca.

Finally mention should be made of the valuable service Mahesh Chandra Regmi has provided for non-Nepali speakers interested in political developments as reported in the Nepalese press. His *Nepal Press Digest*, abstracting in English translation, press-clippings from a broad variety of private newspapers, has been published from Lazimpat (Kathmandu) since 1963. For anyone interested in the ups- and downs of Nepalese politics or in the language of politics, there is no substitute for the newspapers themselves; but for anyone seeking quick and easy access to current political issues, *Nepal Press Digest* is a must [SAI 1963-present].

### LIBRARY RESOURCES FOR NEPALESE STUDIES IN LONDON

Michael Hutt

London is a long way from Kathmandu: the two cities have little in common except, perhaps, a growing traffic problem and the palace of a constitutional monarch. But for historical reasons there are several valuable collections in London of material relating to Nepal. Although these are readily accessible to bona fide researchers, they are currently somewhat under-used. My intention here is to bring these collections to the notice of European scholars. This is by no means a comprehensive survey - there are many other oddities tucked away here and there, no doubt, and several of London's enormous museums

possess large collections of art and sculpture from the Himalayan region. But here I shall mention the main centres for library research, as well as some of the more interesting and unique material they contain.

There are at present three libraries with substantial holdings of books in Nepalese languages (principally, but not exclusively, Nepali), of books in European languages relating to Nepal and of Nepalese manuscripts. These are the India Office Library and Records (IOLR) near Waterloo Station, the Oriental Manuscripts and Printed Books (OMPB) division of the British

Library and the Library of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), both in Bloomsbury. In early 1991, the collections of the IOLR and the OMPB are to be merged to form one single library within the general framework of the British Library. Here I shall treat the IOLR and OMPB as two separate collections, since they are currently catalogued as such and likely to remain so for some time.

### Publications in Nepali

One of the problems I have faced while conducting research into Nepali literature is the speed with which Nepali publications go 'out of print' in Nepal and the non-appearance of second editions. Thus, any library collection of Nepali books and pamphlets is of great value, since most of the material it contains will not be available elsewhere, even (in some cases) in Nepal itself. Each of these libraries holds a Nepali collection: SOAS has about 650 volumes, the IOLR some 750 (about 570 different titles) and the OMPB some 400 volumes. The majority of these are published works of Nepali literature: collections of poetry and short stories, dramas, novels, essays and works of literary history and criticism. Although numerically dominant, these sections of each collection are the least-used by scholars working on Nepal, who have by and large ignored the considerable literary interest and socio-political relevance of much Nepali literature. Each collection also contains many studies of other topics in Nepali.

The oldest collection is the IOLR's: it contains a copy of the Serampore

Bible of 1821, the first book ever printed in Nepali, and a copy of the first edition of Bhanubhakta's celebrated *Ramayana* from 1886. Although dominated by Nepali literature - and within that category by works published in the early decades of this century, including numerous translations from the *Gita*, the *Mahabharata*, various *Puranas* and several interesting ritual and astrological texts (*Khando Jagaune Kabitta*, *Svasthani Vrata Katha* etc.) - there are also biographic verse descriptions of caste in Nepal (*Tharagotravaravali*), and studies of Nepalese art, festivals and folk literature, public finance, health care provision, epigraphy, law, linguistics, history, economics, politics, Panchayat and so on. An item of particular usefulness is *Mecidekhi Mahakali* a four-volume compendium of information on Nepal arranged by geographical region and published in 1974. A catalogue of all Nepali books and pamphlets acquired by the IOLR after 1902 was published in 1985, after which date British Library responsibility for the acquisition of Nepali materials was passed to the OMPB.

The SOAS collection is of more recent origin than that of the IOLR and most of the material it contains dates back no further than the 1930's. Much of it was assembled by Sir R.L. Turner and Dr. T.W. Clark. Again, Nepali literary works form the majority: the SOAS collection is broadly representative of Nepali literature from 1930 to 1960, containing almost every work by Laksmiprasad Devkota, Lekhnath Paudyal and Balkrishna Sama as well as fiction and poetry by many other

authors and a fair number of critical studies. The coverage of more recent literature is, however, somewhat patchy.

