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Research Prospectus

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Gurung community. This is made possible by the corporate ties existing within Lamnasa between the community and the schools.

The dissertation ends with six educational proposals recommending greater attention by the government to the particular needs of Nepal's many ethnic and caste communities. These are that examinations below the tenth grade should be eliminated as selection devices, that local control of village schools should be encouraged, that educational planning should encourage traditional access to modern occupations where these benefit the Nepal economy, that minority culture should find clear expression in the school curriculum, that access to education be improved for disadvantaged minorities, and that more coordination exist between the government and foreign social scientists conducting research in Nepal.

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RESEARCH PROSPECTUS

"Health Policy and Anthropology:
 A Case Study of the Health Program in Nepal"
 by Judith Justice, University of California/Berkeley

(Note: This prospectus describes research recently completed in Nepal)

The research program described in the following paragraphs is designed to assess what types of information about social factors have been useful in developing and extending health services in various settings. It is based on the premise that health and other social service systems are most effective when tailored to fit the needs of particular populations. Based on interviews and observation of an actual program (in this case, the integrated health program) the research, it is hoped, will result in learning what kind of information is needed by health planners, how this information is obtained and how it is incorporated into actual programs.

The Setting. The research will be conducted in Nepal, where the Government's long-term health plan attempts to provide basic services to most people, particularly the 96% in rural and remote areas. The Government is now developing an integrated health program to meet this goal. The program is funded by HMG, several bilateral and multilateral donors, and private voluntary organizations. It is in harmony with the policies and programs of the Government's long-term health plan, as well as those of the international agencies, which stress the integrated approach to the delivery of basic health services. The integrated program seeks to replace existing vertical programs (family planning/ maternal and child health, malaria, TB/leprosy and smallpox) by combining various activities and staffs, training new health workers, and reorganizing management and administration. Six districts have now been fully integrated in the pilot phase and by 1985, minimal integrated services will be provided throughout the country.

The Methodology. The first phase will involve a review of documentation and interviews with officials in the Nepalese Government and in the international agencies that give budgetary assistance to Nepal for health programs. The focus of the interviews will be on the social and cultural factors that were taken into account or were perceived as being useful by the policy makers who were planning the change over from vertical to integrated rural health services.

The second phase will involve both interviews with district and village level health officials in Nepal who are implementing the program and observation of the integrated delivery of services in two districts.

Policy Implications. It is expected that by examining the kinds of information that have been useful in planning the integrated health program, it will be possible to identify the crucial factors that need to be taken into account in developing and extending health services to local populations. The results of this research will be communicated to relevant officials in Government and international agencies, as well as to scholars concerned with effective health planning.

RESEARCH PROSPECTUS

"On the Geography of Religion in Kathmandu Valley"

Abstract of a research project conducted by Robert H. Stoddard
of the Department of Geography, University of Nebraska
under the auspices of the Research Centre for Nepal and Asian Studies
of Tribhuvan University, 1979

The study dealt with one aspect of the geography of religion in the Kathmandu Valley. More specifically, it focused on what various experts declare are the spatial relationships among sets of sacred sites (i.e., the cosmology of the Valley) and what lay persons perceive to be the geographical relationships among religious places.

The study was designed to build on the ideas presented by (1) Mircea Eliade and his discussion about how societies have organized their settlements according to a plan that duplicates a divine cosmology, (2) Yi-Fu Tuan and his comments about human perceptions of spatial organization, (3) Jay Vogt, who examined the relationship of yastu-vidya and the arrangement of houses within Bhaktapur, and (4) Niels Gutschow and his reports on the organization of religious places in the Valley. These sources provided the basis for expecting that various religious sites in the Valley occur in sets and that the arrangement of these sites manifest a divine cosmology. Furthermore, it seemed reasonable to believe that inhabitants of the Valley would perceive such an orderly pattern and would impose their individual mental maps upon the religious landscape of the Valley. Various sacred places would be regarded as belonging to a set that had meaning for the entire Valley as a single areal unit.

The Protective Inventory for the Preservation of the Physical Environment and Cultural Heritage of the Kathmandu Valley lists several sets of sacred sites, including Char Ganesh, Char Narayan, and the Ashta Matrikas. In addition to this publication, which summarizes the general cultural knowledge of many authorities, several other authors and local religious experts confirmed that four Ganesh and four Narayan shrines constitute two sets and that their locations agree with a cosmological emphasis on the four cardinal directions. In contrast, knowledge about a set of eight Matrikas for the Valley as a whole (as distinct from three sets of Matrikas that protect Kathmandu, Patan, and Bhaktapur) is very rare.

Field research involved interviewing residents in a dozen villages scattered throughout the Valley plus sampled persons in the three main cities. Respondents were asked to name the four locations on a large-scale map, and explain reasons for site locations. Similar questions were asked about the existence of Astha Matrikas, piths, and Dikpals for the Valley.

Analysis of the field data has not been completed yet, but reports on the research results are expected within the near future.