The OMPB collection dates from the period 1958 to 1977, although there are a few stray items from earlier in the century. Literary works are predominant. Due to the somewhat haphazard manner in which these collections have been assembled, many of the books in the OMPB are duplicates of those at SOAS and the IOLR. Each collection, however, contains rare items unavailable elsewhere. Thus, the OMPB contains several important works of Nepali literature (Parijat's first collection of short stories, *Sadakra Pratibha*, was one that delighted me) that I have not found elsewhere - even in Kathmandu bookstores. There are also miscellaneous issues of several Nepali journals - *Purnima*, *Nirdesan* etc. - from the late 1950s and early 1960s which are of great interest.

### Books in other Nepalese languages

Each of these libraries holds a substantial number of books (and, in the instance of the IOLR, manuscripts) in Tibetan (much of the IOLR manuscript collection dates back to the Younghusband Expedition of 1904), Hindi (SOAS holds over 5,000 books) and Maithili - all languages spoken in Nepal, but very little of this material is Nepalese in origin. There is really no collection of books in any Nepalese language other than Nepali worth mentioning - chiefly because Nepal's other languages (with the exception of Newari) rarely enter print. There

are, nonetheless, a few stray items of interest; dictionaries of Limbu, Gurung and Kulung Rai, as well as a rare collection of articles and poetry in the Tharu language *Tharu Sanskriti* are available at the IOLR; and dictionaries and grammars of Lepcha and Limbu at the OMPB. The SOAS collection contains a copy of the *Tamba Kaiten vhai Rimthim* discussed by A.W. Macdonald (1975) in his article 'The Tamang as Seen by One of Themselves', as well as grammars and linguistic studies of other Nepalese (mainly Tibeto-Burman) languages.

Each library holds a very small number of books in Newari, although none of these collections could be described as being in any way representative of Newari literature. The largest collection appears to be at the OMPB - there are approximately 150 items there, mostly of poetry, fiction and drama, but also one or two interesting historical and political studies.

### Books on Nepal in European languages

The SOAS collection is perhaps the most extensive of these, amounting to about 1,000 volumes in all, and containing almost every work on Nepal published in Europe and the USA, as well as most that have emanated from India and Nepal itself. The oldest standard works on Nepal are those by Hamilton, Kirkpatrick, Hodgson, Oldfield, Lévi, Landon et al. Many works on Nepalese history are present, ranging from those of Mahesh Regmi to Ludwig Stiller and Mary Schlusser. There are endless reports, feasibility studies and surveys from aid

agencies and from the Nepalese government, as well as the published results of each national census. Most are in English, but there are also publications in French, German and Russian.

#### Periodicals

The Periodicals Section of the SOAS library subscribes to the following journals of relevance to scholars interested in Nepal:

*Ancient Nepal, Himal* (full collection from 1988), *Himalayan Research Bulletin/Newsletter of the Nepal Studies Association* (full collection), *Kailash* (full collection from 1973), *Contributions to Nepalese Studies* (full collection from 1973), *Journal of the Nepal Research Centre, Parbate* (British Gurkha newspaper) and *Nepali* (beginning with 1968). Back issues of each of these are held in bound volumes.

There is a series of the essential *Nepal Press Digest* from 1963-1986 (we hope the SOAS subscription will soon be renewed to this). The Library also holds issues of several now-defunct journals, including the *Gorkha Khabar Kagat* vol. 28 nos 1-12 (Darjeeling, 1927) and three issues of *Indreni*, an influential bilingual poetry magazine, edited by L.P. Devkota, from 1956. There are also four volumes of the Newari journal *Nepala* from 1952-56.

#### Manuscript collections

The most important of these is undoubtedly the Hodgson Collection, held at the IOLR. Brian Houghton Hodgson (1800-1894) was a British Resident in Kathmandu from 1820-1843, and also lived in Darjeeling from 1844-1858. He was one of the

first Europeans to conduct and publish research on Nepal and the subjects he covered included history, geography, ethnology, biology, zoology, religion and linguistics. The Hodgson Collection is enormous: there are over 100 large bound volumes of papers, but a catalogue exists only for material in English. Most of this has already been published in Hodgson's *Essays on the Language, Literature and Religion of Nepal and Tibet* and in the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Bengal* between 1828 and 1880. In addition to material in English, there are also papers in Nepali, Persian, Tibetan, Newari, and some interesting specimens of writing in what I assume to be Lepcha and Limbu.

That Hodgson had academic ambitions is demonstrated by his obvious annoyance at the discovery that the Hungarian scholar Csoma de Körös had pre-empted his work on the Tibetan Kangyur: I came across the following note in Hodgson's own hand in Vol. 97 of the collection:

"The Karchuk or Catalogue of the Kahgyur, translated with aid of Bhotias, and held back owing to De Coros' more authentic labours being just then available. This, however, was done and sent to Cala before De Coros had arrived or written on the subject and therefore his discovery of the true nature of the Kahgyur [translations from Sanscrit] had been anticipated by me. BHH"

In 1984 I compiled a preliminary list of the Nepali material in this collection, and the following summary should give an impression of what is available. Since Hodgson was confined to the Kathmandu Valley, and his movements within

the Valley were restricted too, he relied heavily upon local informants. There are over 400 items in Nepali, written in various hands and ranging in length from a single folio to over 80 pages. In terms of their subject matter, these can be grouped under six very broad headings.

#### 1. Statistics

Some 3,000 folios are filled with land revenue statistics relating to various places in various years. For example, three whole volumes (about 1,100 folios) are dedicated to Kathmandu revenues in nine different years between 1806 and 1824, and a similar quantity to revenues from 'Bhatgaon' (Bhaktapur) for five different years between 1800 and 1828. Other tables document land revenue assessments and receipts in the Tarai and Jumla; from mines and various categories of cultivated land; set out the receipts of Nepal's customs houses; army pay scales; government employees' pay scales; imports and exports; the contents of national arsenals; and the monthly expenses of various members of the royal household.

#### 2. Genealogies, Vamsavali, historical accounts, etc.

About a dozen recensions and several summaries of the *Gorkha Vamsavali*, and innumerable lists of kings, both Shahs and Mallas. Hodgson's informants also supplied accounts of the reigns of several kings, of the conquest of Garhwal and the campaigns of Prithvi Narayan Shah.

#### 3. Ethnography

Copious descriptions of the 'manners and customs' and sometimes the

funerary rites of most of Nepal's hill-tribes: Newars, Lepchas, 'Murmis' (Tamangs), Magars, Sunuwars, Hayus, Limbus, 'Kiratas' and Gurungs. Innumerable lists of castes and clans from various ethnic groups and regions.

#### 4. Political intelligence

Several interesting notes, presumably passed to Hodgson by spies within the Nepalese government, informing him of intrigues at court. Also lists of Chinese officials in Kathmandu, and of Nepalese soldiers. Unable to leave the capital, Hodgson acquired a knowledge of topography by commissioning route itineraries from travellers arriving from Peking, Khasa and outlying districts of Nepal. Lists of towns, villages, pilgrimage sites and forts, and several rudimentary charts and maps (including four forts in Sikkim).

#### 5. Law and administration

Hodgson evidently acquired much of this information by compiling questionnaires in Nepali, and having them filled in. Many of these shed light upon the tax system, the operation of the judiciary and police courts, scales of punishment for various crimes, caste laws and the postal relay system.

#### 6. Religion and art

Data on iconography and philosophy, chiefly in the form of completed questionnaires. Lists and Nepali translations of inscriptions in the Valley; the texts of folktales; notes on silver coinage; religious calendars; descriptions of various festivals.

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## THE ETHNOMUSICOLOGICAL RESEARCH OF DR. A. A. BAKE

Carol Tingey

Arnold Bake pioneered ethnomusicological research in Nepal, as well as in many other areas of South Asia. The recordings and data collected during his two field trips to the Kathmandu Valley in 1931 and 1955-56 have survived as an invaluable resource for scholars today. The collection, which is distributed between a number of locations, may be itemized as follows:

## Sound recordings

- i) Wax cylinders (1931). 75 recordings, including Buddhist mantras and Newar devotional and seasonal music. Originals and tape copies held at the National Sound Archive (NSA).
- ii) Reel-to-reel tapes (1955-56). 92 recordings, including *caca* (*carya git*), Vedic chants, *dapha*, other Newar and Nepali devotional, seasonal and festival music, *nava baja*, women's songs, *gaine* songs, music of peoples outside the Valley and army *jhyaure*. Originals held at the NSA. Copies at SOAS Centre of Music Studies.

## Ciné films

Approximately 3 hours of b&w and colour film (1931 & 1955-56), covering *mudra*, *carya* dance, Newar masked dances and festivals. Also included a documentary film on Newar life, *A Year in Nepal*, by Colin Rosser (1956). Originals held at the National Film Archive. Video (VHS) copy at SOAS Centre of Music Studies.

## Photographs and transparencies

Approximately 650 b&w photographs (1931 & 1955-56) including musicians, portraits, buildings, architectural features and sculptures. Approximately 50 colour transparencies (1955-56), mostly of festivals. Photos & negatives held in private collection, Barchem, The Netherlands. Transparencies held at SOAS Centre of Music Studies.

Field notes and research reports  
Including song texts and English translations, reports and other data

(1931 & 1955-56). Held in SOAS Library, Ref. PP MS 21: Box 6.

## Lectures

Lectures on Nepalese music (1934-63) in English, Dutch, French & German. Draft of a chapter on Nepalese music (c.1957). Originals held at Barchem, The Netherlands. Photocopies at SOAS Centre of Music Studies.

## Letters and memorabilia

14 letters from Bake in Nepal to his mother (in Dutch), 1931. 23 letters from Bake in Nepal to his sister (in Dutch), 1955-56. Held at the India Office Library, Ref. MMS.Eur.F.191: Boxes 1 & 2.

As an aid to scholars using Bake's Nepalese field-work material, Carol Tingey has produced an annotated guide to the collection (M.Mus.Diss., London 1985). For a review of the collection, see her paper "The Nepalese field-work of Dr. Arnold Adrian Bake" in *Ethnomusicology and the Historical Dimension* ed. M.L. Philipp (Ludwigsburg 1989).

## WHAT'S NEW AT TU:

An interview with Vice Chancellor Basudev Chandra Malla  
Martin Gaenszle

1990 brought sweeping political changes to Nepal. The popular movement, organized by the previously banned Congress Party and United Left Front (ULF), succeeded in forcing the Palace to reform the constitution and introduce

a multi-party democratic system. How have these political changes affected Tribhuvan University (TU), the country's major institution of higher education? And what do the changes mean for foreign researchers who seek affiliation with TU?

On 26 December 1990 I talked with Professor Basudev Chandra Malla, the new Vice-Chancellor of TU, and raised these very questions. Professor Malla is a political scientist, who headed the Political Science Department at TU during the seventies. He was dismissed in 1976 on grounds of his political affiliation with the Nepal Congress Party. He later worked as a visiting professor at the Centre for Economic Development and Administration (CEDA). The following is a selective summary of my talk with Professor Malla.

Relating to my first question concerning changes at the University, Prof. Malla pointed out that after the success of the People's Movement, all the higher office-holders were forced to resign. The University was thrown into "a pell-mell condition" in which he along with all his new colleagues, "had to start from scratch". After the posts of Vice-Chancellor, Rector and Registrar had been filled, new faculty deans, research centre directors (CEDA, CNAS, CERID, RECAST) and campus chiefs were appointed.

To cope with the demands and interests of students, teachers and non-academic employees, several university committees were formed to make suggestions for institutional changes. Prof. Malla said, "We had the very great task of making a new university *ain*, or you may say university constitution. This has now been completed and given to the government for rectification. The old existing *ain* does not take care of all the problems and aspirations of the students, teachers, and administrative staff." Among the planned institutional changes is

provision for a senate which will allow adequate representation of these three interest groups. Under the previous system the heads of representational bodies were often appointed from above rather than elected. Now this is being changed in line with the new democratic values.

The second important institutional change noted by Prof. Malla, is that the contracts of teachers, who had previously worked on a temporary basis ("There was always a sword of Damocles hanging over them") are being offered on a longer term and a selective time-bound promotion scheme has been introduced.

Another of my questions concerned the role of foreign universities in the reorganized Nepalese academic system. Prof. Malla emphasized that institutional linkages with foreign universities and research institutes and exchange programmes will continue. Indeed, he added, "They must be enhanced also."

As far as research in general was concerned, the Vice-Chancellor pointed out that in the future new policies will be designated to bring forth "more viable programmes". By this he meant more coordinated programmes which may also be larger in scale; and in this way an improvement on the present "ad hoc practices".

Responding to the question whether there will be a shift in the emphasis of research, Prof. Malla stressed the importance of both applied and academic research. Applied research in such fields as economics, management, administration, education, etc. will remain

crucial for the formulation of policy as there is collaboration with political bodies like the Planning Commission. "We feed them with our findings". On the other hand, academic research in such fields as history, anthropology and sociology will also continue to play an important role. Moreover, the new constitution "will open new avenues for research studies". For example, language studies will assume new significance, as the "constitution has recognized that all these *rastriya* languages - the various languages of the nation together with Nepali, the state language - should be encouraged". Asked about other fields which may gain a new impetus, Prof. Malla drew attention to the study of Ayurvedic medicine. "We have been giving lip service to the promotion of Ayurved (. . . but) in spite of this, nothing has been done".

Eventually I raised the issue of the affiliation of foreign researchers and the difficulties and complaints that have often been voiced by both researchers and members of affiliating institutions that there was not enough cooperation and academic feed-back. The Vice-Chancellor acknowledged the problem, expressing the feeling that mutual harmony is somehow missing. He has discussed this with the Chief of the Research Division. Part of the problem is due to the sometimes lengthy process of one's application through the bureaucratic system and meeting all the requirements necessary to obtain a research visa. Though being aware of the fact that "red tape" cannot easily be eliminated, Prof. Malla expressed confidence that the administrative

process can be speeded up: "I think this should be streamlined, and mutual confidence on both sides must be forged".

My last question was a more personal one: What kind of research would he as a political scientist like to see being done? Here, Prof. Malla mentioned the topics of administrative accountability and productivity, or, more generally, the role of administrators in the democratic system. He also named constitutional problems as a potential field of study, as well as contemporary political processes.

## CONFERENCE NEWS

## Linguistic Society of Nepal Holds 11th Annual Conference

Despite the time absorbed by political activities during the first half of the year, the newly constituted body of the Linguistic Society of Nepal was able to go ahead with its 11th Annual Conference on the 26th - 27th November 1990 at CEDA-Hall, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur. The conference was inaugurated by the newly appointed Vice-Chancellor of the University, Prof. B.C. Malla. In his address the President of the Society, Abhi Subedi reviewed the past decade of the Society in the context of the changed political order in the country. Characterizing the past as inductive to non-academic structures inside the University, he expressed his hope for the development of an open, communicative attitude in a democratic environment.

Twenty papers were presented, focussing on three major areas: Indo-aryan language studies (Nepali, Maithili), Tibeto-Burman language studies (Rai, Newari, Tibetan), and didactic-curricular research in the field of English as a foreign language. Among the participants were scholars from Britain, Germany, India, Japan and USA. Especially meritorious were the contributions by R.K. Sprigg on "The Spelling-Style Pronunciation of Tibetan", N.K. Rai and W. Winter on "Tripllicated Verbal Adjuncts in Bantwa", M.P. Pokharel on "Passivisation in Nepali" and B.H. Matthies on "Judgement L2 Users by L1 Speakers".

At the end of the second day the

Society passed the following resolutions: 1. a department of linguistics be established at Tribhuvan University to conduct teaching and research in linguistics; 2. in the forthcoming census, the Central Bureau of Statistics of His Majesty's Government Nepal be called upon to record language data from all speech communities in order to facilitate systematic study and classification of the languages of Nepal; 3. Tribhuvan University, His Majesty's Government and other responsible bodies be called upon to begin a systematic survey of languages in Nepal, especially of the languages facing extinction; 4. the Linguistic Society of Nepal stands ready to provide its expertise and to participate in carrying out these resolutions.

The Society intends to publish the proceedings of the conference during the coming year. Information can be obtained from: The Linguistic Society of Nepal, Kirtipur Campus, Kathmandu, Nepal.

Manfred Treu

## From Town to City - and Beyond

Anyone who has witnessed the changes which Kathmandu has undergone in the last several decades, knows that not only has there been an increase in population, traffic, and construction but there has also been substantial change in the quality of living: traditional

Newar urbanism is giving way to a more western-style city life. It was the aim of a four-day seminar held and organized by the Goethe Institute and the Solid Waste Management and Resource Mobilization Centre (SWMRMC) in collaboration with the South Asia Institute (Heidelberg) and "Urban Development through Local Effort" (UDLE) to discuss the related problems in a wider academic perspective while at the same time focussing on the practical issues of policy-making.

The first day was devoted to the traditional concepts of South Asian cities viewed in a historical context. Prof. R.L. Singh (Benares) gave the keynote address "City, Culture and Religion", in which he stressed the cosmological dimension of pre-industrial South Asian Cities and the role of their spatial concepts in a balanced 'habitat ecology'.

On the second day the seminar focussed on traditional urban culture in the Kathmandu Valley. In his keynote paper Dr. Niels Gutschow expressed his concern over the deterioration of the Valley's cultural heritage and the increased adoption of western values, as in the current preference for closed compound buildings over the public spaces of courtyard architecture. His description of Newar urbanism as a kind of "lost paradise" from which the West can only learn caused a lively discussion, during which the decline of the *guthi* system emerged as a hot issue.

The outlook for the future was the theme of the third day: "Urban Development in Nepal Towards the End of the 20th Century". Dr. Hans

Christoph Rieger (Heidelberg) emphasized in his paper the accelerating demographic changes to be expected within the next ten years, and their implications. This was the time for town planners and Government officials to voice and defend their policies. Controversial issues, such as decentralization and settlement regulations, were discussed in what proved to be the longest session.

Whereas these three sessions were "expert sessions" with about thirty scholars and policy-makers as participants, the fourth day - on which summaries of the three sessions were presented - was open to public discussion. Here academics, who usually tend to stick to themselves, engaged in dialogue with a wider group of interested persons. The ensuing discussion did not in all cases, however, bridge their divergent interests and experiences.

Martin Gaenszle

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Procedure of application for research in Nepal unchanged

Though the political changes in Nepal have had significant effects on Tribhuvan University and the general academic atmosphere, there has not yet been any change (or planned changes) in the formal procedure of application for a research permit. As before, application forms have to be submitted to the Chief of the Research Division (Dr. Krishna Bahadur Thapa) in four copies, including the research proposal (preferably according to recommended format giving details about the objective of the study, the methodology, scheduling and budgeting), and one letter from the home university, one from the sponsoring agency and one from the respective embassy in Kathmandu. If there is no sponsoring agency, a statement of the applicants' bank account showing sufficient funds is also accepted.

Upon receipt of the application, the Research Division decides to which institute or department the applicant should be affiliated (preferences may be stated), and the files are forwarded to that institution for approval. If affiliation is granted, the application has to be formally approved by the Research Division, the Rector and the Vice-Chancellor, before registration with the University can take place. Parallel to this process, the Research Division seeks a clearance from the Home Ministry. In the past this often proved to be the most time-consuming procedure. Since the

establishment of the new Immigration Department in Thamel integrated within the Home Ministry, clearance from the Ministry appears to move a bit faster. After registration with the University and clearance from the Home Ministry, the application for a non-tourist visa goes through the Education Ministry to the Immigration Department which issues the visa. If all goes well, the Research Division assured me, the process can be completed in about three months. Still applications should be submitted as early as possible.

In 1989 a regulation was introduced which created some confusion and maybe still does: all post-doctoral researchers are required to pay 15 % their research budget to the University. This regulation is still valid, so it is worth clarifying that the total budget that is taken into account is the research budget proper (allowances, equipment costs, etc.) provided by the funding agency, not the salary of the researcher. The 15 % that goes to the University is shared in the following way: 7 % is paid to a "co-researcher" (usually from the affiliating institute), 3 % to the affiliating institute, and 5 % to the University administration. Considering the dire financial situation of the University, it is unlikely that this somewhat unpopular regulation will be changed; or, if changes are made, they will only come after May elections.

## New Courses at SOAS in Nepali Language and Culture

Nepali and Himalayan Studies at SOAS

The School of Oriental and African Studies in London possesses a long tradition of teaching and research in the field of Nepali language and literature, and in various aspects of Himalayan culture - perhaps the oldest of any institution in Europe. The language tradition dates back to the pioneering work of Sir Ralph Lilley Turner, whose *Nepali Dictionary*, a masterpiece of lexicography published in 1931, is still the best Nepali-English dictionary available. Subsequently, Dr. T.W. Clark's *Introduction to Nepali* (1963) and Dr. D.J. Mathews' *Course in Nepali* (1984) became standard works for foreign learners of the language, and Dr. M.J. Hutt's *Nepali: a National Language and its Literature* (1988) and *Himalayan Voices* (1991) have made Nepali literature more widely known. Anthropologists and Tibetologists from the School, such as Professor C. von Fürer-Haimendorf and Professor D.L. Snellgrove have also made celebrated contributions to our understanding of Nepal and the Himalayan region.

For many years Nepali has been taught at SOAS as a component of the B.A. degree, and as an option within the M.A. Area Studies programme, and has been a subject for postgraduate research. A large number of intensive short courses have also been arranged through the External Services Division to cater to the needs of diplomats, aidworkers and so on. Having created a new lectureship in Nepali studies, SOAS is

now extremely well-equipped to offer a new course devoted exclusively to Nepali language and culture which makes the subject more accessible and attractive than it has ever been before.

The New Courses

Participants may enrol for one term (October to December) or for one academic year (October to June). The single term option will probably suit people about to embark on a period of professional work in Nepal, or those who require no more than a basic grounding in the language and a general understanding of Nepal's history and culture. It will culminate in an examination leading to a Certificate in Nepali Studies. The one-year course is intended for students with a longterm or research interest in Nepal. It will end in an examination and an essay assignment leading to a Diploma in Nepali Studies.

The Certificate Course

Classes during the first term will be attended by all course participants: a total of approximately 100 hours of tuition will be provided, including work in the language laboratory. The emphasis will be on literacy, basic conversational ability and a working knowledge of Nepal's historical and cultural background imparted by a weekly seminar and a programme of directional reading. Topics covered will include history, ethnography, linguistics, religion and caste. Candidates for the Certificate qualification will sit an examination in December.

The Diploma Course

Candidates for the Diploma qualification will continue their study of Nepali grammar and increase their conversational proficiency during the second and third terms. Reading practice will be introduced, leading to the study of selected texts during the summer term, and dialogue practices will be held with the involvement of a mother-tongue speaker. The standard of written and spoken Nepali acquired by each candidate will be examined in July.

At the end of the first term, candidates will select a topic concerning Nepal that especially interests them - an aspect of Nepal's history, culture or literature - and will embark upon a programme of reading, guided by tutorials. Weekly seminars will continue until late June, focusing on topics such as economic development, political change, literature and folklore, art and architecture, Hinduism and Sanskritisation, gender roles, etc. Towards the end of summer vacation each candidate will submit an essay of about 6,000 words on his or her chosen topic. This will count towards the final grade attained.

Both the Certificate and the Diploma represent the most intensive courses in Nepali language and culture available in any academic centre outside Asia; they will be offered every year, beginning in October 1991.

Fees for the Certificate in Nepali studies (10 week course) will be approximately £1,500. Fees for the Diploma in Nepali Studies (one year course) will be £3,750.

Applications are now invited for 1991 and 1992. No specific

qualifications are required, but applicants should be able to demonstrate an ability to learn foreign languages and a commitment to the study of Nepal. Please write in the first instance to:

Dr. Michael Hutt (Lecturer in Nepali)

School of Oriental and African Studies

Thronhaugh Street, Russell Square  
London WC1H 0XG

**The Himalayan Forum**

Seminar series during Summer Term at the Centre of South Asian Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, London, Summer 1991. Thursday afternoons at 5 p.m. in room G56.

23rd April

Dr. Declan Quigley (Cambridge): The limits of caste: some consequences of recent change for the Newars of Nepal.

2nd May

Dr. N.J. Allen (Oxford): Changing patterns of kinship and social structure in the Himalayas.

9th May

Professor Richard Burghart (Heidelberg): Sovereignty in the Himalayan region.

16th May

Professor Lionel Caplan (SOAS): "Tribes" and "peasants" in the anthropology of Nepal.

23rd May

Dr. David Seddon (University of East Anglia): Democracy and development in Nepal.

30th May

Dr. Peter Parkes

(Queens University): Minority manouvres: Continuities and transformations among the Kalasha (Kalash Kafirs) of the Hindu Kush, 1950-1990. (To be followed by a showing of the 'Disappearing World' film on the Kalasha).

7th June

Dr. Michael Hutt

(SOAS): Intellectual realignments in post-Panchayat Nepal.

**CONTRIBUTORS TO THIS ISSUE**

Richard Burghart is Professor of Ethnology at the Südasiens-Institut, Universität Heidelberg. He has recently completed a study of the Maithili language and is currently working on the changing relationship between state and society in Nepal.

Martin Gaenzle is wissenschaftlicher Angestellter at the Südasiens-Institut, Universität Heidelberg and Director of the Institute's branch office in Kathmandu. His monograph *Verwandtschaft und Mythologie bei den Mewahang Rai in Ostnepal* is forthcoming from Steiner Verlag, Wiesbaden. His current research is on Rai ritual texts and oral tradition.

Michael Hutt is Lecturer in Nepali at the School of Oriental & African Studies, University of London. He is compiler of *A Catalogue of Nepali Printed Books in the India Office Library* (British Library, 1985), and the author of *Nepali: a National Language and its Literature* (Sterling, 1988). A volume of translations of Nepali literature, entitled *Himalayan Voices*, will appear this year.

Carol Tingey is an ethno-

musicologist at the School of Oriental & African Studies. She recently completed her doctorate on Nepalese *pancai baja* music and currently holds an award from the Leverhulme Foundation to continue her field research on Nepalese folk music traditions.

Manfred Treu is Head of the Department of German at Tribhuvan University, Campus of International Languages.

John Whelpton is a free-lance writer on Nepalese affairs based in Hong Kong. His translation of and commentary on *Jang Bahadurko Belait-Yatra* was published by Sahayogi (1983) and his *Kings, Soldiers and Priests: Nepalese Politics and the Rise of Jang Bahadur Rana, 1830-1857* will be published this year by Manohar. His bibliography, *Nepal*, was published last year by Clio Press in their World Bibliographical Series.

Silke Wolf is wissenschaftliche Hilfskraft at the Südasiens-Institut, Universität Heidelberg. She is currently in Nepal collecting documentation on the 1991 electoral campaign.

The Editors want to thank Anna Margarete Cole and Brigitte Merz for their patience and assistance in the preparation of the Bulletin and the Südasiens-Institut for bearing the costs of this issue.